

San Jose Downtown Association
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San Jose, CA 95113



sjdowntown.com

408.279.1775

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Council
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

RE: Mayor's March Budget Message Recommendations

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Councilmembers,

The San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA) has represented downtown for 35 years and together with more than 1,800 current businesses and property owner members we strive to increase the vitality of downtown San Jose. Over time, as our population downtown has increased, so has the demand to provide critical programs around public safety and business support, and we need public safety and small business assistance now more than ever.

The community we represent has expressed valid concerns over the safety of residents, workers, and visitors in the downtown core. These concerns existed prior to Covid and have become more apparent and frequent in the past two years. We understand that the current SJPD downtown foot patrol shifts are voluntary for officers and therefore they are difficult to fill consistently. We need a dedicated funding source to support a downtown foot patrol and also to finalize the police department's redistricting of deployment process. A stable and sustainable program dedicated to improving the safety of downtown San Jose is a long term investment strategy for our city's viability.

We also request an additional \$1 million be added to the previously allocated ARPA funds for direct fiscal assistance to small businesses. The existing small business resilience programs helped some businesses survive the pandemic but the impacts of Covid are very much ongoing and many businesses need urgent assistance. Abierto was a great program for our arts organizations and we would like to see a similarly-designed program be implemented in short order to help struggling retail and hospitality businesses. Business owners that have made it this far are financially vulnerable, and we have witnessed several longstanding downtown establishments close their doors recently. We have heard from our members that they have reduced hours or limited their days of operation to accommodate for the lack of customers caused by the ongoing public health crisis. We recommend the city allocate a small business grant program designed to help businesses re-establish their pre-covid operating hours using the Abierto model of quick access to sizable grants with few reporting requirements.

We thank the City Council for the continuous support and leadership.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Knies', is written in a cursive style.

Scott Knies
Executive Director