

# Addressing homelessness

## Can long- and short-term solutions keep pace with rising numbers?

San Jose's homeless population has increased by 42 percent to 6,172, according to January's homeless census, mandated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and taken every two years. For every individual placed into housing, three more enter into homelessness.

"The reasons for homelessness are many and varied," said **Joe Simitjan**, president of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. "The high cost and shortage of housing are making a bad problem worse."

The impact of the burgeoning homeless population is especially felt in the downtown area, where individuals squat, sleep unsheltered and often wind up when their encampments are shut down.

"We must double down on homelessness prevention and, in turn, alleviate the human misery and greater public cost following an eviction notice," said San Jose Mayor **Sam Liccardo**.

Groundwerx, funded by Downtown property owners through the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) wants to be a better partner in helping the homeless, said **Chloe Verrey**, operations manager.

"We feel we can be a bigger help," Verrey said.

For five years, Groundwerx has partnered with Downtown Streets Team to place homeless individuals into a job-training program. The current staff at Groundwerx includes nine formerly homeless Downtown Streets Team alumni. In the past two years, 61 people volunteered for Groundwerx and moved into paid positions with other employers.

At San Jose Downtown Association's April public meeting, businesses, residents and property owners received updates on efforts to mitigate homelessness from Councilmember **Raul Peralez**, City of San Jose Housing Director **Jacky Morales-Ferrand** and **Consuelo Hernandez** from the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing.



*Rick Cerventes is one of many Streets Team alumni at Groundwerx.*

### Long-term solutions:

"Homelessness is my number one priority," said Peralez. "We have solutions for almost 100 percent of the homeless on the streets, but the problem is far from being solved."

Voters approved \$950 million in Measure A (November 2016) funding for affordable housing, of which \$234 million has been invested in housing for homeless. The county has invested another \$82 million, and the city has tapped \$48 million in state supportive housing grants. The Plaza Hotel was the first housing facility to open in the downtown core, offering shelter for 49 temporary residents at 96 S. Almaden Ave, operated by Abode Services.

Three permanent supportive housing developments are coming on line near downtown:

- ◆ Renascent Place, 2450 Senter Road, by Charities Housing, 162 apartments for up to 300 people, under construction;
- ◆ Second Street Studios (at Keyes), by Destination: Home, 134 units for the chronically homeless, just opened;

- ◆ Villas on the Park, 278 N. Second St (at Devine) by PATH, 83 units for 73 full-time and 10 interim residents, under construction.

"We need more of these units and we need to get them in the pipeline," Peralez said.

Long-term, San Jose needs dollars (funding), dirt (places to build) and determination (community support), Morales-Ferrand said. "We need people to start saying 'Yes'" to supportive housing in their neighborhoods and to new bond measures, Morales-Ferrand added. Downtown is doing its part, she added.

The next affordable housing projects downtown are at Balbach Street and Almaden Boulevard, 84 units, by Satellite Affordable Housing Associates, and San Pedro Studios, 135 units, by First Community Housing, but building has not yet begun at either location. In January, the City Council also committed to Roosevelt area and Page Street affordable housing developments outside of downtown.

### Temporary solutions:

While long-term solutions to create housing and prevent homelessness are critical to addressing homelessness, they take years to realize. In the meantime, short-term housing and services are necessary to address the immediate problem.

"Long-term housing takes a while," said Morales-Ferrand. "We also have to address what's happening today."

Morales-Ferrand also prefers shifting some resources from long-term housing solutions to investing in homeless prevention funds.

"Keeping people in their homes is a lot less expensive than being homeless," she said.

Some of the stop-gap measures suggested include:

- ◆ Tiny homes: Two San Jose sites have been designated as locations for 40 one-room houses meant to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing. Tiny homes are being constructed for Mabury Road near Coyote Creek and I-680 at Highway 101.

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# Groundwerx innovates to meet challenges

Property owners continue to strongly support the programs of the Property-Based Improvement District, according to results of a survey conducted this spring.

Efforts by the Groundwerx clean team and downtown beautification gained over 90 percent approval, tree maintenance garnered an 87 percent approval rating, and enhanced security services (SEU) jumped eight points to 80 percent approval.

