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# PBID ramps up services in 2023

The ramp-up has begun with enhanced services provided to the downtown community for the next 10 years through the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID), approved by property owners last summer.

"We look forward to ramping up our district's new services in January and anticipate to have new services fully staffed within 90 days of the new year," said **Chris Arkley**, operations manager.

Arkley provided a rundown of what to expect in 2023 and beyond for PBID clean, safe, and other services such as business development, street life and capital improvement projects.

"We're excited to roll out new services and provide our cleaning expertise in new areas," Arkley said. "Some new services will be more noticeable sooner than others."

In preparation for a newly expanded district in southern, northern, eastern and western directions, members of Groundwerx and San Jose Downtown Association have walked new block faces multiple times to assess conditions. They have cataloged more than 100 points of interest such as multistory residences, law offices and auto shops that may require immediate cleaning, as well as targeted areas

they anticipate will need repeated attention from the Groundwerx team.

Groundwerx has already received a request for sidewalk cleaning from Devine Wine and Cheese on Devine Street, which was outside the previous boundary but now inside the expanded 2023 district. SJDA aided the business by coordinating a volunteer cleanup with San Jose State University students last fall.



"We are already planning some deep-clean events early in 2023 and looking at involving community volunteer groups in an effort to foster partnership and get to know our new members," Arkley said.

The entire district will receive the same amount of cleaning services, a change from the former two-tier basic and premium structure. Everyone in the district should also notice an increase in pressurewashing activity. Groundwerx continues to monitor the amount of trash collected, graffiti cleanups and business / property contacts.

"The direct connection between us and our members and how we responded to their request is most important to me," Arkley said. "Looking forward, our goal is to quickly address the areas in need of the most help to bring the new district as a whole up to the high standards we strive for."

#### SAFE

The PBID is beefing up the numbers of safety ambassadors and adding a new Social Impact Team dedicated to connecting with the

PBID boundaries for clean and safe services extend in all directions

unsheltered population downtown. Each unit will assist the other.

"Borrowing from best practices in other assessment districts across the country, SJDA will implement a Social Impact Team dedicated to working with our unsheltered population," Arkley said. "This was a vital need identified during the 18-month renewal process for the

Once established, this new team of five can connect unhoused individuals to service providers with minimal entry requirements who can offer a menu of assistance options including food, care kits, overnight warming locations, cooling centers, day-time activity centers and information about Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Such "low-barrier" referrals can help build trust between the Social Impact Team members and the individual, which could help move that person along the path to accept tempo-

#### Report a mess or issue / Request an escort

The Groundwerx dispatch number (408) 287-1520 and Groundwerx app remain the best means to connect with clean and safe teams in response to issues in the Downtown Property-Based Improvement District (PBID). The app can be downloaded on Apple App Store and Google Play.

This allows not only for ease of deployment, but also clear and consistent communication. All of Groundwerx's clean and safe programming communicates over two-way radios.

If you would like to connect directly regarding with questions or concerns about PBID operations, please connect directly with Operations Manager **Chris Arkley** at carkley@sjdowntown.com. rary or more permanent housing assistance, he explained. The team also has the option to collaborate directly with PATH (People Assisting the Homeless), which provides outreach and case management services to individuals interested in a long-term solution.

Arkley hopes the team can be in place and on the streets as soon as possible in 2023.

The expanded district will have an average of four safety ambassadors per shift per day, twice the number serving downtown recently. "Safety Ambassadors will be able to move through the district with ease and take a more data-driven approach to their deployment, while still having staff available to respond to urgent matters or assist with a special project," Arkley said. "One concept we are studying is identifying days and times when there are higher pedestrian traffic patterns from Diridon Station to the downtown core, so we can deploy our safety ambassadors along those routes as more

With the Social Impact Team, safety ambassadors will have capacity to spend more time connecting with storefront businesses, employees and visitors as well as continue to provide safety escorts when someone requests assistance getting from one part of down-

In addition, PBID staff will work with its Board chaired by President **Chris Friese** to gain a better understanding of the safety needs of the district through 2023 before making any change in the deployment of Secondary Employment Unit officers. SEU officers will continue to patrol downtown on a purposely random schedule.

