



10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY REPORT

2008–2017

Downtown San Jose Property-Based
Improvement District (PBID)

MESSAGE FROM THE PBID PRESIDENT



Where would Downtown San Jose be without Groundwerx? The easy answer is we'd have lots more graffiti, trash, and a less friendly downtown; but the question gets more interesting when you look at the history of downtown San Jose.

Bay Area commercial real estate has had three big runs in the last quarter century and each time it seemed as if downtown San Jose was late to the table. In the late '90s, downtown San Jose just missed the Dotcom boom. Just as cranes were poised to appear downtown, the bust happened. Shortly thereafter, another expansion hit the Bay Area, but downtown San Jose got shorted again when the housing crisis of 2008 hit. This recession meant budget shortfalls and reduced funding for services like street cleaning. To fill the void, downtown property owners came together to form the Property Based Improvement District (PBID), and Groundwerx was born.

Fast forward to 2018. We are seeing another commercial real estate boom in the Bay, but this time San Jose is reaping the benefits. Cranes are everywhere. Thousands of condominiums are being built and San Jose will finally reach a level of residential units downtown that will make many businesses more viable.

What's different this time? No doubt Groundwerx has something to do with it. If I were a developer trying to decide where to put my hundred million dollar building, the first thing I would consider is whether the area looked cared for. Remember the old broken windows theory? Well, if broken windows can create an atmosphere of "let's tear it down," clean streets create an atmosphere of "let's invest here!"

To the 25 Groundwerx employees who are out on the streets of downtown San Jose rain or shine, cleaning sidewalks, picking up trash and making people feel welcome, thank you for all you do. When you look up and see shiny, new buildings and more people living and working downtown, pat yourself on the back because fact is, Groundwerx makes San Jose work.

Chuck Hammers

Owner, Pizza My Heart

PRESENT AND PAST BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Chuck Hammers

2008 –

President

Business Owner
Pizza My Heart

Doug Bartl

2015 –

Vice President

Property Owner
Oracle

Michael Messinger

2016 –

Secretary

Property Owner
Meacham Oppenheimer

Jim Ortbal

2008 –

Treasurer

City of San Jose

Bill Ryan

2008 –

SWENSON

Eric Kline

2014 –

Adobe Systems

Michael Mussara

2016 –

Fairmont San Jose

Blage Zelalich

2016 –

City of San Jose

Wolfram Schneider

2017 –

Downtown Resident

Chris Friese

2017 –

Lift Partners

Jeff Lambert

2018 –

Essex Property Trust

PAST:

Randy Knox III

2008 - 2012

Adobe Systems

Richard Utic

2008 - 2017

Saratoga Capital

Richard Berg

2008 - 2016

SoFA Properties

Susan Gallagher

2008 - 2009

Legacy Partners
Commercial

Cyril Isnard

2008 - 2009

Fairmont San Jose

Dean Munro

2008 - 2009

San Jose
Redevelopment Agency

Elizabeth Mattson

2008 - 2016

Downtown Resident

Michael Shadman

2008 - 2009

10 S. Third Street

Kevin FitzPatrick

2009 - 2010

Legacy Partners
Commercial

Janet Kern

2009 - 2011

San Jose
Redevelopment Agency

Roger Burnell

2010 - 2014

10 S. Third Street

Carlo Nardi

2010 - 2012

Fairmont San Jose

Andria Souza

2010 - 2015

Legacy Partners
Commercial

Kelley Cosgrove

2012 - 2016

Fairmont San Jose

Richard Keit

2012 - 2013

Successor Agency
to San Jose
Redevelopment Agency

Janis Schneider

2014 - 2016

R & J Jewelry

Leland Wilcox

2013 - 2015

City of San Jose

Terry Kilgore

2015 - 2016

City of San Jose

MESSAGES FROM THE MAYORS



As we celebrate downtown San Jose's current resurgence, I'd like to extend my gratitude to the many members of the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) for helping pave the way.

Over the past 10 years, the PBID has played an instrumental role in unifying the downtown business community to invest in a series of key beautification and safety initiatives, to the benefit of downtown residents, businesses, and visitors alike. Their efforts became crucial following the 2011 elimination of redevelopment agencies, when the City's financial support for downtown plummeted and the PBID helped "keep the wheels on" during a tough ride.