"I'm pleased to see that satisfaction with the SEU program has increased, especially after working with the PBID staff to recruit and retain officers," said San Jose Police Department Capt. **David Santos**.

By recruiting more officers, enhanced security downtown has become a fully staffed and functioning program, said **Chloe Verrey**, operations manager. "The officers have a consistent presence and have grown relationships with residents, businesses and property owners," she said.

Ambassador services maintained a similar approval rating to past years, property owners said.

However, property owners rated their satisfaction with the overall condition of downtown at its lowest levels since Groundwerx enhancement services began 12 years ago.

"With more people downtown in general, we have more challenges," explained Verrey. "Our strong ratings in cleanliness and enhanced security match what our property owners view as top priorities. Unfor-

tunately, an increased homeless population, overall public safety and the maintenance of parks — which are also important to our members — are not in our control."

Groundwerx stays in close contact with homeless individuals and works directly with PATH, downtown's homeless service provider. Verrey will share survey results with city police, parks, planning and housing departments, as well as Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing.

"Like any urban center, downtown has safety concerns, especially around quality of life issues," Santos said. He advises people fearing

their safety or the safety of others to call 9-1-1 and asks people with general safety concerns to reach out to SJPD to have a crime prevention specialist to talk to individuals or their staff.

Meanwhile, Groundwerx continues to look for innovative ways to improve its programs. The introduction of all-terrain litter vacuums (ATLVs) and the new Groundwerx app are intensifying Groundwerx's ability to clean and respond to messes more quickly, Verrey said, adding, "We're doing more with the same number of hours."

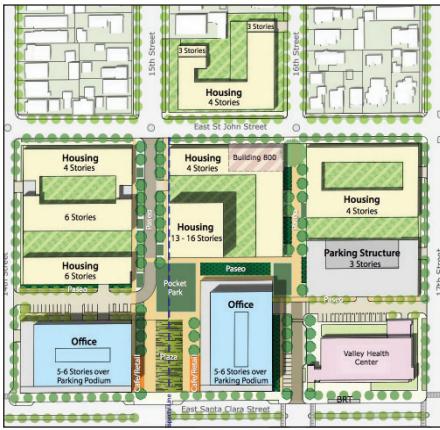
The Groundwerx Everywhere app is available on iPhones and Android.

## Groundwerx / PBID survey of commercial property, business and resident owners

Survey conducted March-April	2007	2011	2015	2017	2018	2019
Respondents	42	189	153	115	150	144
Improved overall cleanliness	46%	82%	76%	71%	72%	70%
Improved safety	34%	49%	45%	39%	51%	46%
Satisfaction with overall condition of downtown	78%	94%	89%	85%	84%	79%
Approve of clean team	n/a	87%	93%	94%	92%	90%
Approve of ambassadors	n/a	74%	77%	76%	75%	72%
Approve of beautification projects	n/a	77%	92%	89%	91%	91%
Approve of tree maintenance	n/a	71%	71%	79%	86%	87%
Approve of enhanced security program	n/a	n/a	76%	75%	72%	80%

Note: PBID services first implemented Jan. 28, 2008

## Downtown News



County plans housing, retail and offices for old hospital site.

**New plans for old hospital site:** Santa Clara County released a final draft of its plan for 12 acres of county land bordered by 14th, 17th, St. John and East Santa Clara streets, one mile from the downtown core.

The mixed-uses to be built around the new Valley Health Center on the former San Jose Hospital site include 550-800 units of housing in six buildings off St. John Street, 320,000-360,000 square feet of office in taller buildings fronting East Santa Clara Street, up to 11,300 square feet of retail, a parking structure and paseos as well as a plaza between the buildings.

Housing includes affordable housing solutions and services on the ground floors, and is meant to include a range of affordable income levels. Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara Housing Authority would occupy the offices. Retail could include a café and grocery store. The site would be developed in three phases over five to 20 years, starting off with an office building and housing on the western side along 14th Street.

### New owners:

◆ The 111 Market Square office towers, formerly Community Towers, at 111 W. St. John and 111 N. Market streets, have been purchased by an affiliate of Rubicon Point Partners.

