



Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Jen Baker

SUBJECT: Economic Development
Activities Semi-Annual
Status Report

DATE: August 12, 2026

Approved

Date:

8/13/26

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the semi-annual status report on recent announcements, significant accomplishments, and upcoming events related to economic development.

BACKGROUND

The City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA) drives San José's vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous city, fostering economic vitality, cultural expression, and workforce opportunity through four core services: 1) Cultural Affairs: Arts, Sports, and Entertainment; 2) Economic Growth and Business Development, 3) Workforce and Talent Development, and 4) Strategic Support.

Historically, OEDCA has provided the Community and Economic Development Committee with regular verbal status reports highlighting notable OEDCA activities conducted throughout the fiscal year. These status reports are now provided on a semi-annual cadence. Starting in Fiscal Year 2026-2027, the verbal status reports will be accompanied by a memorandum.

ANALYSIS

This semi-annual status report provides a summary of notable activities and program implementation conducted by OEDCA staff from February through July 2026.

Cultural Affairs

2026 Public Art Activations

OCA commissioned acclaimed artists to enliven downtown with interactive art and technology projects complementing the broader SJ26 activations. In March, *Free Throw* was installed at Arena Green West in collaboration with San José State University Professor Craig Hobbs and his interdisciplinary students, using projection mapping to animate the eastern façade of SAP Center. Another significant OCA and San José State University collaboration, led by Professor Esteban Garcia Bravo, resulted in the commissioning of four dynamic, illuminated public artworks displayed at various downtown locations from January through July, engaging millions of downtown visitors.

From May through August, Brooke Einbender of Mindbender Studios brought *Gaiascope* to the Circle of Palms, inviting visitors into an immersive, interactive, kaleidoscopic art experience. At City Hall, *Hometown Heroes*, an interdisciplinary exhibition featuring approximately 55 local artists, brightened public spaces with sports-themed murals and photography while reimagining the City Hall Exhibition Program. Together, OCA's 2026 public art program and special event coordination and production spotlighted San José's distinctive cultural identity, showcased the breadth of interdisciplinary talent within the local creative workforce, and strengthened the role of arts and culture in the city.

SJ26 Activation - March Madness

Downtown San José welcomed the 2026 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship West Regional, hosted by San José State University at SAP Center on March 26 and 28. The two-day event brought the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight rounds of the tournament to downtown, with OEDCA supporting coordination among City departments and stakeholders on event readiness, transportation, public realm conditions, business engagement, and the overall visitor experience.

Hosting the championship placed San José on the national sports stage and brought thousands of basketball fans downtown, generating increased activity for nearby restaurants, bars, hotels, and other businesses. The tournament further demonstrated San José's capacity to successfully host high-profile, nationally televised sporting events at SAP Center while leveraging major events to support the broader downtown economy and enhance San José's visibility as a destination.

SJ26 Activation – FIFA World Cup Watch Parties

San José played a significant role in welcoming residents and visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with nearly one million visits to downtown during the tournament period and extensive watch party programming across all 10 City Council districts. OEDCA played a central coordinating role in positioning downtown and the City's

neighborhood business districts to capitalize on the six World Cup matches hosted in the region, working with partners to create opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in World Cup activities while generating economic activity for local businesses.

Downtown Entertainment Zones, including South First Street, were activated for 54 days, including 39 days supporting FIFA World Cup watch parties at San Pedro Square. Collectively, these efforts extended the economic and community impact of the FIFA World Cup matches beyond the stadium, driving visitation and activity to downtown and neighborhood restaurants, bars, hotels, retailers, and other businesses while showcasing San José as a welcoming destination for major international events.

CityDance San José World Stage Series

The OCA Special Events Team expanded CityDance San José through a six-event World Stage Series in June, designed to welcome visitors and activate downtown during FIFA World Cup. The series incorporated Mexico match watch parties and, through partnerships with San José Jazz and Filco Events, showcased local artists and vendors, including artists affiliated with the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute. Events activated Parque de los Pobladores and the South First Area, adding locally driven arts and cultural programming to the City's broader World Cup visitor experience.

