Establish a Guiding Framework.

The following Initiatives are based on the existing assets—the unique qualities of Downtown San Jose identified in the previous chapter—that contribute to a high quality public realm. The Initiatives are a series of topical, over-arching strategies that are based on protection and enhancement of the city’s assets.

The Initiatives provide a point of reference and guiding framework for the specific projects listed in this plan, and are intended to inform future improvements proposed to Downtown San Jose’s streets and open space. The theme of each Initiative encompasses a variety of possible project opportunities geared to specific public realm improvement goals. As a guiding framework based on what is specific to Downtown San Jose, the Initiatives should remain relevant for years to come.
Promote Downtown

Engage the public realm to express and celebrate the city’s identity as a geographic and cultural hub of Silicon Valley.

As the Bay Area comes to be more commonly understood as a single metropolis, Downtown San Jose’s qualities that are specific to its location in the Bay Area and its history of development if protected can ensure its unique identity in the region and allow it to compete with other Bay edge cities. Its special qualities must be appreciated and thoughtfully cultivated to be the creative urban center of Silicon Valley. Capitalize on opportunities in the public realm to express and celebrate the city’s identity, its material resources, and cultural activity, including existing and potential relationships with local arts organizations and Silicon Valley.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

- City of San Jose
- Santa Clara County
- Valley Transportation Authority
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- San Jose Valley Water District
- SPUR San Jose
- Team San Jose
- San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Silicon Valley Creates
- San Jose State University
- San Jose Museum of Art
- St. James Association
- Park Conservancies
- Tech Museum of Innovation
- Children’s Discovery Museum
CHAPTER 3  Downtown Initiatives  Promote Downtown
Contributing features and positive aspects of each neighborhood should be identified, sustained and complimented with PBID projects. PBID projects and city planning initiatives should endeavor to provide compatible improvements and policy that work with special attention to bike and pedestrian access to tie the neighborhoods together, while maintaining each neighborhood’s unique quality. Build neighborhood activity and character by capitalizing on local assets to create new gathering spaces and amenities to draw people into the public realm and enhance pedestrian connectivity.

Both on-going horticultural and art programs have the potential to be curated and coordinated to be unique to their immediate neighborhood as well as contribute to the District’s identity.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

- City of San Jose
- SPUR San Jose
- San Jose State University
- Communiversity
- San Jose Veggielution
- Village Harvest

**Intensify Neighborhoods**

*Enhance the specific cultural and material qualities of each neighborhood.*
CHAPTER 3 Downtown Initiatives

Intensify Neighborhoods
Connect the Anchors

Establish appealing, integrated pedestrian routes to cohere the District’s energy centers and destinations, and activate the streets between them.

Taking advantage of the existing landmarks in Downtown San Jose, establish a network of appealing, integrated pedestrian routes to join together the District’s energy centers and destinations and activate the streets between them. Opportunities to develop threshold moments at various entries to Downtown should be considered to contribute to the visitors’ perceptions of Downtown as a District.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

- Valley Transit Authority
- City of San Jose Department of Transportation
- Pedicabs
- SPUR San Jose
- Team San Jose
- Zero1
- Theaters, Arts Organizations
- San Jose Sharks
- Diridon Station
CHAPTER 3  Downtown Initiatives  Connect the Anchors
Grow the Garden City

**Promote and enhance the District’s garden identity with projects that capitalize on the city’s climate, horticultural resources, and open spaces.**

Promote and enhance the District’s garden identity with projects that capitalize on the city’s climate, horticultural resources, and open spaces. Key resources to capitalize on include the urban forest, downtown open space, parks and plazas, as well as the Downtown Association’s horticultural program and manager. Increased street planting can be both in planters and in-ground; opportunities to for stormwater management—detention and treatment of paving run-off—should be considered in evaluation of in-ground planting areas.

Some of Downtown San Jose’s streets would benefit from more trees. Others suffer from the impact of existing trees that are in poor health or whose roots have damaged the surrounding sidewalk. By building and maintaining the District’s urban forest—by planting new trees and removing or replacing existing trees that are problematic—the PBID enhances the character and comfort of its public realm.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

- Our City Forest
- San Jose Beautiful
- San Jose Downtown Residents Association
- Kawahara Nursery
- Devil Mountain Nursery
CHAPTER 3 Downtown Initiatives Grow the Garden City
Enhance Parks and Open Space

Protect, enhance, and revitalize the existing public parks and plazas.

While open space in San Jose’s Downtown is ample, the parks appear underutilized and even, in parts, neglected. Opportunities to make new connections between open spaces and enhance existing should be capitalized on. The Downtown Association and PBID support initiatives to evaluate the existing parks for opportunities to add program and amenities to reinforce the open space value and identities as public destinations.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

- San Jose Parks Foundation
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
Enhance Parks and Open Space

CHAPTER 3  Downtown Initiatives  Enhance Parks and Open Space  45
Leverage new public realm projects to advance principles and practices of sustainability.

Working toward a more sustainable environment is a constant process, and that effort is inspiring to witness. A good public realm shows commitment to sustainability by residents, businesses, and organizations responsible for maintaining a neighborhood. It also demonstrates potential for new strategies of sustainable place making. Promoting sustainability means observing a commitment to use minimal resources in all Street Life Plan projects, and expressing that value in planning, construction, and maintenance practices.

The sustainability of a project involves the economic, social, and environmental systems necessary to implement and maintain it with minimal resources. The PBID endorses sustainability as a value and guiding principle for all public realm projects it pursues.

Sustainability strategies for PBID projects include:

• RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES like solar and wind.
• SUSTAINABLE BUILDING MATERIALS that are reused, reusable, or produced with low impact on the environment.
• STORMWATER TECHNIQUES that improve water quality and lessen impact on the city’s storm infrastructure.
• SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE PRACTICES that minimize energy use, waste, and emissions.
• WATER EFFICIENT PLANT SPECIES suited to the District’s environment.

Possible organizations for partnerships with and to support include:

• City of San Jose Environmental Services Department
• Santa Clara Valley Water District
• San Jose Water Company
• Republic Services
Promote Sustainability