

# Long road to recovery

With so much still up in the air, many downtown businesses are resigned to doing what's under their control and operating on a week-to-week basis.

That summarizes the comments made at a series of virtual district meetings of business representatives from the Historic, SoFA, San Pedro Square and Little Italy districts held in May and hosted by San Jose Downtown Association.

"It's like a car race," said **Bree Von Faith**, SJDA Managing Director. "Everybody knows there will be a race, but they have to wait for the green light just to start their engines."

When is the key question, but how is also on the minds of every business owner.

On May 25, SJDA estimated only 18 percent of

downtown's 1900 businesses are open at some level with local shelter-in-place orders still in effect. Santa Clara County businesses lament they were among the first forced to close and will be among the last to re-open fully. While other counties throughout the state allow businesses to begin operations, Santa Clara County continues to be more restrictive than protocols established by the state.

Meanwhile, retailers such as Muji, the stores of Moment at San Pedro Square (Source Zero has been open as an essential business), and Diaz



Artist **J Duh** posts an inspirational message while **Paper Moon Coffee Co.** renovates.

Menswear are gearing up for Stage 2 interaction with customers shopping for curbside pickup only.

By mid-May, several downtown restaurants re-opened for take-out service, including Original Joe's, San Pedro Square Market, Olla Cocina, Farmers' Union, Old Spaghetti Factory, Old Wagon Saloon, Sushi

Confidential and Scott's Seafood in their new location at 200 S. First St.

An *Al Fresco* (Italian for "dining in open air") program broached by Mayor **Sam Liccardo** and

Councilmember **Dev Davis** on May 7 has restaurants also wondering where they might be serving meals once dine-in service is re-established. The *al fresco* idea would allow temporary use of streets, parking lots, recreation spaces and adjacent parcels not just for restaurants, but to help businesses that can perform their services outdoors, such as fitness classes.

"The *Al Fresco* program is a new, temporary way to allow businesses to operate outdoors on private property and the public right of way in order to resume in-person dining while maintaining social distancing protocols for the safety of employees and patrons," said **Nate LeBlanc**, SJDA business development manager. "The business community

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# Good score for PBID despite thorny outlook

Despite having an understandably pessimistic view of downtown's current economic state, center city property owners responding to a survey in March and April continued to strongly support the programs of the Property-Based Improvement District. (PBID).

"I'm happy with the overall PBID survey results," said **Doug Bartl**, director of real estate and facilities for Oracle and PBID president. "It's great to see that our residents and owners appreciate the work Groundwerx teams provide, especially during this pandemic."

Seventy-nine percent of 163 survey respondents rated downtown's overall condition as fair, good or excellent, the same score as 2019.

On the other hand, 45 percent of respondents thought that the economic climate downtown was either slightly worse or much worse than last year.

"Despite a not-so-rosy outlook about the future, they still approve of PBID services across the board," said **Chloe Shipp**, PBID operations



**Doug Bartl**

manager.

Completing the survey by April 24, survey takers rated:

- ◆ 90 percent approval to the clean teams;
- ◆ 71 percent approval to ambassadors;

- ◆ 85 percent approval to PBID street life beautification efforts;
  - ◆ 82 percent favoritism to tree-pruning services; and
  - ◆ 74 percent approval to Secondary Enforcement Units provided by the city's police department.
- Satisfaction levels regarding overall clean and safe impressions plummeted with respondents saying

downtown is not as clean in 2020 as in 2019 (from 70 percent to 48 percent) and not as safe (from 46 percent to 25 percent).

Though the responses in these two categories dropped, respondents did not say that overall clean and safe were worse than the prior two years. Instead, respondents clicked on the middle-ground "no change" choice more than ever, boosting "no change" scores from 8 percent to 30 percent vs. the prior year in the overall cleaning category and 17 percent to 32 percent "no change" in the safety category.

Respondents' top priorities remain:

- ◆ Homelessness services (88 percent);
- ◆ Cleanliness (82 percent); and
- ◆ Security (70 percent).

"We will asterisk this survey as being administered in the midst of the pandemic," Bartl said. "We realize we have a big role in helping people feel comfortable returning to a clean and safe downtown. We are up to the task."