As a result, downtown was primed to grasp the new wave of economic development and prosperity that has followed the Great Recession. Downtown's long dismal office vacancy rate has dropped below 10 percent, and more than 180 tech companies now call downtown San Jose their home. Our skyline boasts several new high-rise towers, with 1,138 new homes currently under construction and the rehabilitation of several older buildings and public spaces.

Our work is far from over, and we must continue working together to address the many complex challenges that face our downtown and our city. Nevertheless, I'm thankful for the tireless work of the San Jose Downtown Association, PBID, their Groundwerx program, and countless other crucial partners. The seeds they've planted this past decade have already begun bearing fruit – and soon, we'll see the fully blossoming downtown that San Jose and Silicon Valley deserves.

Sam Liccardo

San Jose Mayor, 2015 – Present

Downtown Councilmember, 2007 – 2014



When I took office as Mayor in 2007, we had cut services to balance the budget for five years and it was clear to me that cuts would continue. Downtown was not exempt from cuts, so when the SJDA brought up the idea of creating the PBID I was open to the effort.

The PBID would raise money from property owners and lock-in city and RDA funding based on their properties. It was a great idea, but that is not necessarily enough.

Having participated in the creation of the BID, I knew it might be a tough sell to add the PBID. Fortunately, it was not difficult to convince the staff and City Council to support it, because SJDA had successfully implemented the BID and had a stellar track record managing it. That also gave the SJDA credibility with the property owners who had to approve the PBID.

Creating the PBID saved Downtown from some of the devastating cuts in basic services after the Great Recession, despite horrendous budget shortfalls in the General Fund and the killing of the RDA. I regularly walk the Downtown, and I always see Groundwerx working. They make me smile every time. Thank you SJDA.

Chuck Reed

Hopkins & Carley

San Jose Mayor, 2007 – 2014

PBID MILESTONES

JANUARY 2008: Services commence.

JULY 2008: VTA contracts with Groundwerx to clean Transit Mall tracks and stations.

AUGUST 2008: Five-year beautification plan from Ken Kay Associates approved. [Page 10](#)

OCTOBER 2008: First PBID mural (panda wall) completed on South First Street. [Page 10](#)

OCTOBER 2008: Planters, lights in trees, and festoon lighting elements added along key pedestrian corridors. [Page 10](#)

NOVEMBER 2010: Tree-trimming service launched. [Page 11](#)

MARCH 2011: Groundwerx overhauls its cleaning equipment. [Page 4](#)

JULY 2011: Mobile App launched.

JUNE 2012: Renewal of the PBID through 2022.

FEBRUARY 2013: Business Development position added. [Page 12](#)

MAY 2013: Secondary Enforcement Units introduced.



FEBRUARY 2014: Street Life Plan created. [Page 10](#)

JULY 2014: Groundwerx adds positions for Downtown Streets Team members. [Page 8](#)

OCTOBER 2014: Knight Foundation announces support to launch Street Life projects.

NOVEMBER 2014: Holiday Pop-Up Project opened at nine downtown locations. [Page 12](#)

MARCH 2015: San Pedro Squared awarded Knight Cities Challenge grant. [Pages 10 and 12](#)

AUGUST 2015: Knight Foundation five-year grant for activation and Street Life commences.



Jason Su

DECEMBER 2015: PBID's first major capital project unveiled: Dan Corson's illuminated "Sensing YOU" and "Sensing Water" under Highway 87 at Santa Clara and San Fernando streets, respectively. [Page 11](#)

DECEMBER 2016: Local Color opens in vacant storefront at 27 S. First St. [Page 12](#)

APRIL 2017: Collaborative activation projects at Fountain Alley supported by Sharks, Santa Clara District Attorney's Office, San Jose State University students and other partners. [Page 11](#)



JUNE 2017: Began providing supplementary cleaning services in St. James Park.

OCTOBER 2017: Groundwerx Program Director Semu One Bear named Block by Block Western Region Employee of the Year.

JANUARY 2018: PBID celebrates 10th anniversary. [Pages 1-13](#)

"People can't believe what we started with. The sidewalks turned from black to white. The result of Groundwerx efforts is an amazingly cleaner downtown."