#### **OTHER PROGRAMS**

The PBID also assists in business development, street life and capital improvement projects. With renewal, some additional funding will go toward efforts to assist businesses with their development and for more and/or enhanced street life and beautification programs.

Additionally, property owners agreed to a new mechanism for assessment increases specific to capital projects that would only be levied on commercial properties with approval by the City Council.

For capital projects, SJDA seeks private sector and foundation partners to increase capacity to undertake these multivear, multifaceted projects. Past projects include the MOMENT shops at San Pedro Square and SoFA Pocket Park.

A new project set to debut in 2023 teams Street Life Manager Sarah **Billings** with internationally renowned design and engineering firm ARUP on a comprehensive downtown lighting plan that covers a variety of ways in which lighting can enhance safety, vibrancy and beauty downtown. It also provides product recommendations, gives an overview of existing private (think the lighting on your building) and public lighting levels throughout downtown, and scalable projects that can be deployed in spaces throughout the core.

#### Letter from the President

While you hear this at the start of every year, I'm declaring that 2023 is going to be the biggest, most important year in history yet!

Truth be told, there is a lot of change happening in the world right now, and with that change brings uncertainty and anxiety. I get it, things might seem scary right now. But to remind you of a quote from a previous column from **Heraclitus**, "The only constant in life is change.'

As an entrepreneur, I am more of a glass-is-halffull type of person, and I see plenty of opportunities. I am going to give two pieces of advice on how we can collectively use the new year to create a better community for everyone:

Be Pro-Active. Make that resolution to improve yourself in some way. Try to start something challenging this year and make progress at it.



Make an effort to meet someone new. If you see a need to be filled, ask yourself, "Why not me?" as opposed to waiting to see if someone else takes it. Volunteer at a cause you are passionate about. Make your voice HEARD.

Making this (y)our best year yet There are a lot of communities and posts within both the SJDA and City of San Jose itself that need

> I am excited to announce that in 2023 the SJDA will host a series of town halls where we will do community outreach so we can have meaningful discussion on specific issues that impact our lives.

to be filled and are waiting for concerned citizens

like yourself to step up and make a difference.

**Be Empathetic.** We are a community of individuals, and while any one of us can start something, it always takes a lot of support to see that vision through. If we listen to each other and work together, we can accomplish anything.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by all of this then please reach out. I promise we've all been there before as well and you are not alone. There are resources that can help and there is always someone who cares. As a martial arts instructor, I often like to remind people to measure my success not just on my "strongest" students, but also on my "weakest" students.

Nothing is ever guaranteed in life, but that's part of the adventure. Downtown San Jose is a wonderful place to have that adventure. Make 2023 your year - I'm rooting for you!

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#### **Downtown News**

**Housing developers incentivized again:** For the fifth time, the San Jose City Council extended the High-Rise Incentive Program for housing projects 150-feet and higher in the "downtown planned growth area," which includes the core area and Downtown West.

First approved in 2007 and again in 2012, 2016, 2019 and now 2022, buildings of about 12 stories will again receive a 50 percent reduction on construction taxes and a waiver of the fees they would normally have to pay per square foot of living space, called "in-lieu fees," for market rate housing in-lieu of including affordable housing units in their projects.

The City Council voted unanimously in favor of the extension, which is meant to provide a better chance for developers to finish their projects.

"In 15 years, conditions haven't changed. This isn't just about a moment in time when the economy is challenging," said outgoing Mayor **Sam Liccardo**, at the Nov. 15, 2022, meeting. "If all goes well, we might get another one or two out of the ground based on past experience. We haven't had a single one of these break ground since 2017 when we've had the most explosive real estate market in Silicon Valley history. There are chronic realities — we have very low height limits and very high water table and construction costs, and that isn't going to change."

break ground and be finished before the June 30, 2029, deadline for this round of the incentive program.