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

Survey conducted March-April	2007	2011	2015	2018	2019	2020
Respondents	42	189	153	150	144	163
Improved overall cleanliness	46%	82%	76%	72%	70%	48%
Improved safety	34%	49%	45%	51%	46%	25%
Satisfaction with overall condition of downtown	78%	94%	89%	84%	79%	79%
Approve of clean team	n/a	87%	93%	92%	90%	90%
Approve of ambassadors	n/a	74%	77%	75%	72%	71%
Approve of beautification projects	n/a	77%	92%	91%	91%	85%
Approve of tree maintenance	n/a	71%	71%	86%	87%	82%
Approve of enhanced security program	n/a	n/a	76%	72%	80%	74%

Note: PBID services first implemented Jan. 28, 2008

# Essential Farmers' Market opens June 5

Farmers' Markets are considered essential during the COVID-19 crisis. Beginning June 5, SJDA will open its San Pedro Square market each Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. along San Pedro Street between Santa Clara and St. John streets.

Opening one month later than usual due to the pandemic, extra precautions will be taken to keep customers and vendors safe. The market will be limited to agricultural products only; operate with social distancing measures; and booths will be separated with multiple hand-washing stations.

Artisan booths will not be added to the market until further notice.



Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association (PCFMA) will recruit up to 20 farmers. For June, expect to find plenty of vitamin-rich leafy greens, broccoli and cauliflower, potatoes and fruits ranging from apricots and cherries to strawberries.

SJDA originally started the downtown Farmers Market in 1993, when the market was first located

in the parking lot at First and San Fernando streets. This is the tenth year that Kaiser Permanente has teamed with SJDA and PCFMA to serve as presenting sponsor of the market, educating attendees on healthful and "green" living that allows each individual to thrive.

Admission is free. Parking in the Market-San Pedro Garage is also free for the time being. More info is at PCFMA.org and sjdowntown.com

The market will continue each week through Dec. 18. Follow the Downtown Farmers' Market on Twitter (@SJ\_Downtown) and Facebook (/sjdowntown and /DowntownFarmersMarket).

## Changes at the market

- + Booths spaced 10 feet apart whenever possible
- + Handwashing stations or hand sanitizer available
- + Customer access to stalls restricted
- + Booths have designated area for customers to wait
- + Farmers bag all items
- + Farmers wear masks and gloves if handling money

## How you can help

- + Wash your hands before you get to the market
- + Wear a mask at all times
- + Always practice social distancing - especially in line
- + Minimize the size of your group
- + Know what you want before it's your turn
- + Buy pre-bagged items when possible
- + Shop quickly to limit crowding and socializing
- + Pay with a card, small bills or exact change



## Long road

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is eager to return to work, but safety must be at the forefront of every interaction."

Restaurateurs facing reductions of tables inside their eateries are generally agreeable to operating *al fresco*, but they also know plenty of details remain to be sorted out, such as off-premise alcohol service.

"This will work if we all stick together and we're allowed to work with restaurants to serve drinks with the meals," said **Jim Mitchell**, manager of Mac's Club on Post Street.

In Little Italy, businesses have to co-exist with residents, and parking spaces are crucial to both. A barrier separating seating from parking and a through-way might be the best solution. "But would we have to pay for that?" questioned **Joshua Melander**, president of Little Italy San Jose.

Others are applying some creativity and shifting their business models. Elise Restaurant introduced Eating Simplified: the customer makes an order in the early afternoon and the meal is delivered at dinnertime -- and is serving 80-100 dinners daily. Voyager raised money through GoFundMe.com to keep employees working and to donate coffee to front-line and healthcare workers. Nomikai will likely change its "share" menu to individual dishes when it returns, said owner **Kathy Tran**.

Businesses are concerned about how the demand

downtown will return with office employees working from home and the convention center, SAP Center and theaters shutdown. San Jose State University will do distance learning for the upcoming fall semester.

With galleries closed and special events canceled, arts groups are taking their activities virtual. Some 7,000 people tuned into the multi-channel SoFA Music Festival, which quickly morphed into SoFA Saturdays, a weekly online music series featuring SoFA businesses and local and regional bands.

Other entrepreneurs, such as Tony Caters, which runs the café at The Tech Interactive, and Back A Yard have pivoted their operations to provide meals for first-responders and homeless, respectively, for pay.