— Bob Martins, Special Projects Manager

BY THE NUMBERS, 2008–2017

FINANCIAL

Total assessment investment: **\$22 million**

Property Assessments: **\$18,550,000** / (\$2,061,000 annually)

City baseline: **\$3,227,000** (\$358,000 annually)

CLEAN

Pan/Broom hours: **120,000**

Pan/broom debris removal: **768 tons**

New brooms each year: **120**

Pressure-washing hours: **64,691**

Gum removal: **2,856 pounds**

Mechanical sweeping/scrubbing hours: **40,000**

Hot-spot cleaning / calls for service: **77,024**

Graffiti removed: **219,461**

Graffiti remover in stock at all times: **10 cases**

Graffiti remover used each year: **18 cases**

Trash collected and emptied from cans: **639 tons**

Trash bags used per year: **30,000**

AMBASSADORS

Ambassador hours: **124,000**

Bike and Segway patrol: **15,000 miles**

Directions offered: **186,666**

Contact with businesses: **38,000**

Quality-of-life interaction/outreach: loitering, food/shelter assistance, social services information, incident reports, property condition reports: **17,000**

BEAUTIFICATION

Street Life projects: **55**

Trees trimmed: **2,400** in a four-year cycle

Hanging baskets replaced twice a year: **55**

Hanging baskets replaced once a year (April): **17**

Planters: **400**

Plants and Flowers: **22,103**



GROUNDWERX EQUIPMENT

1 M-20 (3 in 2008), used now to clean light-rail tracks Sunday mornings | **5 PRESSURE-WASHERS** (1 in 2008), the deep-cleaners of downtown sidewalks, found more effective on granite and concrete than the M-20s | **3 KUBOTA RTVS** to pull pressure washers around (original Taylor-Dunn electric cart replaced as pressure-washer fleet expanded) | **2 GREEN MACHINES** (3 in 2008) sidewalk vacuums | **2 "BILLY-GOAT" LEAF VACUUMS**, smaller version, emitting sound equal to a lawn mower (0 in 2008) | **2 PICKUP TRUCKS**, one Chevrolet and one Ford. The Ford has a mounted pressure-washer. | **3 BIKES FOR SAFETY AMBASSADORS** (replacing Segways) | **10 PAN-AND-BROOM CARTS** and the supplies necessary to perform daily duties



Groundwerx management team



SECRETS OF PRESSURE WASHING UNVEILED

- The number of pressure-washers at Groundwerx has grown over the years to four full-time and two part-time pressure washers.
- When Groundwerx first started, SoFA had the dirtiest sidewalks. "We spent six months cutting through and removing gum in SoFA," said Mike Thibodeau, Groundwerx pressure-washer supervisor.
- Water reductions caused by the drought resulted in cutbacks of pressure-washing. "There was no deep-cleaning. It was more of a rinse. Logistically it was sometimes hard to explain but most property owners understood," Thibodeau said.
- In non-drought years, pressure-washers can do deep, detailed cleaning on downtown furniture and sidewalk surfaces using either the wand or rotational scrubber, aka "The Twister."



“Our tenants and my team rely on Groundwerx on a daily basis. Groundwerx not only provides much needed assistance with maintenance and beautification of the downtown area, but also provides a friendly interface between businesses, visitors and others downtown. They make downtown San Jose a happier, safer and more beautiful place.”

— Sarah Mancuso, Regional Operations Director, Harvest Properties, Inc.

WHAT’S IN THOSE PAN-AND-BROOM CARTS?



“Groundwerx is responsive to our needs from cleaning to safety and security. We have seen a significant improvement in the downtown area over the years since the PBID’s implementation.”

— Julie Garcia, General Manager, Cityview Plaza

PEOPLE PROFILES 10-YEAR VETERANS

BOB MARTINS Equipment/Special Projects Manager

San Jose resident:
47 years
Born in San Jose



Previous titles at Groundwerx:
M20 Operator, mechanic, temporary
operations supervisor

Favorite part about being with Groundwerx?:
My job is to be involved in everything. Special projects might be putting DG (decomposed granite) in spots, cutting and removing tree grates, supervising paint projects or replacing street covers. The favorite part for me is that I may get an assignment every once in awhile, but I've worked my way into having some autonomy and being my own boss. I tell myself what I have to do each day. I'm proud that I've reached that level in my career.

What satisfaction do you get out of your job?: I feel like how we do things — the procedures, the cleaning practices, the equipment we use — I've played a big part in all these decisions over the past 10 years. We've come a long way.

