Minutes of the Meeting
Board of Directors
San Jose Downtown Association

January 15, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the San Jose Downtown Association, a non-profit California corporation, was held in at SJDA's Business Support Center, San Jose.

The following SJDA directors were in attendance: Blair Carson, Gabriela Chavez-Lopez, Elizabeth Chien-Hale, Dan Georgatos, Adolfo Gomez, Eric Nielsen, Jill Perez, Brendan Rawson, Sammy Reyes, Emily Ruvalcaba, Chris Shay, Alexandra Stein, Corinda Wong and Tomoyo Yoshinaga

The following SJDA directors were not in attendance: Tommy Aguilar, Dap Ashaolu, Indu Chakravarthy, Sean Curtis, Maia Harris, Anjee Helstrup-Alvarez, David Mulvehill, Joshua Melander, Chris Neale, Christina Ramos, Laura Riparbelli, Sanjeev Sethi, Leah Toeniskoetter and Shawn Whelan.

Also present were SJDA CEO Brian Kurtz and staff members Julie Carlson, Corinna Dixon, Nate LeBlanc and Lauren Nuttell.

Ted McMahon, Dan Phan, Julie Garcia and Josh Buroughs were welcomed as PBID Board members in attendance.

The meeting was presided over by Chair Gomez with Dixon as notetaker.

Chair Gomez called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Chair Gomez opened the floor to Public Comments. None were made.

Nov. 13, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes were presented as approved by Exec. Committee Dec. 4.

Chair's Report – Chair Gomez

a. Introduction of 2026 Executive Committee and Officers

The 2026 Executive Committee and Slate of Officers, as included in today's meeting packet, was reviewed.

Chair - Adolfo Gomez
Vice Chair - Chris Shay
Treasurer - Jill Perez
Secretary - Anjee Helstrup-Alvarez
Immediate Past Chair - Emily Ruvalcaba – as appointed by the Chair
Executive Committee Members
- David Mulvehill
- Brendan Rawson
- Sanjeev Sethi
- Shawn Whalen
- Blair Carson
- Tomoyo Yoshinaga
- Eric Nielsen
- One (1) Executive Committee position remains available to be appointed by the Chair

Alexandra Stein and Sammy Reyes were welcomed as new SJDA Board members in attendance.

b. Introduction of CEO, Brian Kurtz

Gomez introduced Brian Kurtz as the CEO of SJDA. Kurtz' first day in office was Jan. 8, 2026.

Gomez and Kurtz thanked the Search Committee and welcomed both SJDA and PBID members to this morning's joint Board meeting.

c. 2026 Board Meeting Schedule

The SJDA 2026 Board Schedule (Jan. – July), as agreed upon at the Dec. 4 Exec. Committee meeting, and as included in today's meeting packet, was reviewed.

At the Dec. 4 Exec. Committee meeting, and at the recommendation of the Steering Committee, the motion to include PBID Board members at future SJDA Exec. Committee meetings, effective Jan. 8, 2026, was adopted.

Organizational Transition Committee Update – Committee Co-Chairs Helstrup-Alvarez and Burroughs

The SJDA / PBID Steering Committee is comprised of Helstrup-Alvarez, Burroughs, Gomez, Shay, Phan, and Kurtz.

Burroughs provided an overview of the "SJDA Organizational Options Report 10.29.25", as compiled by the consulting agency Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.).
P.U.M.A. presented two options: a "consolidated" model with a single board; and a "holding company" model of a larger organizational board, plus boards for each of the entities (SJDA, PBID, Foundation, DCDC). The report included a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) summary for both options. P.U.M.A. recommends the consolidated model which "offers the simplest, most efficient option". "While as a larger transition it will require more up-front work, ongoing management will be less complex and more cost-efficient than the holding company model."

No action is required at today's meeting. The SJDA / PBID Steering Committee will compile further information (legal cost quotes; transition timeline; major decision to address; effectiveness for downtown, etc.). At future Exec. Committee meetings, members will further review the findings of the report and the recommendations of the SJDA / PBID Steering Committee.

It is anticipated that a new organizational structure will launch effective FY 2026-27 (July 1, 2026). In the meantime, the SJDA and PBID boards will "practice" combined meetings on a regular basis to share activities and information.

Kurtz and Board Chairs (Gomez, Freise) will work together to align future meeting schedules and agendas to meet the requirements of both current boards.

- SJDA Executive Committee + PBID Board of Directors to meet monthly
- SJDA Board of Directors + PBID Board of Directors to meet bi-monthly

CEO's Report – CEO Kurtz

Kurtz thanked members for welcoming him to the downtown community.

As outlined in his Jan. 14 email to the Boards, his charge over the next several months is towards a long-term strategy for the organization and downtown while intentionally identifying near-term and incremental adjustments that move SJDA closer to goals and prepare for an active year ahead.

a. Introduction & Program Updates

Kurtz encouraged board members to register for the Jan., 16 business webinar “Preparing Your Business for the Big Game” hosted by SJDA and the City of San Jose. Panelists from the SJDA, Team San José, and the City of San José's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs will discuss ways businesses can make the most of Super Bowl weekend in San José. The webinar recording will be available.