SJDA is also phasing in more activities as the pandemic curve flattens and restrictions are eased:

- ◆ Opening the Farmers' Market on June 5 (see Front Page)
- ◆ Preparing a "Downtown is Open" recovery marketing campaign
- ◆ Trimming trees and planting flowers
- ◆ Installing new Downtown Doors and "Hella Gardens" artworks
- ◆ Expanding Groundwex hours with on duty cleaning until 8:30 p.m. seven days a week.
- ◆ Increasing small business technical assistance -- sorely needed to understand the ever-changing Covid-19 orders for re-opening and business operations.

Key environmental mitigations include assuring that tree removal does not occur during nesting season, protecting the **McKinley, Kennedy and Naglee** monuments, using low-emissions construction equipment, and careful assessment of the grounds when digging in the event of archaeological discovery. The EIR also specifies that all loud music events must end by 10 p.m.

Reconstruction will be done in one phase and should take between 12 and 24 months, according to the report.

To review the report, go to [sanjoseca.gov](http://sanjoseca.gov) and search "active EIRs."

**BART reaches milestone:** BART will finally reach a major milestone June 13 when Berryessa Station opens for passengers, completing an 11-mile segment from Warm Springs in Fremont through Milpitas into San Jose.

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District formed in 1957 and the initial system opened between MacArthur Station in Oakland and downtown Fremont in 1972. Extending the line into San Jose has been in the planning for more than 50 years.

The opening of the extension from Warm Springs to Milpitas and Berryessa stations has been delayed for almost three years. Delays in the planning and start of work on the next extension -- six miles through downtown San Jose to Santa Clara -- have already occurred while engineers sort out how a single-bore tunnel will be built. Time line for service to the end of the line in Santa Clara is estimated for 2030 and cost more than \$6 billion.

## Business News

**Great, Scott's:** Scott's Seafood opened for take-out and delivery on May 20 from their new location at 200 S.

First St. on Paseo de San Antonio. Scott's will be ready when Santa Clara County restaurants are allowed to eat outdoors because their patio on the paseo is already set. The longtime fresh seafood restaurant moved as part of the new CityView Plaza redevelopment plans. Scott's is open seven days a week, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Check [scottsseafoods.com](http://scottsseafoods.com).

**Paper Plane soars:** Paper Plane is one of 10 nominees for Tales 2020 Spirited Awards for Best American Bar Team, a first-ever nomination for a downtown San Jose-based bar in the 14 years of the competition. Paper Plane will also compete for top spot in the Best American High-Volume Cocktail Bar category.

"Mixtress" **Mary Palac** of Paper Plane has made Top 10 for American Bartender of the Year. Palac is grateful for the honor, but humbly suggests she's not even the best bartender at Paper Plane.

Paper Plane is also part of the #TriForceToGo program, which includes Thursday-Saturday pick-up service of Miniboss + SuperGood Kitchen, Original Gravity and Paper Plane orders, picked up at SuperGood Kitchen



Scott's re-opens in a new location.

# Construction continues

In May, restrictions on construction projects were among the first to be eased. Work hours, which allow the projects to recover faster, will be expanded an hour on each end, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in an emergency city ordinance to be approved June 2 or June 9. Masks are on, and sharing of tools or ladders is not allowed.

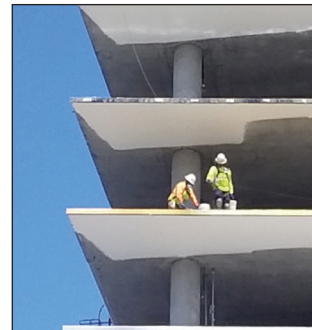
### Back at work:

◆ Adobe's fourth tower -- Adobe is taking advantage of quieter streets to pour concrete for the foundation along San Fernando Street.

◆ Miro by Bayview Development Group -- Two 28-story towers combine for 630 new residences, 15,000 square feet of retail space and 10,000 square feet of offices. Suffolk Construction thinks it can finish by March 2021.

◆ The Grad by AMCAL and SWENSON -- The builders are shooting for completion in time for this fall semester. When finished, The Grad will have 1,039 beds in 260 units and 15,000 square feet of retail.