How do you regard the Groundwerx team?:
Besides my family, this is the group I most like to be around.

Favorite downtown activity: Sharks games

Spare time: Going to races and spending time with family, three children.

MIKE THIBODEAU Pressure Washing Supervisor

San Jose resident:
10 years



Lived previously: Seattle,
Maine, Kansas and Atlanta.

At Groundwerx: Started as a safety ambassador, switched to pan-and-broom and within two months became a pressure washer. Now also manages the pressure-washing schedule

Favorite part about being with Groundwerx?:
I had worked in food service making pizza. I

definitely like work outside versus in a hot kitchen. That's a nice change.

What satisfaction do you get out of your job?:
When we first started pressure-washing, there was drastic change and immediately saw a night-and-day difference. With pressure-washing comes tons of accolades. The residents see the huge difference. Over the years, I've been able to develop relationships with the people downtown and that's pretty awesome.

Favorite places downtown: The Ritz, which attracts bigger shows, San Pedro Square Market and SoFA Market.

Spare time: I love ocean kayaking and surfing, though I wish I were a better surfer.

JESSE VELO Cleaning Ambassador

San Jose resident:
20 years
Born in Manila,
The Philippines



Previous titles at Groundwerx:
Ambassador (two years)

Favorite part about being with Groundwerx?: I like it all — being an ambassador and reporting something out there, and cleaning the messes. The clean team is similar to ambassadors because I'm always saying hi to people, seeing a lot of new people every day and helping them with directions.

What satisfaction do you get out of your job?: I came to America and worked as a TSA screener in 2007. Then I got this good job with Groundwerx. After I was hired here, I was able to bring my wife and children to the U.S. I followed my sister and then my mom here, and got my citizenship in 2010.

Favorite places downtown: I like my cleaning area: The Tech Museum, around Plaza de Cesar Chavez, and along Park Avenue and Almaden Boulevard. And I like La Victoria and their beef burritos and tacos.

Spare time: Spent with family, wife of 21 years, three boys and two girls.

MIRKO VERAJA
Pressure Washer

San Jose resident: 18 years
Born in Vinkovci, Croatia

**Previous titles at
Groundwerx:** Cleaning
Ambassador (eight years)



What satisfaction do you get out of your job?: I like to clean a block, turn around and see how great it looks when I'm finished. It always looks much different. And passersby appreciate it. They say: 'Thank you Groundwerx. You're doing a great job.'

What has changed in 10 years?: There is a lot less graffiti downtown now.

How do you regard the Groundwerx team?: Groundwerx works well together. We've known each other a long time. I also enjoy helping to train new employees.

Favorite part of downtown: Safeway — It's good they opened downtown. I also like the big open area around Peralta Adobe at San Pedro Market.

Spare time: Watching soccer.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF PBID OPERATIONS MANAGER

By **Chloe Verrey (2016–present)** and **Eric Hon (2008–2016)**

REGULAR DUTIES:

- Read the daily Groundwerx report, information and updates about special projects, graffiti abatement, safety escorts and events.
- Meet with Groundwerx to cover special events, conventions and other discussions about program goals, effectiveness and scheduling.
- Walkabout with Groundwerx to view firsthand downtown conditions and set cleaning-related priority punch-list.
- General correspondence, outreach and check-ins with residents, businesses, commercial property owners and managers about PBID services.
- Coordinate with Secondary Enforcement Unit (SEU) officers. Read their on-duty reports to Groundwerx, SJPD and PATH homeless services.
- Coordinate with PATH and other homeless service providers regarding homeless individuals in need of services and shelter.
- Communicate with SJPD and Sheriff's Office on quality-of-life issues and member concerns.



- Communicate with city and VTA staff on construction projects that impact downtown businesses, traffic and pedestrians.
- Coordinate with city staff on street lights, trail conditions and homeless encampments. Closest city partners are in departments of transportation, public works, parks, housing and cultural affairs.
- Evaluate beautification and Street Life projects with Street Life Manager Jason Su. Coordinate planter maintenance with landscaper Kathy Finley.

DAILY PRIORITIES MAY CHANGE:

- Respond to business or property owners with pressing concerns such as homelessness, public safety, cleanliness and construction impacts.
- Unexpected construction impacts that require coordination with City staff, impacted parties and SJDA staff.
- Unanticipated cleanup or setup of events, such as Farmers' Market and South First Friday Street MRKT.
- Resolve tree emergencies, migratory bees and other natural phenomena.