Eight projects representing 2,383 units are in the pipeline for the downtown core, including The Carlysle (290 units) at 51 Notre Dame Ave.; Scape (336) at 600 S. First St.; The Mark (222) at 459 S. Fourth St.; Echo/Icon (415) at 147 E. Santa Clara St.; SoFA 1 (254) at 420 S. Second St.; SoFA 2 at 420 S. Third St.; Energy Hub at Fountain Alley (194) at 35 S. Second St.; and Project BoTown (SoFA 3) at 409 S. Second St.

Another 2,400 units are entitled in the downtown planned

growth area. New permits must be secured by June 30, 2025, under terms of the program extension.

**Abierto's encore:** San Jose Downtown Association dispersed \$80,000 in Abierto program funds to six groups producing events this fiscal year.

This is the second year of the Abierto (Italian for "open") funding provided by the Mayor's Budget Office for the city's parks department to celebrate the city's post-pandemic reopening with events and public space activations. SJDA dispersed \$20,000 to two groups not involved last year, and \$10,000 to four groups that will repeat their events this year.

- Friends of Levitt Pavilion San Jose: \$20,000 For a five-week concert series and picnic in October at St. James Park, introducing to the public the idea of a permanent Levitt Pavilion planned to be constructed there.
- SJSU Research Foundation AAPI Event: \$20,000 This spring, activate the hidden histories of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Santa Clara County through an outdoor event and screening, walking tours, food, music, and lectures and panel talks.
- Urban Vibrancy Institute: \$10,000 UVI continues to place bands in bars and restaurants and in public spaces on Thursday evenings to support local businesses.
- Curatus: \$10,000 Support the artists, musicians and performers of STREET MRKTs plus the SubZERO event coming up June 2-3.
- School of Visual Philosophy: \$10,000 Pays for artists and musicians participating in Second Saturday art walks along the Alameda.
- SJSU College of Humanities & the Arts: \$10,000
   Funding supports continuation of Public Art as Resistance free walking tours this spring.

#### **Business News**

**Boa Noite:** Carlos and Fernanda Carreira have reactivated the space above Petiscos, their restaurant at 399 S. First St. restaurant, and opened Noite nightclub and lounge.



New CoTA nightel

Noite is an intimate, upscale nightclub/lounge focused on house cocktails with DJs open for now Friday through Sunday. In the tradition of Avery and Agenda, previous second-floor nightlife businesses at the same spot, the Carreiras plan to bring live music back to Noite in the future.

The family also own the esteemed Adega Portuguese

restaurant on Alum Rock Avenue, plus downtown favorite Pastelaria Adega bakery at 30 E. Santa Clara St.

Catch the mood of Noite in person or at noitesi.com.

**Create at The Selfie Spot:** The Selfie Spot SJ, 112 Paseo de San Antonio, is the place where photographs and videos pop from your mobile phone.

Local entrepreneur **Carina Ramirez-Navarrete** has brought the pop-up selfie photo craze to downtown San Jose, presenting individuals and groups with whimsical and creative environments for memorable private or very public social media moments.

Let it rain "Benjamins" in the golden money room, step up to the retro burger bar, hang out in the jungle room or be surprised by more than 13 sets.

Navarrete is not only the business owner, she puts together set designs and uses her own professional cameras to capture portraits of customers, their family members and occasionally their and pets. She also keeps an eye out when shopping or surfing the internet for interesting props and furniture (check out the vintage sofa she found in the "red room").

From Santa Cruz County, Ramirez-Navarrete has lived in San Jose the past three years after graduating from Cal State-Monterey Bay. She gained valuable experience in Southern California where she made music videos, and first saw a similar business of selfie stations.

