

**For Immediate Release**

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## **San José Councilmember Raul Peralez Expands Downtown Economic Recovery Task Force In Response to Continuing Impacts from COVID-19**

*In response to the ongoing economic impacts of COVID-19, San José Councilmember Raul Peralez is re-convening local business and community leaders to participate in the Greater Downtown San José Economic Recovery Task Force. Phase II includes participants from additional industries: Faith Based & Community Spaces, Hotels & Hospitality, Large Employers & Property Owners, and Performance & Entertainment Venues.*

San José, CA - Councilmember Raul Peralez, who represents Downtown San José District 3, has re-convened and expanded the Greater Downtown San José Economic Recovery Task Force last week. The Task Force includes local business owners and community organizations to collaboratively address the concerns of our diminished local economy in the Greater Downtown San José area. This Task Force will explore policy strategies and solutions for the long-term economic recovery of San José's urban core from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gabrielle Antolovich of the Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center, shared, "Thank you to Councilmember Raul Peralez for having the foresight to organize the Task Force and the overarching discussions about how we can all manage businesses and community spaces during COVID-19. We want to keep our people safe, yet find ways for them to continue to connect online, in the outdoors and eventually inside again."

The first phase of the Task Force met this past summer and produced a comprehensive package of policy recommendations that was unanimously accepted by the San José City Council. Those recommendations included direction for legislative advocacy, changes to parking and street programs, and proposals to increase opportunities for retailers. Many of the recommendations have been or are in progress of being implemented. "I found working with Councilmember Peralez and the Task Force to be very rewarding. I think many small businesses feel underrepresented by the government and the Task Force helped us get our voices heard. I am excited and honored to continue with Phase II," shares Takahiro Kitamura of State of Grace Tattoo.

The cross-sector task force will include 16 individuals elected by eight industry-based committees consisting of over 50 stakeholders and four at-large members. The second phase of the task force began last week with the following industries and their elected representatives in participation:

Arts & Special Events

Brendan Rawson, *San José Jazz*  
Wisa Uemura, *San José Taiko*

Faith Based & Community Spaces

Gabrielle Antovich, *Billy de Frank Center*  
Phil Mastercola, *Grace Baptist Church*

Food & Beverage

Adriana Amador, *Enoteca La Storia*  
Fernanda Carreira, *Adega/Adega Pastelaria*

General Retail & Services

April Gee, *Petite Galleria*  
Chris Patterson-Simmons, *Neu2U/Urban Kiosk*

Hotels & Hospitality

Enrique Fernandez, *Unite Here*  
Jimmy Sarfraz, *Hilton San José*

Large Employers & Property Owners

Jeff Arrillaga, *Urban Community*  
Jay Ross, *Hopkins & Carley*

Performance & Entertainment Venues

Dalia Rawson, *New Ballet*  
Scott Guggenheim, *3Below Theaters*

Personal Care

Alan “Gumby” Marques, *Heroes Martial Arts*  
Takahiro Kitamura, *State of Grace Tattoo*

At-Large

Laura Chmielewski, *Team San José*  
Jonathan Perez, *Office of State Senator Jim Beall*  
Stacie Shih, *Office of Assemblymember Ash Kalra*  
Blage Zelalich, *City of San José*

“I am pleased to see this expanded group of industry experts and operators, who are battling day in and out to survive, come together to elevate their voices to decision makers like myself.” says Councilmember Peralez.

The next task force meeting for Phase II will be on Wednesday September 30, 2020 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. The meeting will be virtually hosted via Zoom, open to the public and all details regarding the meeting and task force can be found at [www.sjd3.com/dtsjrecovery](http://www.sjd3.com/dtsjrecovery).

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**Councilmember Raul Peralez** is a lifelong resident of San José and is currently serving as the Councilmember for San José Council District 3, encompassing the City’s downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods. Raul was a former San José police officer prior to being elected into public office. He has been a leader on several key issues facing the City tackling public safety needs, the housing crisis, and transportation improvements, as well as helped spur sustainable and equitable economic development, all while maintaining quality city services for residents. Raul represents the City at the the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)