PEOPLE PROFILES - FORMERLY HOMELESS THRIVE

“Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.” — Robert Frost

Adam Stanislawek’s path to Groundwerx has not been so clearly defined as that of many of his co-workers.

Born in Dearborn, Mich. and raised in Poland, Stanislawek returned to the United States in 1995, moved in with a friend in Seattle — and that is where his American story begins.

His journey took him to Santa Cruz County, where he made jewelry and worked construction gigs. But he also started abusing drugs. He lived homeless, bouncing from couch to couch. “I had zero motivation to find a job,” he said.

Eventually, a friend told him about Downtown Streets Team, a program that puts homeless to work and into job-training situations - but without pay and as volunteers.

“He also told me that it worked,” Adam said.

Sure enough, “Downtown Streets Team kick-started my ability to be motivated and want to work again,” he said.

One of DST’s work agreements is with Groundwerx. “I received a lot of positive input,” Stanislawek said. “I knew it was a competitive process, so I did my best and started kicking butt.”

Two-and-a-half months after volunteering through DST to help Groundwerx, a position opened and Stanislawek was offered the part-time job.

That was 2-½ years ago. Then he went full-time. A few months ago, he was promoted to pressure-washer.

Stanislawek is one of 12 DST-to-Groundwerx success stories in the five years of the program. Two others, Corinna Salas and Christina Ruiz, have been with Groundwerx since 2015 after starting through DST. Besides the 12 DST volunteers moving into employment at Groundwerx, 37 others volunteered for Groundwerx and then were hired by other employers.

Over the past year, Downtown Streets Team had 47 team members hold a volunteer position at least 90 days. Of the 11 that volunteered for Groundwerx pan-and-broom teams, three were hired and held the job three months or longer.

“Attitude-wise, this is the best team I have ever worked with,” Stanislawek said.

His Groundwerx duties give him tremendous satisfaction. “I sleep now tired from a hard day of work, not from other stupid stuff,” he said.



FATHER AND DAUGHTER WORK TOGETHER

Ray Garcia and daughter, Justine, both work for Groundwerx, he as a cleaner and she as ambassador. But they could go on the road as a comedy team.

The layers of their loving loyalty and devotion cut way deeper than their quick wit and bantering.

“Turns out I’ve worked some time or other with all four of my kids — my eldest daughter, son, my wife ...” he starts to explain.

“... But I’m his favorite,” she interrupts.

While he goes home to his wife and tries to relax during his spare time, she’s playing with god-children, taking care of her puggle (pug/beagle mix) ... and visiting her parents.

“I bring Yoshi (the puppy) with me,” she says. “That’s his grandson.”

She appreciates that her steady job at Groundwerx allows her to live in her own place. At work, they keep it professional — most of the time.

“Sometimes I embarrass her when I call her on the radio by her nickname — Tina,” he says. “Everyone here knows her as Justine.”

“I’m named after his cousin,” she says proudly.

The clean team and ambassadors use a radio to alert the other of messes, spills and people who need help.

“It’s never awkward to see him every day,” she says. “It’s nice to have a quick catch-up.”

Like all Groundwerx staff, these two feel they make a difference improving downtown, and appreciate the positive reinforcement of downtowners.

“We hear ‘Good job Groundwerx’ from somebody different and every day,” Ray says.

The Garcias have been in San Jose for generations.

“I remember coming downtown as a boy to go to the movies,” he said. “And I remember doing graffiti.”

He shakes his head when asked if he still does graffiti. “No. I grew up.”

“It’s funny that he’s cleaning it up now,” she quips.

Then adds, “I used to do graffiti, too. That’s the apple not falling far from the tree.”

Justine cut short her studies to work for Groundwerx. This year she plans to go back to nursing school when she isn’t serving downtown as Groundwerx ambassador.



BEAUTIFICATION YEAR-BY-YEAR

A portion of Property-Based Improvement District funding has always been earmarked for beautification projects.

Over the years, beautification programs have become increasingly sophisticated and complex, largely due to the 2014 introduction of the Downtown Street Life strategy plan developed by the PBID Board of Directors.

