



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Councilmember  
Raul Peralez

**SUBJECT:** URBAN STREET PARK PILOT

**DATE:** September 28, 2017

**Approved:**

**Date:**

9/28/17

## RECOMMENDATION

I nominate for priority setting on October 17, 2017 the creation of an urban street park pilot for no more than 12 months at:

1. San Pedro Street between West Santa Clara Street and West St. John Street, and,
2. Post Street between South First Street and Lightson Alley.

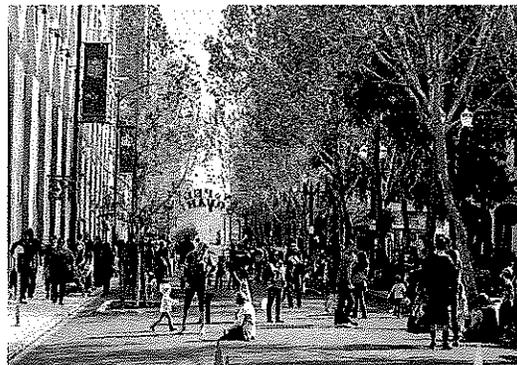
The pilot should include community outreach prior to implementation in partnership with the affected businesses, San José Downtown Association, City Staff and the Council District 3 office.

## BACKGROUND

During my Sister Cities Summit Trip to Dublin, Ireland last year, I admired how many of Dublin's public streets were reconfigured to allow events and natural pedestrian activation. While this example was seen in a foreign country, the concept of opening streets to pedestrians is not a foreign idea to San José. A well known example would be the closing of South Seventh Street, South Ninth Street and East San Carlos Street through San José State University in 1994. Since the closure of those streets, we have seen campus cohesion and increased activation.

### San Pedro Square

During Super Bowl 50 festivities in 2016, San Pedro Street was activated for a week into a walkable public space. Managed by the San José Downtown Association (SJDA), the activation included the closure of San Pedro Street to vehicular traffic, opening the street to pedestrians and placement of amenities such as family friendly activities and micro-retail. The design of the street closure did not

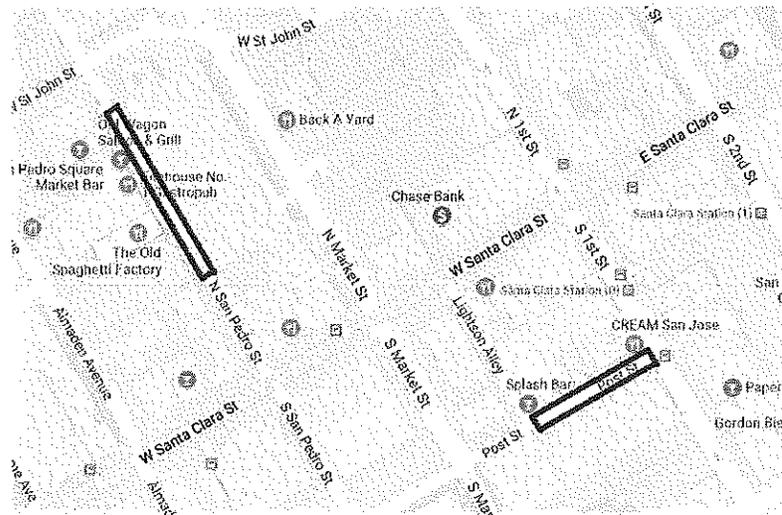


impede on entry and exit points into the Market Street garage and maintained smooth traffic flow in and out of the garage. The activation was received very favorably by residents, businesses and visitors.

### Post Street

We have also seen similar activations along Post Street in the Historic District during large events such as San José Jazz Summer Festival. Flanked by popular businesses such as 55 South, CREAM and SplashSJ, there are opportunities to see a strong pedestrian presence that will enliven the corridor further. Also, with recent activations in the adjacent Fountain Alley by the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) Street Life team, making this space available to the public could produce equally exciting programming.

### ANALYSIS



The city will soon be considering to suspend 50% of applicable park impact in-lieu fees from four prospective high rise developments that will equate to \$15,012,100. While this is a loss of substantial park impact funds, this pilot will be a creative use that could offset that impact. This will also be in alignment with the developing Greenprint goal of having

a park available within a 10 minute walk or one-third of a mile from every resident.

There are also new business developments slated for the future that will benefit from this pilot. One beneficiary will be the anticipated construction of San Pedro Squared, a public private partnership project between SJDA, the PBID, Knight Foundation and City that will bring micro-retail spaces along the ground floor of the Market Street Parking Structure. Increasing pedestrian foot traffic through this vibrant commercial corridor will bring strong economic benefits to our Downtown.

This pilot will also present an opportunity to further the city's current efforts on Easy Urbanism and Pink Zones. We can explore how to make it easier to draw in exciting events and activations in these spaces whether it be reducing steps in our permitting process or making our fees more cost-efficient for our community. The city has a demand to see more food truck parks, pop up micro-retail and other creative uses in our public spaces, we should cut down the red tape to free up the supply.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this pilot is to explore new and different ways on how we can transform our public right-of-ways to be a more accessible amenity for the community. I have strongly held the belief that Downtown San José is a place for everyone, and if we are to make that a reality - places are what we have to create first.