

Time to renew

Downtown property owners will review and sign petitions this month to extend Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) services for another 10 years.

After more than six months of outreach, analysis and revision, a PBID Renewal Steering Committee has created a management plan for the next decade that includes boundary changes, new services and an expansion of the popular Groundwerx services.

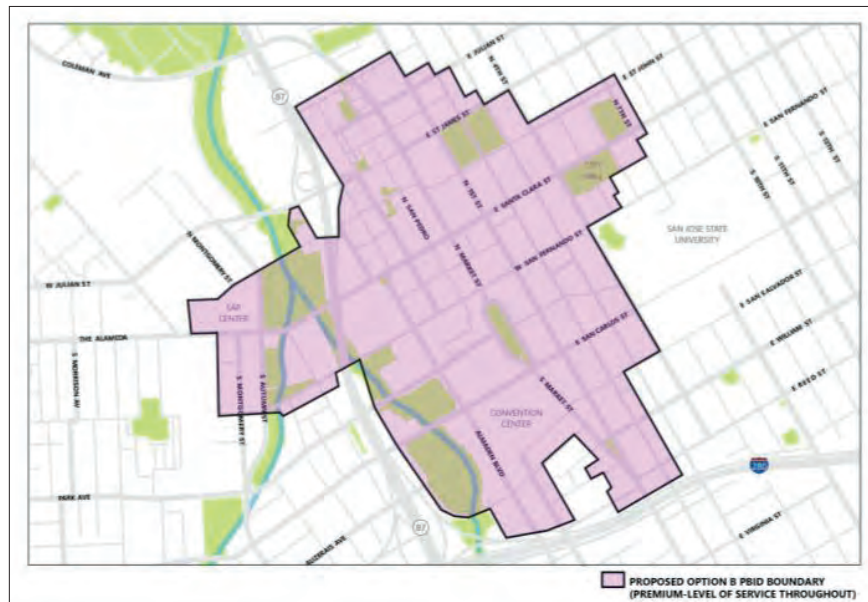
The PBID formed in 2007 for an initial five-year period and was extended for 10 years in 2012.

Downtown property owners are encouraged to attend San Jose Downtown Association's next public meeting Feb. 10 at 8:15 a.m. to hear a detailed presentation on current and proposed PBID services, goals for the renewed district, and participate in a Q&A session. SJDA is under contract to manage PBID's management plan. The meeting will be on Zoom webinar. Register at sjdowntown.com/sjda-public-meeting/ or view live on Facebook.

The PBID is best known for its Groundwerx clean, safe and beautiful services such as trash and debris removal, sidewalk pressure washing, flowering planters and graffiti abatement.

"These services are the PBID's bread and butter, and will continue with the new district," said **Chloe Shipp**, director of public space operations. "With the renewal, Groundwerx will have increased staffing and funding, allowing for greater impact and more capacity to serve downtown."

Instead of having two levels of service delivery – premium and basic – the entire district will provide



PBID boundaries would have premium service throughout, and some additional blocks included.

premium level, meaning increased investment in pressure washing, mechanical cleaning, safety ambassadors and collaboration with downtown homeless service providers.

"We will bolster these services with more staffing," Shipp added. "Communications will be better through our Groundwerx app with an added dispatcher, and we are building more flexibility into the PBID as downtown grows over the next decade."

Business development services will be bolstered to help recruit and retain small businesses, assist in city and county permitting processes and have a strong advocate voice.

Other existing PBID services that will continue include landscaping and tree-trimming; beautification projects such as murals, lighting and art installations; off-duty San Jose Police Dept. officers connecting with business owners and focused on quality-of-life issues; capital projects such as MOMENT stores and dog parks; and operation of the Business Support Center at 16 N. Third St.

More staffing is in the works to help tackle tougher issues, including:

- ◆ A new five-person Social Impact Team that will assist with the unsheltered population downtown,

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CreaTV leads Second Street Renaissance

The long-shuttered Zanotto's/tech shop building on Second street will see new life in a unique joint venture between several like-minded non-profits led by CreaTV San Jose. At present, the space will be shared and/or activated by CreaTV and two additional community media outlets – *San Jose Spotlight* and NPR affiliate Northern California Public Media.

CreaTV's **Chad Johnston** said the Open San Jose joint venture will occupy part of the building. He added that other potential partners and additional collaborations could be announced soon. Street-facing facades on Second and in the "Globe Alley" connecting Second and Third streets will be activated by the stalwart Works Gallery – moving over from the Convention Center offices on Market Street – and Chopsticks Alley, a gallery celebrating southeast Asian culture through art.

