

## PBID renewed by overwhelming majority

A resounding 89 percent of downtown property owners voted in favor of renewing and expanding Property Based Improvement District (PBID) services through 2033.

The City Clerk counted more than 400 ballots and reported the results June 14 at the San Jose City Council meeting. The Council unanimously approved the PBID.

The district will raise more than \$54 million over the next decade for downtown services that include the Groundwerx clean and safe program; landscaping and tree trimming; beautification projects such as lighting, planters and art installations; off-duty San Jose Police Dept. focused on quality-of-life issues – along with new services to address the unhoused population in the district.

Even with the slow business recovery in the midst of Covid, the timing of asking property owners to tax themselves was not a disadvantage as owners said Groundwerx services are needed more than ever in the center city.

“Keeping the downtown clean is the most visible PBID activity and one that receives universal praise,” said **Ted McMahon** of Bayview Development.

Since its formation in 2008, the PBID has removed three million pounds of debris from public spaces; delivered 100,000 hours power washing downtown sidewalks; and abated 308,000 graffiti tags.

A Renewal Committee of property owners, residents, city and SJDA staff led the process over the last year doing outreach to owners, working with a consultant team and leading a successful petition effort earlier in the year – a requirement before moving to the ballot phase.

“Our owners said safety and cleanliness are top priorities, and the pandemic underscored the need for additional investments in PBID programming,” said **Chloe Shipp**, SJDA Deputy Director.



New planters at First and San Carlos Streets.

### PBID Streetlife at work: SoFA Urban Gardens

New planters were installed at storefronts that previously had none in the SoFA District, and decade-old planters that could be reused were given a fresh look. Utilizing SoFA's new branding guidelines, volunteers repainted the planters with new graphics that create a gateway to the district at San Carlos street. Both new and old planters contain native plants from different regions with California Poppies the common element, paying homage to the historic California Theater sign in the 300 block of SoFA.

“Innovation is needed to address downtown's vulnerable unsheltered population, which inspired the creation of a Social Impact Team,” she said.

Several new innovations were added to the PBID services during the renewal process:

A Social Impact Team will focus on connecting with the unsheltered population downtown, and directing them to services that help individuals move with dignity from downtown sidewalks, parks and paseos. This team will respond to member concerns within the district, support Groundwerx staff, and coordinate with City,

County and non-profit service providers on effective outreach and service delivery. The Social Impact Team will be reachable via the Groundwerx dispatch number, and when fully staffed, will be in the field seven days a week.

Increased Groundwerx capacity, including a dedicated painter to tackle graffiti, a full-time dispatcher to streamline internal deployment and communications, and higher staffing levels for cleaning ambassadors, safety ambassadors and pressure washers.

A Research and Data Analyst to help understand

and analyze trends that are relevant to business and property owners, as well as help streamline PBID operations.

The Renewal Committee explored boundary expansion due to previous requests for services in areas outside of the district and potential development in downtown frame areas just outside the core. The renewal plan that was approved ended up with a slight expansion of PBID boundaries, with the most significant new areas in the North San Pedro and Downtown West neighborhoods.

The PBID will continue investing in streetlife capital projects that have added the MOMENT retail shops in San Pedro Square, dog parks and programmable lighting in the district. Business Development services will also expand to help recruit and retain small businesses, assist in city and county permitting processes and operation of the Business Support Center at 16 N. Third Street.

“The additional investment in small business support, communications and a data driven approach will allow us to better connect with rate payers on the services they need,” Shipp said.

Every property owner located within the boundaries of the PBID pays an assessment with their property taxes that is calculated on total square feet of lot and building. While the cost of the PBID may be a small amount to a condo owner, it is significant to institutional investors owning a lot of commercial property. Therefore it's worth noting that large property owners tend to be some of the biggest champions of Groundwerx.

“They work to ensure that downtown has a uniform cleanliness,” said **Julie Garcia**, General Manager of Jay Paul Companies. “Groundwerx is a valuable resource for our property management team. It's clear they take pride in their work keeping downtown clean and safe for our tenants, employees and visitors.”

## Letter from the President

“The only constant in life is change.” - Heraclitus

So I was sitting there in the warm San Jose twilight, enjoying the Legendary Waiters at the first Music in the Park of 2022 and contemplating the so-called “new normal.” It occurred to me that I really don't know how the term “normal” applies to anything anymore. I have been around downtown San Jose for a while now as both a business owner and a patron, and every year there seems to be a new definition of normal.