The Street Life Plan expanded the scope of

beautification projects, connecting downtown districts and its most attractive pedestrian areas. Many of downtown's flower beds, planters and baskets and decoratively lit trees have PBID origins. The PBID has also been a direct contributor to the downtown mural proliferation the past decade.

Some of the finer touches over the years include:



2008-09

- The PBID's first action in downtown beautification was to take over maintenance of planters and sidewalk extensions funded and installed by the Redevelopment Agency in the SoFA District.
- Original "demonstration area" along First between San Fernando and Santa Clara streets include 14-foot-high bamboo "green screen" fronted by a panda mural.
- Original 5-year beautification plan approved.

2009-10

- Beautification efforts connected First Street improvements near Santa Clara and San Fernando with previous SoFA beautification and included 10-foot-by-135-foot mural at the Federal Building wall.
- Lights repaired on San Pedro Square arch.

2012-13

- Colorful mural added to 33 sections of a wall a total one-fifth of a mile long along Almaden Boulevard across from the Convention Center.
- 200-foot mosaic tile ribbon was applied to the parking lot wall along South Second Street at Fountain Alley.
- Granite pieces reconstituted into benches for the renovated Parque de los Pobladores.



2014-15

- Street Life Plan completed.
- Knight Foundation grant used to hire Jason Su as Street Life Manager.
- 46 affirmation banners celebrate San Jose and adorn the Transit Mall, a joint project between the City of San Jose and PBID.
- Panda wall repainted.
- PBID partners with Exhibition District on three downtown murals at Workingman's Emporium, former Tech Shop at Second and San Carlos and Brazilian Blowout Bar.
- First art crosswalks created on Paseo de San Antonio at First and Second streets.
- San Pedro Squared retail project selected for funding for the Knight Cities Challenge.

2013-14

- PBID partnered with 50 West San Fernando owners to install RGB pixel lighting on the palm trees in the Circle of Palms.
- PBID adjusted tree grates on trees downtown where the grates were lifted by roots or growing into the tree trunks. In some cases, they had to be replaced by decomposed granite.



2010-11

- Planters added to Paseo de San Antonio, SoFA District, Second Street and Santa Clara Street.
- The PBID and Team San Jose repaired two heritage clocks downtown.
- Placed 12 custom-made koalas in eucalyptus trees along San Carlos between Second and Fourth.
- City utility cabinets for lights and traffic controls were wrapped with vinyl images that mimicked the surrounding area.
- Tree maintenance program for the district adopted, calling for about one-fourth of downtown's trees to be trimmed each year. In the first year, 969 trees received structural pruning — all 345 palms and 624 trees of numerous varieties.

2011-12

- San Pedro Square improvements included: Historic cannery labels mural on Almaden Press building (now site of Centerra housing) // Famous people portraits added to base of San Pedro Square arch // Stained glass added to eight ornamental San Pedro Square signs.
- Tree trimming accelerated, with another 700 trees trimmed, not counting 345 palms that have to be trimmed every year. PBID announced plans to trim the remaining 600 trees in 2012 - attending to all 2,235 trees in just three years.



2015-16

- Highway 87 Illuminations lighting projects in partnership with Caltrans, Office of Cultural Affairs and ArtPlace open on Santa Clara and San Fernando streets.
- Art display structure built at Second and San Carlos streets.
- PBID partners with Anno Domini on a 4,125-square-foot mural overlooking Fountain Alley, with funding from Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and Republic Services.
- Four art crosswalks complete the linkage between the paseo and Third and Fourth streets, plus a new design on San Pedro Street at Santa Clara and St. John streets.
- A 25-foot-by-20-foot abstract art design is centered on the San Salvador-First Street intersection in SoFA.

2016-17

- Hart's Dog Park open, murals painted on Santa Clara Street.
- PBID partners with Empire Seven on mural on St. John Street elbow at Highway 87.
- Fountain Alley activation includes cleanup and beautification with the Sharks Foundation // summer picnics and Friday series, bringing music, art, table tennis, stand-up comedy and food trucks // 2 murals.
- PBID co-sponsored The Musical Swings temporary installation in Plaza de Cesar Chavez.
- Supported a POW! WOW! San Jose! festival bringing 6 new murals to downtown and 13 others throughout the city.
- Added additional festoon lights to Paseo de San Antonio.
- Completed the first and second downtown pedestrian counts.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The PBID added a Business Development position in February 2013 at the direction of property owners looking for help to fill vacant storefronts and to assist businesses in getting open quicker downtown.