Envisioned as a hub where nonprofits, artists, community leaders, and social change-makers can co-work and collaborate, the space is now under construction with a projected completion date of late April/early May.

Open San Jose will activate 18,000 square feet of ground level space plus a 12,000 square foot basement. Johnston says the basement is for low-cost storage and the ground floor will consist of one-third shared office space and two-thirds community space, wherein events for 15 to 150 people can be held for fees on a sliding scale.

"Whether you want to make a 30-second Tik Tok video or livestream a hybrid event, our community spaces are equipped with the technology to make it happen on any budget," he said.

Letter from the President

Bet on Downtown San Jose

Why I am betting on Downtown?

"New Year, New Me" (as they say) and please let me introduce myself as the new SJDA President.

I'm **Gumby** damnit. I've had Heroes Martial Arts since 2009 (come train Brazilian Jiu Jitsu with us!). I have been present in some way or another in downtown for a long time before that and seen a lot of changes over the years. I LOVE San Jose.



Alan "Gumby" Marques

You could define a downtown as a city's commercial, cultural, historical, political and geographic heart (wikipedia). I look at the downtown as the center of dreams. Those dreams range from the top of the buildings and new construction, to our businesses

large and small, to our venues and parks to every individual. Everyone in downtown has a dream.

Not to overstate the obvious, but the last few years have been rough in so many ways. The dream isn't over, however, it's only been delayed. And with a little bit of support and coming together, we will put those dreams back on track.

There is work to be done but I think San Jose is up to the challenge. What can we do? Support San Jose. Right now the small business community could definitely use some help. Support your old favorites. Discover some new favorites. Enjoy what downtown San Jose has to offer now, and your community will have even more to offer in the future.

I firmly believe that the rising tide carries all boats.

2022 is going to be a big year for San Jose. For right now, know that I am PROUD to be from San Jose and am looking forward to working alongside everyone.

Your friendly neighborhood,
Gumby

Signia signing on

Signia by Hilton San Jose will make its debut in late March, about a year after The Fairmont San Jose closed and declared bankruptcy. The property will begin accepting reservations in February.



Signia's new lobby was renovated in 2020.

The former Fairmont first opened in 1987 and possesses all the quality amenities of the Signia by Hilton brand with meeting and event capabilities, and signature culinary experiences. Launched in February 2019, Signia by Hilton features a portfolio of premier hotels in urban and resort destinations offering sophisticated business and leisure travelers an elevated hotel experience.

According to Hilton, each Signia by Hilton property demonstrates an impressive lobby, modern guest rooms, destination bar, signature restaurant, and premium wellness experiences. Each hotel offers meeting and event rooms with world-class design, state-of-the-art technology, and signature food and beverage offerings, all backed by the Hilton name and award-winning Hilton Honors program.

Already an iconic landmark and extensively renovated, Signia by Hilton San Jose is Silicon Valley's largest hotel with 805 rooms and 65,000 square feet of meeting space. The lobby and bar, as well as the main entrance foyer and the guest registration areas have been revamped and upgraded. The renovation also encompasses a complete refresh of the property's outdoor rooftop pool and fitness center. The hotel's North Tower is undergoing a complete bathroom renovation set for completion this year and will be followed by guest room renovations set for completion in early 2023. Also coming soon will be a new Grab & Go, offering guests and locals the

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Renewal *Continued from Front Page*

creating trust and connecting individuals with service providers. This team will respond directly to member concerns, 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.

- ◆ Dedicated painter to tackle graffiti.
- ◆ A research and data analyst to help understand trends that are relevant to business and property owners, and streamline PBID operations.

PBID boundaries would extend slightly in all directions:

East: Extends to both sides of St. John Street between Sixth and Seventh streets, which services Horace Mann School, plus the Grocery Outlet / Lee's Sandwiches center on Santa Clara street.

South: Extends from Reed Street to I-280 in SoFA district and includes Second Street from San Salvador to the freeway.

West: Now includes both sides of San Fernando Street from Highway 87 to Cahill Street.

North: Services would cover the new North San Pedro district from Highway 87 to Devine Street.

Property owners are asked to sign their petitions by March 1. Once a majority of petitions are confirmed, property owners will receive a ballot in April-May to vote on the district.

Signia *Continued from Front Page*

option to get fresh and delicious take-out food.