Alan Gumby Marques

Downtown always seems to have something different, something new, something exciting year after year. I see downtown as an ecosystem with life in every corner. Change can be challenging of course, but ultimately change can be good. I would venture to say that change is the new normal.

This year will bring a host of changes to downtown as would any other year, but THIS year we really are poised to see some big ones come November. San Jose will elect a new mayor, the downtown District 3 will get a new councilperson, and SJDA will – for the first time since its founding – have a new CEO at the helm. (By the way, we're planning a special charity event on October 29 to roast – I mean honor – our current CEO **Scott Knies**, so mark your calendars).

There are cranes in the sky and shovels in the ground. New residents are moving into new residences. The streets are being activated with events such as Sub-Zero, SoFA Street Fair, the Farmer's Market and Viva Calle. New businesses are opening their doors such as Cafe Guzmania (yum Empanadas), Island Taste Caribbean Grill (yum, jerk chicken) and Axe-Men Throw House (ummm, Axes?) It was nice to see Scratch Chicken getting a more permanent home in Fountain Alley,

Even for those of us who have been here for years, the changes are evident. This summer we're welcoming a whole new group of students to come train with us at Heroes Martial Arts as people are eager to try something new. If Brazilian Jiu Jitsu isn't your thing, there are plenty of other activities in downtown for you to try, such as boxing at Checkmate or rock climbing at Studio Climb or maybe a pottery class at Higher Fire. Go bowling at San Pedro Social. Laugh at the Improv, see a movie at 3Below, dance at Aura, listen to some live music at the Ritz or the newly opened Mama Kin.

I can go on and on about everything that is packed into walking distance downtown, but I will challenge you to go out there and explore it yourself – and define your own normal. We've waited long enough, why not go and create your own authentic experience.

You can always visit [sjdowntown.com](http://sjdowntown.com) or check out the Instagram page on [sj\\_downtown](https://www.instagram.com/sj_downtown). Got a suggestion for a place or an experience? Feel free to email me at [gumby@heroesmartialarts.com](mailto:gumby@heroesmartialarts.com) and hopefully I'll see you there!

## Dine Downtown is July 21-31

More than 20 downtown eateries will be participating in this year's Dine Downtown with food and drink pairings, 3-course prix-fixe menus, or chef specials not normally offered during the 11 Day promotion.

Now in its 14th year, Dine Downtown entices patrons to explore new establishments and return to old favorites. And it's not just for the white tablecloth set. Three coffee shops have agreed to participate so far: Academic Coffee, Voltaire Coffee Roasters, and Voyager Craft Coffee – all offering a Dine Downtown special.

Marketing Director **Julie Carlson** feels confident this year will be a boost for downtown restaurants and cafes on the long road to economic recovery. “We continued with Dine Downtown during the pandemic, promoting a restaurant week in both 2020 and 2021,” Carlson said. “Restaurant owners tell us they always see an increase in business, and the last two years were no exception. Still, none saw the kind of numbers they had in pre-pandemic years, and we're optimistic that 2022 will change that.”

Participating restaurants and their Dine Downtown offers can be found at [dinedowntownsj.com](http://dinedowntownsj.com).



New participants include The FAB, Mama Kin, San Pedro Social and Secco.

# Council votes to remove parking mandates; sunset outdated parking programs

A resolution was introduced at the June 14 City Council meeting to amend the Master Parking Rate Schedule and establish a Commercial Real Estate Parking Program at city-owned and operated facilities and update various parking programs and rates.

Citing the need for clear guidelines for strategic use of city owned or operated parking in support of economic development and the city's climate smart goals, the council approved the planning commission recommendation to allocate parking resources in the Downtown in an equitable manner and provide clarity to commercial property owners on the parameters of the city's long-term parking agreement options.