"San Jose has always had a lot of potential," she said.
"I opened (in November) to bring another special element of cool to the creative people of Silicon Valley."

She added that the origins of her business concept date back to the monochromatic sepia family portraits of folks in Western costume dating back to the 1800s. Over the holiday, Santa stopped by; Ramirez-Navarrete indicated she would create scenes for Valentine's Day.



#### Donated tree

A young bay laurel tree native to Italy's Mediterranean climate was planted in Little Italy across the street from Henry's Hi-Life, thanks to a donation from Dinsmore Landscape Co. Dinsmore wanted to give back and freshen part of the downtown landscape as people return to work, enjoy downtown's assets and recover from pandemic. SJDA's Street Life team assisted with the planting.

Tickets and one-hour appointments can be made online at theselfiespotsj.com. Most customers wrap up in about 50 minutes, she said.

Salads make the world go 'round: Salad Planet orbits the SoFA Market, 387 S. First St. Enjoy classic salads, vegetarian, vegan and keto salad options, build-your-own salads, plus wraps, "superfood" toasts, waffles and fresh cold-pressed juices. For a healthy lunch and dinner option, check out thesaladplanetca.com.

#### **From the Archives**

**15 years ago — January 2008 —** With a new board, officers, staff and logo, the new Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) began its efforts to make downtown San Jose sparkle. **Chuck Hammers** served as the first PBID President

20 years ago – January 2003 – Jim Fox, for whom the Golden Nail Award is now named, was honored for 15 years of downtown restorations, including the Hotel DeAnza, Dohrmann Building (335 S. First St.), New Century Building (Santa Clara between First and Second streets), and the Jose Theater and the now-called Open San Jose building on Second Street.

**25 years ago – January 1998 –** The City Council agreed to a Redevelopment Agency recommendation to install six automatic public toilets downtown to be placed at Plaza and St. James parks, on South First Street, near Fountain Alley, near First and Santa Clara and San Pedro Square.

**30 years ago – January 1993** – After a successful year of its downtown lighting program, during which the arch at San Pedro Square was lighted, SJDA set its sights on decorative lighting at the traffic island at Almaden Boulevard and Santa Clara Street across from the Hotel DeAnza, and on trees along South First Street in SoFA

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### **Groundwerx Employee of the Month – Victoria Manzanares**

Groundwerx supervisors and team members have come to count on **Victoria Manzanares**. Her attendance, customer service and followup have been consistently good in the year and-a-half she has served as a safety ambassador.

In her role, Manzanares is responsible for keeping census numbers of unhoused people living on the street, a count she makes three times a week. In fall, she helps collect leaves on the street and sidewalk — which can become a safety hazard — and this was a particularly prolific leaf season!

In spring and summer, Manzanares greets passersby at the bicycle-powered Groundwerx information kiosk at the Farmers' Market, a job for which she is well-suited. Her exuberant: "Free information! Take whatever you need," is well-known by vendors and SJDA staffers who work the market every week.



Her outreach efforts can be challenging, she said. She told the story of a homeless man she encountered on a rainy day who was without shoes. She set off to find a pair of boots in his size after he admitted he could use them, but was nowhere to be found when she returned with the footwear and expectations to make his day.

"I just remind myself that one person rejecting my help does not mean everyone will," she said, "and I no longer feel discouraged."

A San Jose native and Andrew Hill High School alum, Manzanares last held a temporary job working security at the emergency shelter at Santa Clara County Fairgrounds during the pandemic. That assignment taught her the skills needed for her current position with Groundwerx, she said..

When not working, Manzanares is at home with her 6-year-old daughter or taking care of her grandmother. She also enjoys spending free time downtown and recently celebrated a birthday at San Pedro Square. Other highlights for her 2022 included seeing **WAR** at Music in Park and skating under the palms during the holidays. She looks forward to the revitalization of Saint James Park and addition of the Levitt Pavilion.