Combined, the towers built in 1965 have 324,000 square feet of space. The previous owners – Swift Real Estate Partners in 2014 and Ridge Capital Partners/TPG Equity REIT in 2016 – both invested in modernizing the look of the buildings. MODULUS Architects of San Jose helped bring the towers from Class B to Class A status in 2019 by applying back-lit decorative glass cladding.

Swift paid \$40 million in 2014 and the latest owners paid \$64.8 million in 2016. The latest sale was for \$141 million. Tenants include Crewmrs Barber Shop, Orange Theory Fitness, Kerio Technologies, BCA Architects, Virtual PBX Telecommunications and a number of law firms.

◆ Trianon Theatre has a new owner, Sand Hill Property Co., which paid \$5.2 million for the 1923 building.

New Beginnings Community Church of Redwood City intends to move into the building later this year and serve as a second campus for its activities.

The Trianon Theatre website does not have any musical bookings listed beyond this month. Also known as Le Petit Trianon, named after the Grand Trianon and Petit Trianon on the grounds of Versailles in France, the building was originally a house of worship for Christian Assembly.

◆ Urban Catalyst has found a second downtown site for Opportunity Zone redevelopment and partnership with Urban Community's **Gary Dillabough**. The Bo Town seafood restaurant property at 409 S. Second St. will be developed into a high-rise use. Urban Community also has control of the Valley Title development site across the street.

**Richard Berg** and **Case Swenson** are also involved in the investment.

Urban Community and Urban Catalyst are also involved in a project on South First Street next to the Bank of Italy building. Dillabough and Urban Community are now involved in 20 deals totaling an investment of more than \$300 million in downtown San Jose.

## Business News

**M still M:** M now stands for Mumbai Local restaurant and lounge at 98 S. Second St., formerly M Asian Fusion. Serving dishes from the streets of Indian's largest city, Mumbai Local also hosts DJ and Bollywood parties.

**Ashwini K** is owner. Check facebook.com/MLounge-SanJose.

## Homeless

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◆ **Navigation centers:** Navigation centers provide temporary housing and a safe solution for newly homeless or those who may be disrupted by an encampment closure. They serve those who need permanent housing but are fearful of accessing traditional shelter and services. They move people indoors. San Francisco has led the way nationally developing navigation centers, and recently approved its seventh center in the past four years.

◆ **Safe parking centers:** Roosevelt Community Center is the latest city-owned property in San Jose where homeless who live in their vehicles can park safely overnight. Safe parking areas are open from 7 p.m. to 10 a.m. and offer water restrooms and trash disposal. In San Jose, churches, libraries and community centers have offered safe parking since Liccardo allocated \$3 million since March 2018 for various strategies to end homelessness.

◆ **Overnight Warming Locations:** OWLs give the homeless places to stay warm and dry when temperatures, rain and wind become inclement. Four city-owned sites can take up to 120 people – Alum Rock Library (families), Tully Library, Southside Senior Center and Roosevelt Community Center.

◆ **Temporary & Incidental Shelter Program:** Existing places of assembly can register with the Housing Department and offer temporary shelter on-site.

◆ **Dignity on Wheels:** A program of the nonprofit Project We Hope, Dignity on Wheels provides shower and laundry service to individuals experiencing homelessness at several locations per week.

"Solutions are right here in front of us - we just need to mobilize the collective will and resources," said **Jennifer Loving**, CEO of Destination: Home and chair of the Santa Clara County Housing Authority. "Bottom line: homelessness is solvable."

## SJDA Events



**Airfield Supply Co's Music in the Park presented by Metro** opens with two Grammy Award winners and closes with two up-and-coming artists:

- ◆ June 21 – **The Delfonics** (Soul / R&B)
- ◆ July 19 – **Ozomatli** (Latin rock / Hip-Hop)
- ◆ Aug. 1 – **Cuco** (Pop)
- ◆ Aug. 23 – **J Boog** (Reggae)

Shows begin at 5:30 p.m. at Plaza de Cesar Chavez. Tickets are \$15 in advance for general admission, \$35 for a VIP experience, \$20 and \$40, respectively day of the show and available at sjdowntown.com.

This is Music in the Park's 30th year.

**The Delfonics:** Love songs and oldies from these Philly soul pioneers, headed by William "Poogie" Hart, including classics "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)," which won the Grammy for Best R&B Performance, and "La La Means I Love You."