“SJDA provided exceptional guidance and support as we navigated the oft murky waters of opening a new business concept in downtown San Jose. With their assistance we were able to go from initial-lease-signing to open-for-business in less than nine months. We are very grateful for the many hours of diligent effort SJDA invested into helping make the launch of our project a success.”

— **Heinz Jones, Forager**



The timing for such a position came off the heels of the closure of Redevelopment Agencies across the state, including San Jose, in 2011.

“The RDA staff, grant programs and other resources all went away,” recalled Nate Echeverria, the PBID’s second Business Development Manager, who held the position three years.

Filling empty spaces, assisting new businesses by providing coaching and technical assistance and working with the city to streamline processes are still core to the position.



Nate LeBlanc

The position has also evolved, said Nate LeBlanc, the current business development manager. “It’s about connecting people, knowing the landscape, knowing the real estate and who’s making the moves,” LeBlanc said. “Early in the going we helped develop the role of the city’s Small Business Ally and made process improvements that have made

the permit system easier to navigate. We work side-by-side with them.”

The city hired Juan Borelli and Xuan Ha as Small Business Allies. “They are tireless advocates who always try to get to ‘yes’ and solve a problem,” LeBlanc said.

The PBID’s business development manager could assist up to 50 different businesses during any given month. Some assistance may be as simple as answering a question in a phone call or helping a business join the parking validation program. Other challenges can be complex permit regulations and project management issues.

“It’s easy to get attached to some people and businesses,” LeBlanc said. “And sometimes it feels as if you can never do enough in a day.”

In the last three years, the business development team counts major assists to dozens of businesses who are open downtown. Other business development achievements include:

- Creating a fast-track process for restaurants.
- Introducing temporary pop-up businesses in vacant spaces.
- Continuing work on San Pedro Squared parking-to-retail project.
- Process work on storefront assistance and grants, and parklets in the downtown core.

“Starting a business in San Jose can be complicated, especially if it’s in food service. Luckily we have people like Nate LeBlanc from SJDA who really cares about the community. He was incredibly proactive in helping me with everything from getting bike racks installed to figuring out how to run a pop-up while we were waiting for our final inspections.”

— **Frank Nguyen and Kathy Duong, Academic Coffee**



“We’re not brokers, but we help people find real estate,” LeBlanc said. “We’re not planners, but we help people get permits. We want to be additive to the process and make the right connections. That’s what I do all day.”

Starting January 2018, Derrick Seaver has moved from the Silicon Valley Organization over to San Jose Downtown Association as Policy and Operations Director. Managing all PBID Operations, he will assist LeBlanc in business development.



Groundwerx Ambassador Jonathan Lopez points out directions.

“Our owner is based in Marin, with other District locations in San Francisco and Oakland. Our architect is based in Sacramento. City Hall is quite the trek between all of those locations. We needed someone in San Jose that could help bridge, physically and figuratively, communications between everyone working on opening this new location. Nate was always responsive and went above and beyond to keep things moving forward for us. He was an ideal liaison between our business and the City of San Jose. We’ve opened restaurants in other cities and never have we received such support as this.”



— **Rachel Kaiser, District**

GROUNDWERX

408-287-1520
groundwerx.com

IMPORTANT LINKS

STREET LIFE PLAN

sjdowntown.com/street-life/#more

STREET LIFE PAGE

sjdowntown.com/street-life/

BIZ DEVELOPMENT & COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES AVAILABLE MAPS

sjdowntown.com/map

PBID FINANCIALS

<http://sjdowntown.com/property-improvement-district/>

GROUNDWERX APP



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10-year Anniversary Report

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It takes a community . . .

Thanks to the businesses, artists, vendors, funders and donors, and individuals who have contributed to PBID projects the past decade.

People:

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Dan Turner, Luis Ayala, Primo - All Bay Landscaping; Asphalt Impressions; Block by Block; BrightView Landscape Services; Christmas Lights Pros; CMG; Tom Colla, Colla Signs; Commercial Tree Care; Country Garden Nursery; Devil Mountain Nursery Service Group; Dinsmore Landscape; Eaton Hall Architecture; Kathy Finley,

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