Downtown Ice: Skate Under the Palms has been extended through Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 8 thanks to funding provided by PG&E, the Mayor’s office and the San Jose Sports Authority https://www.skateunderthepalms.com/

In preparation for Super Bowl activations, walking tours with Groundwerx operations and City department officials have been and will be conducted to identify maintenance and safety items to be address by either entity.

On Jan. 12 a safety meeting with SJPD was held. Additional officers will be available downtown leading up to Feb. 8 Super Bowl 2026 and March 16 NVIDIA GTC 2026.

SJPD Captain Miri has been elevated to the position of Assistant Chief of Police (effective 01/26/26). As such, Captain Nqui Scherry has been assigned to the downtown Bureau of Field Operations, Central Division.

A celebration in appreciation of Gumby's service to the San Jose Downtown Association as Interim CEO will be held on Jan. 22 at Mezcal. Thank you to Gomez / Mezcal, Mulvehill / Nuvo Hospitality, Shay / Sharks, SJDA and PBID for sponsoring the event.

Kurtz acknowledge 2026 (August) as the 40th anniversary of the SJDA and would like to leverage this to draw more attention to the impact of SJDA and a means of fundraising for the important work. He expressed his respect for those leaders (Knies, Stettinski, Marques), staff and board members that have come before him to support the organization.

Kurtz provided an overview of his personal and professional background (Pittsburgh, PA and Tulsa, OK) and expressed that he was immediately drawn to the people, place and community of San Jose.

Kurtz expressed that as managers of places and spaces in the public realm, the work done by SJDA to connect stakeholders and bridge gaps, can, and should, be a conduit to effective changes in the community.

Kurtz acknowledged various challenges that will impact this transition, such as: the larger economy; imminent large events (Super Bowl, FIFA, etc); SJDA internal operations; getting to know members of the community and City personnel.

Over the coming weeks and months, Kurtz plans to listen, learn, observe and understand the culture and operations that exist both internally and externally to identify priorities and goals to align with a measurable matrix for success. Partnerships, policies, contracts and budgets need to be reviewed. The Strategic Framework 2023-2026 will be reviewed and an updated formal plan will, eventually, be presented to the Board.

Over the next several weeks and months Kurtz intends to meet with each board member to gain a better understanding of opportunities, challenges and priorities.

Kurtz thanked Marques, Gomez, the Executive Committee, the SJDA staff and Dixon for transition guidance and support.

Arts, Sports, Advocacy Committee update – Committee Co-Chairs Shay and Helstrup-Alvarez

a. VTA / BART

Shay thanked Tomo Yoshinaga, Gumby Marques, and the community, for advocacy efforts against VTA's proposal to cut & cover.

b. Stitching Districts overview

1.0 Focused on Santa Clara St. enhancements - placemaking will be ongoing
2.0 Focusing on Sharks Way (San Pedro to SAP) - wayfinding and artwork is underway
3.0 Will focus on building connections with the SoFA district

c. Support Downtown Housing

Shay thanked Marques for serving as advocacy intermediary between the City, County, and Supervisor Betty Duong on the unhoused initiative issue.

On Jan. 27 SJDA will advocate for two critical City Council housing-related agenda items:
Item 8.2 – Expansion of the Downtown Residential Incentive Program to include commercial-to-residential conversions
Item 8.3 – Extension of the Multifamily Housing Incentive Program
SJDA will submit a letter urging support of these items and the elimination of arbitrary timeline and unit caps.

Members are encouraged to email / call Councilmembers before the meeting, and to register to speak at City Council on Jan. 27.

d. SJ26 Visitor Center / "The Locker Room" update

The Visitors Center, aka "The Locker Room", as formed by John Poch, will serve as a full-service center to provide a centralized hub for information and enhance the visitor experience.

Located at 93 E. San Carlos Street on the corner of 3rd Street, The Locker Room is open Monday – Friday: 10am – 5 pm and Saturday-Sunday: 12pm – 5 pm, and is actively recruiting volunteers staff as ambassadors. Grand opening celebration date is pending.

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held on Jan. 23.

The Mayor's office is coordinating "Tackle San Jose" downtown clean-up days: Jan. 17 @ San Fernando; Jan. 24 @ Julian; Jan. 31 @ St. Leos; Feb. 7 Downtown; Feb. 14 @ Woz Way. bit.ly/tacklesj

Chair Gomez moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 9:34 a.m.

Next Meetings:

SJDA Executive Committee, inclusive of PBID Board			
	Thurs., February 5	8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Business Support Center
SJDA Executive Committee, inclusive of PBID Board			
	Thurs., March 5	8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Business Support Center
SJDA Board Meeting, inclusive of PBID Board			
	Thurs., March 12	8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.	Business Support Center