DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE STREET LIFE PLAN
This Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan aspires to many goals:

- Improves the public realm downtown by developing projects and cultivating activity in targeted areas while increasing energy between the downtown districts already working;
- Recommends provocative and inspiring projects that attract new funding and partnership opportunities;
- Creates a “menu” of diverse streetscape elements and larger site-specific projects that can be implemented over 1 – 10 years;
- Makes Downtown friendlier for people of all ages with a pragmatic vision to help downtown property owners, businesses and residents flourish.

The Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) commissioned this Street Life Plan to guide its continued investments in bettering the pedestrian experience Downtown. By improving the spaces we walk upon each day, we also promote safety, beauty and sustainability in our downtown.

Proposals within this plan combine “district-wide” projects and “special projects” unique to downtown focus areas. All projects aim at creating a higher quality of life that contributes to downtown’s long-term vitality and livability.

Plus, more inviting places for us to walk through and enjoy our center city.

Please join us, and our partners at the City of San Jose, in supporting this effort and achieving the spirited goals of the Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan.

Sincerely,

Scott Knies
San Jose Downtown Association Executive Director
January 9, 2014

Dear Fellow San Jose Downtowners,

The Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) has contributed significantly to the cleanliness, friendliness and beauty of downtown San Jose since it started in 2008. When the district was overwhelmingly renewed by 91 percent of property owners for 2013, we wanted to take PBID services to the next level. This Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan is an early result of that objective.

I believe you will find this document is much more than just a plan. It presents a vision of creating memorable public spaces that enhances the identity of downtown and the experience of those within it.

The plan presents individual streetscape and beautification elements that can be implemented throughout downtown alongside more involved projects addressing specific streets and districts. Many of these projects provide exciting opportunities for partnership with both publicly owned and privately owned properties to create an overall network of inviting public spaces.

I see this as potentially the key benefit of the Street Life Plan: by communicating compelling projects, goals and proposals we inspire a vision that develops synergistic partnership. Indeed, this document is a road map to greatly assist us (and our partners) in fundraising and implementation for both short and long term projects to improve downtown's public realm.

On behalf of the PBID Board of Directors, the San Jose Downtown Association staff and our community partners, we look forward to making our streets come to life by building the inspired projects called for in this plan.

Sincerely,

Chuck Hamme's
President
Downtown Sar. Jose Property Owners Association
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1. INTRODUCTION

PROJECT STATEMENT

The Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan creates a vision and road map for a next generation of place-making and open space improvements in the city center based on stakeholder input and a long term needs assessment. The Plan harnesses the ideas of the San Jose Downtown Property Based Improvement District (PBID) constituents and stakeholders to articulate a guiding vision and frame initiatives, and define a list of projects through goals, guidelines and conceptual drawings that will significantly improve the flow, usability, sustainability, and beauty of the District. The Plan is a 10 year document that will be used by the PBID to direct both long-term large scale projects and short-term site specific projects, as well as inform planning and urban design projects by others.

The Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan has been developed through a process that received input from the diverse mix of the Downtown community, including the PBID Beautification Committee that represents the City, property owners, commercial property managers and tenants, and institutions within the District. The process also included collaboration with City agencies and San Jose SPUR to review the Street Life Plan projects in relation to other ongoing improvement enterprises within the District.

The PBID encompasses the most important area of San Jose for the many people attending conventions and staying in hotels within the District. The area is also home to a mix of residents, businesses large and small, San Jose State University, museums, galleries, and many other points of interest for locals and visitors alike. The public realm also has a profound effect on all those who use the District—whether they live here, work here, or are just visiting. The Street Life Plan articulates a vision that the public space of Downtown San Jose should encourage and facilitate vibrant social interaction, promote pedestrian life, be safe, be a place of beauty, and be a source of pride for the community. The Plan embraces the streets and open space as a place that should evolve over time to become more rich and interesting, accruing texture and character through art, landscaping, and spaces for city life.
Process

Over eight months, CMG worked with the PBID to establish a vision for Downtown, identify initiatives for working toward that vision, and invent a diverse array of projects to catalyze and exemplify improvements for Street Life in San Jose.