Also in support of the city's overall transportation and mode shift goals, council voted to sunset various parking programs which historically have leaned heavily on free or reduced rate parking structures, and to instead focus on ensuring ample parking availability that is priced at market rates. As a result of that vote, the programs proposed to sunset on June 30 are:

1. Clean Air Permit: Originally implemented in 2001, the program was designed to encourage early adoption and purchase of clean air vehicles in San José by providing free parking at city parking facilities and on-street parking meters. The city's mode shift goals are to discourage single occupancy vehicles, regardless of vehicle emissions status.
2. Discounted Parking Incentive Programs: Various parking programs implemented between 2005 and 2011 were designed to provide free or significantly

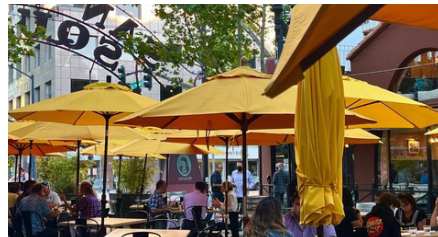
reduced rates for employee parking to new or relocating businesses and tenants. Discounts ranging from 25 to 100 percent were offered based on the type of business and/or property and agreement terms. Transitioning away from free and heavily discounted parking will align parking programs with the city's Climate Smart goals.

In eliminating the outdated parking programs, it was noted that city-owned downtown garages now offer a period of free parking (90 minutes) to all customers regardless of vehicle type or employment status, and that program would continue.

Perhaps most noteworthy was the council's decision to remove mandatory minimum off-street parking requirements for developments, instead implementing a market-based parking approach. Once again citing the City's Climate Smart goals, staff reported that when minimum parking requirements are applied, they tend to reduce density and increase the distance between land uses. This in turn makes walking, biking and public transportation less viable modes of transportation, ultimately increasing the amount of driving and the demand for parking.

Additionally, parking is expensive to build, with costs ranging from approximately \$30,000 for a surface parking space to more than \$75,000 for an underground parking space. The construction of unneeded parking spaces solely to meet the required minimums of a zoning code adds a substantial cost to a development and contributes to the high cost of real estate.

## Al Fresco dining extended on San Pedro & Post Streets



Before going on summer recess, the City Council approved next steps for the currently-closed block of San Pedro Street between Santa Clara and St. John Streets as well as advanced the process toward a weekend closure of Post Street between First Street and Lightston Alley.

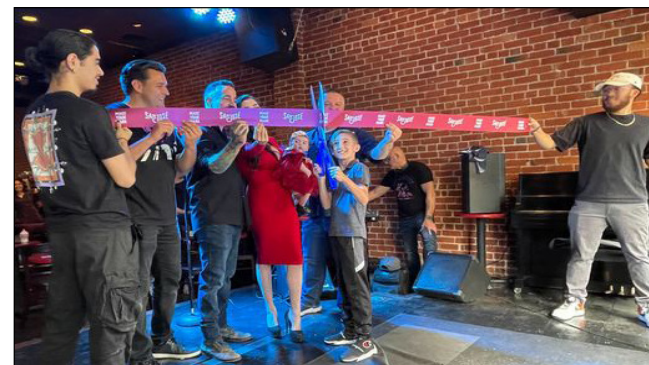
The council action will allow outdoor business operations on San Pedro to continue through June 30, 2023. During this time period, city staff will explore the implementation of permanent operations on closed public streets.

"This commitment from the city is vital to the continued

success of businesses in San Pedro Square. Another year of outdoor operations will go far in assisting with recovery from the pandemic and further validating the long term benefit of Al Fresco in San Jose," said **Chris Arkley**, SJDA Operations Manager.

Meetings with stakeholders continue to make progress towards a summer start to a pilot street closure on Post Street. The city and the businesses on Post Street are approaching a final plan for a Thursday-Sunday closure and activation plan for the street. This pilot closure is complex due to the weekly shutdown of the street and the businesses on the street have shown great patience and collaboration in making their voices heard and furthering plans for activation.

Staff was directed to incorporate feedback from local business owners and community partners to ensure an equitable and collaborative approach that balances activation, ADA requirements, emergency access, fire suppression, and vehicular egress and ingress. A final estimate of design and construction costs should be complete by March 2023.



Owner **Andrew Saman** (third from left) and his family

## Business News

**Mama Kin opens in former Cafe Stritch location:** The long-awaited reopening of the former Cafe Stritch on South First Street was met with an enthusiastic response from music lovers who came out to see owner **Andrew Saman** cut the ribbon on Mama Kin's during the SubZERO Festival and South First Friday in June.

Mama Kin's takes its name from the Aeorsmith song, which has been a favorite of Saman.

The remodeling included adding new banquettes, a new bar top, and - most notably - a relocated stage to allow

for more seating in front of the performers.