The hotel has already appointed key leaders to its hotel executive team including **Jimmy Sarfraz**, general manager (formerly at Hilton San Jose); **Catherine Hendricks**, complex director of sales marketing for both Signia by Hilton San Jose and Hilton San Jose; and **Hans Lentz**, executive chef, who has served as a global culinary director for international resorts and convention centers in Hawaii, Dubai, East Africa, Chicago and Miami. Signia by Hilton San Jose is recruiting for several key positions and applicants can visit jobs.hilton.com/ for more information.

Downtown News

Opera San Jose's new director talks San Jose:



Shawna Lucey

With such a wealth of global experiences, *Downtown Dimension* couldn't resist asking **Shawna Lucey**, Opera San Jose's new general director, to assess Opera San Jose, the San Jose arts scene and downtown San Jose as she begins her position.

Her work has taken her across the United States and across the Atlantic Ocean to Spain, Russia and Germany. She received her MFA from a theater Institute in Moscow.

◆ **Opera San Jose:** "I was fortunate enough to direct at Opera San Jose a few years ago and had an absolute blast. The company supported me so much with my vision of what I wanted to create with the show. It was a bright spot in my career because as a stage director, I felt I could do my best work. And the audience was so engaged, so responsive. It was an extremely fond memory. During the shutdown at the beginning of the pandemic, I admired from afar how OSJ created the Heiman Digital Studio and produced consistently great digital operatic works. Truly, OSJ is located at the hub of innovation in our country and the company itself is full of that culture, incubating the next great opera musicians, technicians, and administrators."

◆ **San Jose's arts scene:** "I've been to San Jose a number of times and I'm always struck by how much is happening in the arts scene and how diverse the offerings are. From classical music to gorgeous murals to poetry slams to thousands of people dressed to the nines to go to a Comicon - there's always something happening. And that makes me so excited as the general director of Opera San Jose - to know we are an integral part of that arts scene. I am looking forward to collaborating with the

other local arts organizations and making OSJ's thrilling productions everyone's favorite night out!"

◆ **Downtown San Jose:** "Every time I am there, Downtown San Jose strikes me as so cool. It's so vibrant and diverse. It has a feel similar to Austin (where I went to undergrad) - that there's a lot going on from amazing restaurants to important business profiles to cool cultural happenings. There's always a buzz in the streets when I'm walking downtown and I'm so pleased Opera San Jose is right in the middle of it all at the gorgeous California Theater with our exciting offerings of everything from opera classics like 'Tosca' to 'West Side Story.'"

Note: Opera San Jose presents "Carmen," Feb. 12-27 at the California Theater.

Four Reps for San Jose: San Jose is the only major U.S. City divided into four different Congressional Districts: California's 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th. Downtown finds itself mostly in Congressional District 18, which extends from the Alameda-Santa Clara County line in the north to south of King City in mostly unincorporated land. Incorporated areas include San Jose's Alum Rock and East sides, Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Hollister, Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield and King City.

San Jose International Airport, Berryessa, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Milpitas are now a part of District 17. Willow Glen, Fruitdale and Campbell join Mountain View, Palo Alto and Los Gatos in District 16. Evergreen and Edenvale are part of District 19, which extends to Santa Cruz and down the coast to Paso Robles.

Zoe Lofgren (18), who has been downtown's congressional representative since she was elected to office in 1995, will continue to serve in that capacity as she moves from District 19 to District 18. **Ro Khanna** (17), **Anna Eshoo** (16) and **Jimmy Panetta** (19) round out the remaining San Jose representatives, all of whom are Democrats. New districts take effect with the June 2022 election.

The 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission was required to meet a number of criteria, but did not consider how the maps affect candidates or incumbents.

Business News

Axe-Throwing, Restaurants, and Golf (Oh My!):

Windows cut into the monolithic walls of the former Camera 12 building allow the first glimpse of Paseo, a dining and entertainment project with a projected opening of Christmas 2022.

Retail floors are now fully leased and two new eateries will be announced soon, said **Nick Goddard** of Colliers International.

"One is a high-end farm-to-table restaurant, and the other an all-day casual dining spot offering breakfast, lunch and dinner," he said.

The anchor tenant is Urban Putt, an adult-oriented miniature golf course with a full bar and restaurant on site. Urban Putt is already in San Francisco and Denver, but Goddard points out that each location celebrates the city in which they are located and no two are alike. A custom design for San Jose is in the works, and he predicts one of the structures will resemble the Winchester Mystery House.

Also coming to Paseo is Unofficial Logging, a bar and full-service restaurant centered around the growing sport of axe-throwing. Unofficial Logging started in Bend, Ore. three years ago and has been well-received by customers who say it's a great way to relieve stress. San Jose will be the second location.