◆ 200 Park Avenue by Jay Paul Co. -- Still in the beginning excavation process after breaking ground just prior to the pandemic, 200 Park Ave. will grow to more than 800,000 square feet of office with four floors of parking under-



Crews return to work at Miro.

ground plus 19 stories above ground.

◆ Modera, by Mill Creek, 28 M. Almaden Ave., 201 units, where a passageway has formed to San Pedro Street. Workers are putting finishing touches on some units as tenants move into others.

◆ North San Pedro area projects, including 135-unit San Pedro Studios by First Community Housing at Bassett and Terraine streets, pushing toward June 2021 completion; and the five-story San Pedro Square Apartments at 195 W. Julian St., which builder Johnstone Moyer said could be ready by February 2021.

### Not back:

◆ Boston Properties' Platform 16, 440 W. Julian St., off Autumn Parkway across from the Guadalupe River has been halted.

Excavation was under way for this 1.2 million square-foot office project of three different six-story buildings. In a reported call with investors, Boston Properties has stopped work on the buildings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and instead of building speculatively, it now seeks a tenant pre-lease before moving forward.



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## Downtown News

### Jay Paul Co. expands CityView Plaza holdings:

Jay Paul Co. completed another key purchase on the CityView Plaza block by acquiring the Wells Fargo building at 121 S. Market St. on April 23 for \$42 million.

The acquisition means Jay Paul is one step closer to starting its massive project bounded by San Fernando and Market streets, Almaden Boulevard and Park

Avenue to build a 3.4 million square-foot complex with three office towers. Plans call for Jay Paul Co. to raze the existing CityView Plaza plus Wells Fargo building to make way for redevelopment.

The only parcel on the block not owned by Jay Paul is the building at San Fernando and Almaden from which MIX 106.5 FM and K-Bay 94.5 FM broadcast.

Also, Preservation Action Council and the city's Historic Landmarks Commission are recommending that the **Cesar Pelli**-designed, Brutalist-style building at 1170 Park Ave. be preserved. The most recent use of the building was Family Court for Santa Clara County. Designating the building as a historic landmark would make it more difficult for Jay Paul Co. to tear it down.

Jay Paul has made several purchases over the past two years, and has already demolished a building and adjacent parking lot and started construction on a 875,000-square foot, 19-story tower at 200 Park Ave., across the street from CityView Plaza.

The Wells Fargo Bank branch office at the base of the eight-story, 74,000-square-foot, 52-year-old building will move into Jay Paul Co.'s 50 West ground floor at San Fernando and First streets, which was previously occupied by Bank of the West. Bank of the West became the first ground-floor tenant at Centerra Apartments, taking the space at 77 N. Almaden Ave., Suite 30.

Timing of Wells Fargo's branch move has not yet been announced.

**St. James Park takes next step:** The City of San Jose has submitted its draft Environmental Impact Report for redevelopment of St. James Park. The public has until July 6 to respond to the report.

Except for 23 heritage trees, 130 other trees and several historic monuments to be saved, the rest of the park will be new. New physical highlights in the park include a performing arts pavilion where 50 to 300 events per year would take place, including up to 72 large concerts and events, plus café, two picnic groves, two fenced-in dog parks, two large meadows, plaza, playground, fountain and monument walk around the park.

Light rail would continue through the park, but North Second Street through the park would be closed off to private vehicles and buses.



Wells Fargo Bank building officially joins CityView Plaza.

parking underground, more retail space at pedestrian level, more floors of office space and more units of housing."

**25 years ago -- June 1995** -- A project to restore the 1920s Fox (California) Theater was trimmed from the Redevelopment Agency's budget, so RDA put out a Request for Proposal for a private firm to "preserve the building's architecture while creating an economically feasible project for theater, entertainment or retail uses."

**30 years ago -- June 1990** -- With a "hands-on" philosophy of encouraging touch and exploration, the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose opened its purple doors.

## Downtown Facts

**Library celebrates 140th anniversary:** The City of San Jose voted to open a free library on May 1, 1880. The first city library was located in the Murphy Building that stood on the northeast corner of Market and Post streets. Since its closure in March due to coronavirus, San Jose Public Library (SJPL) has continued working virally. As of May 25, the library has registered 252,370 eBooks/eMedia checkouts, issued more than 6,500 eLibrary cards, and has 646,500 library card holders, according to SJPL.

## DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

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