**Also produced by SJDA this summer:**



## San Jose Downtown Foundation

### Downtown Doors refresh downtown walkways:

The look of Downtown San Jose has been refreshed with the artwork of 20 San Jose-area high school students who competed for a canvas in the public realm as part of Downtown Doors, the signature program of the San Jose Downtown Foundation.

In its 15th year, student artwork has been digitized, transferred to vinyl coating and affixed to downtown's service doors and utility boxes 292 times. Downtown Doors occupies 110 sites located mostly on busy pedestrian routes through the downtown core.

Students from 22 schools vied for selection to 2019 Downtown Doors. Of the record 206 art works submitted, 20 were selected from students at 13 schools.

"Downtown Doors is as popular as ever," said **Ramona Snyder**, president of the San Jose Downtown Foundation board. "It is always interesting to see what is on the minds of today's high school students."

**Program sponsors:** Baker's Floor & Surface; **Bill Graham** Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund; Catered Tool; City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs; Comerica Charitable Foundation; **Ernest and Irene Pestana** Charitable Foundation; Kimley-Horn; KQED; Newmark Knight Frank; the Offices of Councilmembers **Dev Davis, Johnny Khamis, Lan Diep, Magdalena Carrasco, Pam**



Each Downtown Door artist has a story to tell in 2019.

**Foley, Raul Peralez, Maya Esparza, Sylvia Arenas** and **Sergio Jimenez**; Orchard Commercial; Republic Services and SVCcreates.

Stipends for the artists and teachers were supported by Adobe, **Annabel Mangold**, Catered Tool, **Juan Borrelli, Manny Fernandez**, Roy's Station Coffee & Tea and San Jose Museum of Art.

**Site hosts for 2019 art work:** City of San Jose, 33 South Third Street Apartments; Digital Realty; Hilton San Jose; Hyatt Place San Jose/Downtown; San Jose Marriott and The Studio Climbing.



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## From the Archives

**10 years ago – May 2009** – The first-time Dine Downtown restaurant week involved 27 restaurants who saw business increase by 15 to 200 percent. The event started with a City Bites promotion during which thousands of downtown workers spilled out of their offices to try bite-sized samples from dozens of participating restaurants.

**15 years ago – May 2004** – Guadalupe Parkway (Highway 87) opened as an unobstructed freeway between Interstates 880 and 280, completing a surrounding of the downtown core with freeways.

**20 years ago – May 1999** – **Frank Taylor**, the architect of modern downtown San Jose, retired after 20 years as executive director of the Redevelopment Agency.

**25 years ago – May 1994** – Businesses tried to find a "catchy handle" for the historic business district along the Transit Mall between San Fernando and Santa Clara streets. Contenders included "El Centro," "Century Center" and "Old Town," finally deciding on "Historic District."

**30 years ago – June 1989** – SJDA Board President **Chuck Reed** kept businesses up to date on how SJDA had used their assessments, which were mailed for the first time. Besides starting Music in the Park and hosting the Raise the Roof and Great Taste events that attracted 250,000 people, SJDA started the Mother's Day Treasure Hunt and jewelry store promotion and successfully advocated for a delay increasing downtown parking rates, Reed reported.

## Next SJDA Meeting

**Mayor tops June 14 agenda:** SJDA's next public board meeting will be held June 14 from 8-9:30 a.m. at San Jose Fire Museum, 201 N. Market St. Mayor **Sam Liccardo** will speak regarding his priorities for downtown San Jose and the rest of his term in office, and Deputy City Manager **Jim Ortbal** will provide an update on Diridon Station. RSVP at sjdarsvp@sjdowntown.com.

## At the Convention Center

June 3-7 -- Apple Worldwide Developers Conference (6,000) developer.apple.com/wwdc19  
June 11-13 -- Velocity + Software Architecture (5,250) oreilly.com/conferences/velocity-software-architecture  
June 15-16 -- Dance Academy USA (4,800) danceacademyusa.com  
June 25-27 -- Sensors 2019 (3,000) sensorsexpo.com  
June 30 -- WEKFEST Summer 2019 (7,000) wekfest-usa.com/events/wekfest-san-jose-2019

## DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

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