Downtowners won't have to wait long to take up this new sport because the Axe-Men Throw House is planning to soft open before the end of March in the former Voodoo Lounge space on Second Street at Santa Clara Street.

Co-owner **Sarah Sed** -- who, with her husband **Matthew Bird**, operates three Axe-Men facilities in the Houston area -- said the sport combines the thrill of doing something a little dangerous with the satisfaction of learning a new skill.

"It has long been a popular timber sport, but is relatively new to the mainstream public," she said. "In Canada, where recreational axe-throwing started about 15 years ago, it's now more popular than bowling."



Axe-throwing

Groundwerx Employee of the Year — Frank Chavez



Frank Chavez

To **Frank Chavez**, Groundwerx is more than a job pan-and-broom cleaning or using the ATLV vacuum sweeper over downtown sidewalks. Expressing his desire to be a solid contributor to the downtown community, Chavez goes the extra mile to lend a helping hand to those who might need it.

"I consider how visitors might judge downtown and want to do my part to ensure they have a good experience," said Chavez, who helped one employee with a broken arm move an A-frame sign at Insomnia Cookies and multiple people across the street during the holidays. "I know that crossing the street can be difficult and dangerous for some," he added.

His supervisors at Groundwerx recognized Chavez' positive attitude and strong work ethic, which quickly earned the respect of co-workers, management and downtown customers, and named him Groundwerx Employee of the Year for 2021.

"What stands out is that Frank always approaches each day with more than just a paycheck in mind," said **Brian DeHart**, operations supervisor. "He genuinely cares about the community he serves."

Chavez credits three of his co-workers for training him on how to meet his day-to-day cleaning goals. Groundwerx managers quickly promoted him into operating the heavier machines half-time. His 2021 included harsh weather in October and December that forced him and his co-workers to emphasize weather safety and being aware of their surroundings, he recalled.

Chavez expressed pride in being a part of the downtown culture. San Jose is his hometown, and he has spent a lot of time downtown -- specifically at Circle A skate shop as a teen-ager, from where he purchased three skateboards over the years. He still regards his skateboard as his "second car" and is happy to now provide Groundwerx services to Circle A and Good Karma owner **Bob Schmelzer**.

He also has his hands full away from work taking care of his 12-month-old daughter, **Ayiana**.

"Frank's positive attitude has been a constant uplift in tough times," said **Chris Kendrick**, program director.

sjdowntown.com/groundwerx

DOWNTOWN DIMENSION



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Neither Goddard nor Sed see a problem with two axe-throwing establishments operating in close proximity. Goddard likens it to two bars with pool tables on the same block. Sed thinks the two will create a competitive environment that will foster an axe-throwing community in downtown San Jose.

Poor House in new location: Rather than operate around a decade of construction in Google's Downtown West development, Poor House Bistro owner **Jay Meduri** moved his family's historic building to a spot in Little Italy



Poor House en route to Little Italy.

between the new Italian Cultural Museum and Henry's Hi-Life restaurant. In true Italian and Cajun styles, the house moved with notable fanfare, complete with marching band and Cajun scrambled eggs breakfast, on Jan. 8. In Little Italy, the name of the restaurant will expand to Famiglia Meduri Poor House Bistro.

Re-opening day has not yet been set, but the former location between Autumn and Montgomery streets still has a patio structure, live music and food prepared from a mobile kitchen. The house was originally built on 11th

Street, and Meduri's parents moved it to Autumn Street in the 1950s. Visit poorhousebistro.com.

From the Archives

10 years ago - February 2012 -- San Jose Redevelopment Agency, along with all other redevelopment agencies across the state, came to an abrupt end on Jan. 24 after 55 years of operations. A successor agency was formed to dispose of assets and wind down the local RDA.

15 years ago - February 2007 -- KALEID Gallery, born out of the popular seasonal Holiday Gallery of Gifts, now provides South Bay artists with a year-round place to exhibit and sell their fine art, limited editions and creative gifts. Originally located on the ground floor of the Fourth Street Garage, KALEID has moved just once -- now at the corner of South First and San Carlos streets. It is still managed by **Brian Eder** and **Cherri Lakey** of Anno Domini.

20 years ago - February 2002 -- New playground equipment (still in use today) was installed in St. James Park.

25 years ago - February 1997 -- Traffic signals along Santa Clara Street benefited from the city's Project Safe Place program, as new signals allowed protected left turns off Santa Clara onto First and Second streets, and protected left turns in all four directions at Market and Santa Clara streets. The signals are still set up the same way today.