The food offerings are described as "a fusion of American classics and modern Mexican culinary flourishes." Mama Kin's is now open Tuesday through Saturday, 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. at 374 South First Street in the SoFA District.

**If you're serious about dumplings:** Based on the popular dumpling cuisine from Shanghai, Serious Dumpling is a fast-casual concept restaurant now open in the lobby of the Moderna Apartments in San Pedro Square.

The restaurant features an open prep kitchen in a contemporary environment, where patrons can watch as chef's prepare the specialty of the house - Sheng Jian Bao, which is also known as "SJB." The SJB is



Plenty of seating at **Serious Dumpling**

## Groundwerx Employee of the Month — Dominic Asberry



**Dominic Asberry**

**Dominic Asberry** uses his studies in sociology every day on the job as a Groundwerx Safety Ambassador. He loves being on the front line, so to speak, working with the entire downtown community of residents, visitors, business owners, and the unhoused population.

He learned early on the job that his actions have a direct impact on the community he serves.

Right now he's "on a roll" with connecting homeless people to the resources they need now, making connections twice a week on average. "There was one woman who I would see every day who would not talk to me or anyone," Asberry recalls. "Day after day I would greet her and get no response, until one day when she said 'hello' back and then asked for help."

Another "regular" on his route had a cast on his foot one day, and didn't seem familiar with San Jose's many homeless resources. Asberry gave him some information and the next time he saw him, the cast was off and he was wearing new clothes and new shoes. He was very thankful to Asberry for his outreach.

Asberry believes that most unhoused individuals want help, but it just takes patience and passion to build the trust they need before they are comfortable entering services. After just three months on the job, Asberry knows he is having an impact on the unhoused population by the number of them who now thank him for his referral to shelters and other resources like clothing and food. His philosophy for his position is: If I don't do it, no one will.

Besides directing people in need to resources, his ambassador job also entails working with downtown businesses on issues like graffiti removal and making their customers feel safe. He loves seeing visitors downtown and watching all the new construction underway that will eventually bring more people he can interact with on his rounds.

Asberry has connected with 54 businesses, removed 822 graffiti tags and conducted wellness checks with 41 unsheltered individuals in his short time on the Groundwerx staff. His passion for his work was noticed by his supervisors on the first day he started the job.

[sjdowntown.com/groundwerx](http://sjdowntown.com/groundwerx)

# DOWNTOWN DIMENSION



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a speciality rarely seen outside of Shanghai that is more difficult to make, but more delicious than a standard dumpling.

The menu features pork, beef, pork & shrimp, and a vegetarian SJB made up of tofu, spinach, carrot, and Shitake mushroom.

There is a good selection of beer, wine and sake on the menu as well. The restaurant is open 7 days a week from 4 to 10 p.m.

**Scratch Cookery will stay put on Fountain Alley:**

Scratch Cookery has long been known for its food truck serving Nashville Hot Chicken that is a favorite of foodies who often take to social media to find out where they will be next. They no longer need to search far and wide for the distinctive black and white truck, because Scratch

has opened a brick and mortar restaurant in the former Tangerine Hookah Bar space on Fountain Alley.

The Scratch food truck has always been a fixture outside of breweries and night markets since their menu tends to go well with a nice glass of cold beer. Owner **Khanh Vu** wisely applied for a beer and wine license at his new restaurant so patrons can enjoy all their favorite taste sensations on site.

Scratch Cookery is open Thursday through Sunday from 11:30 a.m. until 8 p.m.

## From the Archives

**10 years ago** — SJDA partnered with Metro to launch "Live & Local," a campaign promoting [liveandlocalsj.com](http://liveandlocalsj.com), a website where venues, local musicians and music lovers connect to learn who's playing where on any given night of the week.

**15 years ago** — Trader Joe's in Market Center held its grand opening, presenting Hawaiian leis to the first 500 shoppers to enter the store on June 29, 2007. The third TJs in San Jose, the Coleman Avenue store is distinguished by its colorful mural of familiar San Jose scenes.

**20 years ago** - Monopoly in the Park opens in Discovery Meadow next to the Children's Discover Museum. Touted as "the world's largest and only permanent outdoor version of the popular board game," the opening got downtown San Jose featured in Fortune Magazine.



Scratch on Fountain Alley