

## THE SILICON VALLEY REAL ESTATE, BREAKFAST DOWNTOWN SAN JOSÉ REAL ESTATE UPDATE



*Pictured from left to right: Sean Cottle, Alex Stettinski, Laura Riparbelli, Nathan Donato-Weinstein*

Hoge Fenton held our Silicon Valley Real Estate Breakfast on June 13, 2023, in Downtown San José at the Silicon Valley Capital Club. The breakfast was hosted by shareholder Sean Cottle and moderated by attorney Laura Riparbelli, board member of the [San José Downtown Association](#) (SJDA).

"I greatly admire the investment you have made for years in building community through your convenings on issues and topics of interest to the business community. The Hoge Fenton Real Estate Breakfast is a true asset to our community, and I am so grateful to be part of it."

- Nathan Donato-Weinstein, Downtown Manager, City of San José, Office of Economic Development

We were delighted to welcome Nathan Donato-Weinstein, the [City of San José's](#) new downtown manager, and Alex Stettinski, CEO of the San José Downtown Association (SJDA), as they met with VIPs from our local Real Estate and Business communities and discussed the current economic shape and viability of Downtown San José.

Donato-Weinstein was appointed as San José's new Downtown San José Manager last April to focus on downtown's economic development. He has built his career in downtown San José and is committed to transforming the area into a more vibrant city center.

Alex Stettinski is the CEO of the San José Downtown Association. He has an extensive background in the business improvement district, economic development, and tourism/destination marketing industries and served in several leadership roles for the past 20 years.

Donato-Weinstein discussed how the COVID-19 shelter mandates have decreased customers and sales for many longtime downtown businesses. As fewer people came into the office, restaurants, and pubs struggled, and many residents lost their employment, contributing to an increase in homelessness.

But there has been progress. Sales tax revenue, which plummeted to 38.5% in 2021, has improved by more than 60%. But it is still down by 14.7% compared to pre-pandemic levels.<sup>1</sup> New small businesses like Con Azucar, Mama Kin, Hula Bar and Kitchen, Nirvana Soul, Wheel Bite, Mommy's Banh Mi, and Birre by Pour Decisions have filled the vacant retail spaces.

The SJDA has also put a concerted effort into hosting more downtown community events to encourage foot traffic such as the [Levitt Pavilion San Jose](#) free concert series in St. James Park and the [SoFA Block Party](#) designed to unite neighbors and communities, support local businesses, and to help create vibrant spaces. Stettinski discussed how [Urban Vibrancy Institute](#) (UVI) will work with various city and community groups to highlight various San José neighborhoods to drive awareness/sales to businesses and the community through a "block party." Explore upcoming downtown events [here](#).

Stettinski discussed the SJDA's 2023 focus for the rest of 2023, including carrying out their three-year plan, which includes increasing the vibrancy of downtown San José with their annual plant refresh, the Highway 87 Illuminations Project, Hart's Dog Park, showcasing new art murals in Almaden Exercise Loop and San Pedro Square, and installing art murals and coordinating pop-up businesses in vacant retail spaces. Learn more about the SJDA initiatives [here](#).

Donato-Weinstein and Stettinski also discussed their focus on keeping the city center cleaner and safer, providing more small business support, and re-calibrating internal structures.

They discussed the impact that [Groundwerx](#) has had on downtown. Groundwerx Safety Ambassadors and Cleaning Crews have taken 7,828 service calls, removed 495,300 of debris, and abated 26,719 graffiti tags. Groundwerx Safety Ambassadors are easy to spot in bright green shirts. They help people with directions, escort people to their cars, and report unusual events. Groundwerx Cleaning Crews help keep downtown clean with sidewalk sweeping, anti-graffiti efforts, pressure washing, and more. If you see a mess that needs immediate attention, call Groundwerx at 408-287-1520 or download the Groundwerx app to submit a service call. Cleaning Crews and Ambassadors work daily from 6 am – 8:30 pm. On Friday and Saturday, safety ambassador hours were extended to 10 pm.

Stettinski informed our professionals about the following business development services that the SJDA is offering to support small businesses:

- Permit assistance
- Location assistance
- Small business advocacy
- Development tracking
- Grants and access to capital
- EDA grant for business resilience
- Knight parklet grant

Learn more [here](#).

Stettinski also discussed VTA's Business Recovery Program for the BART project downtown. VTA released a blog on June 14, 2023, that outlines its plans to assist small businesses disrupted by construction during the buildout of the BART line through downtown San José. Heavy construction is scheduled to begin in a year. Learn more [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sanjosespotlight.com/meet-san-joses-new-downtown-manager/>

## Related Attorneys

- Sean A. Cottle
- Laura C. Riparbelli