At the outset this process included a San Jose Downtown Association PBID Retreat to discuss issues and strategies, as well as a group “downtown walk” to look for examples and opportunities to inform the Concept phase of design work. SJDA constituents annotated “mental maps” of the District, noting their use and impressions of the Downtown area.

Following review of ongoing City initiatives and plans, several more site walks, meetings with the City of San Jose departments staff and SPUR San Jose, and meetings with the PBID, CMG developed the chapters of this document and proposals for dozens of public realm improvements projects, vetted and approved by the PBID.
ABOUT THE PBID

The Downtown San Jose Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) was formed in 2007 to produce a cleaner, friendlier and more appealing Downtown (a map of the District and the locations of previous beautification projects are attached). Renewed in 2012, the PBID looks to expand upon the success of its initial beautification efforts. Examples of such improvements include large-scale art installations, interactive and decorative lighting, directional way-finding signs, street furniture, murals, planters, median enhancements and other forms of capital and aesthetic improvements in the District’s public spaces. All PBID enhancements are aimed at improving the overall aesthetic of Downtown and increasing business and property values.

The Downtown San Jose District is defined by a diversity of residents, cultural offerings and businesses, generally bounded by the 87 and 280 freeways, 4th Street and Devine and includes the Diridon neighborhood and City Hall. It bustles with world-class museums, dining, convention space, hotels, and educational institutions. It includes a variety of housing from senior housing and below market rate housing to luxury condominiums and live/work lofts. The PBID is perhaps the most dynamic District in San Jose and offers the amenities and resources to be the urban center of Silicon Valley.

The PBID was created as part of a comprehensive and thoughtful effort by people who live and work in the District. The San Jose Downtown Association, a nonprofit organization, manages the District. The SJDA employs staff and sub-contractors to implement programs. The SJDA’s staff works with a board of directors, multiple committees and contractors to advance services.

For more information visit the website, www.sjdowntown.com.
GUIDING GOALS OF THE DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE STREET LIFE PLAN

Based on its mission to improve quality of life in the District, the PBID established three fundamental goals to guide the development and implementation of urban design, streetscape and open space improvements in the city center. The goals are based on the unique qualities of Downtown San Jose and the missions of the PBID and SJDA:

A. **Improve connectivity**
   Enhance connectivity for all modes of transportation—especially walking and biking—to create linkages between city center landmarks, open space and neighborhoods.

B. **Enhance character and identity**
   Enhance the unique character of each of the neighborhoods, and the overall District to strengthen individual and collective identity.

C. **Promote street life**
   Make improvements to the city center’s public realm that raise the quality of pedestrian experience, and afford a variety of places for both passage and lingering, increase social interaction, and foster community pride.
IMPLEMENTATION

The Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan is intended to be a tool for realizing a wide variety of public improvement projects across the District. The projects outlined in this document range from temporary installations to long-term, large scale urban design changes. Each project description defines the intent of the project, design concepts for developing the project to the next level, and the role of the PBID in advancing the project: lead, initiate and assist, or advocate. The plan allows for flexibility in implementing the projects to respond to opportunities for partnerships, funding, and coordination with other related improvement projects.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan is the product of a visioning process for improving the District’s public realm. This document suggests what it is that makes a good public realm and what it is that makes Downtown San Jose special; based on these, it proposes long-term initiatives to inspire and coordinate improvement projects to be led by the City, developers, and others, in addition to initiatives led by the PBID.

- Use this book to understand the PBID’s goals and values for improving Downtown San Jose. These goals and values can inform all future downtown projects.
  
  As a statement of the PBID’s goals for improving public space and strategies for achieving those goals, the Downtown San Jose Street Life Plan can steer the organization’s efforts to serve its community into the future, well beyond the specific projects included in this book.

- Use this book to learn about specific projects, endorsed by the Downtown San Jose PBID.
  
  As a manual for cultivating better street life, this document proposes dozens of discrete projects that support a broad vision for the future of Downtown San Jose, and demonstrates how these projects accrue for impact over time. In that way, it comprises a “menu” of meaningful steps toward improving Downtown; steps that can be taken in any order, by lots of potential leaders.