Website and Email Launch for Film Permit Program

In June, OEDCA launched a dedicated website and email address for the Film Permit Program to improve access to information and assistance for film permit applicants. Since its launch, the program has experienced a 75% increase in film permits compared with the 2021–2025 period, while 98% of surveyed applicants reported a positive experience with the program.

Economic and Business Development

Corporate and Industry Engagement

The Business Development team's corporate outreach officers prioritized engagement in, and hosting of industry events intended to broaden exposure of the City of San José as a business investment opportunity, highlight the competitiveness of the region's supply chain and talent base, and to answer questions about growth opportunities and supporting services and infrastructure. The following events highlight the Business Development team's corporate and industry engagement activities during the reporting period:

- *SPIE Advanced Lithography, San José McEnery Convention Center (February)* - This well-established event serves as a key convening opportunity for the semiconductor industry and attracts senior leaders from across the sector. Companies and organizations engaged during the event included ASML, Canon,

Edwards Vacuum, Intel, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Lumentum, Molecular Vista, Synopsys, and Teledyne.

- *Manufacturing Day at the San Jose Sharks, SAP Center (February)* - The Corporate Engagement team convened leaders from across the region's advanced manufacturing sectors to foster cross-sector collaboration, strengthen industry connections, and highlight the breadth of the local manufacturing ecosystem. Attendees represented a diverse range of industries, including semiconductors, photonics, biotechnology, medical devices, data centers, energy, consulting, systems integration, and contract manufacturing.
- *NAIOP I.CON West, Los Angeles (March)* - NAIOP's I.CON West is a premier industrial real estate conference that brings together developers, investors, brokers, and other industry leaders from across the sector. OEDCA participated in this year's conference alongside Team California. As part of the conference, Team California hosted a boat tour of the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which the City of San José supported with branded promotional materials. The City also secured a prominent speaking opportunity to highlight San José's economic strengths, advanced industry base, and advantages as a location for business investment and expansion. Throughout the conference, staff engaged with a broad range of industrial real estate leaders and professionals, including several individuals who played key roles in the recently completed Edenvale Industrial Park in South San José. Staff also established and strengthened relationships with other industrial real estate professionals involved in investment, development, and site-selection activities.
- *Silicon Valley Economic Forum, Open San José (May)* - The City supported the Silicon Valley Economic Forum, organized and hosted by local investment bank Baird Augustine, by providing event space at Open San José and City Hall Rotunda. The City's participation provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with the venture capital and investment communities, leveraging Baird Augustine's established connections with influential family offices and investors. The event featured a single-family office panel that generated significant attendee interest, as well as a keynote address by the Founder and CEO of Decile Group and Executive Chairman of Founder Institute. Decile Group is a global venture capital platform focused on supporting emerging fund managers. Throughout the event, staff engaged with venture capital investors and representatives from a range of companies and organizations, including a geothermal utility plant provider, Hacker Dojo, Robot.com, and others, helping expand relationships within San José's broader innovation and investment ecosystem.
- *TechEx, San José McEnergy Convention Center (May)* - This broad technology conference featured seven co-located events focused on digital transformation, artificial intelligence and big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), edge computing,

data centers, intelligent automation, and cybersecurity. Attendees ranged from C-suite executives and industry professionals to San José State University students, providing opportunities to engage with a diverse cross-section of the region's technology ecosystem. OEDCA staff had a visible role in the conference, participating in a data center panel and in an interview with the Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer of Connect Podcast highlighting Silicon Valley's leadership in artificial intelligence. The interview has received more than 40,000 views. Staff engaged with numerous companies and organizations throughout the conference, including establishing a connection that led to an ongoing relationship with the Bay Area Robotics Association, and secured a prominent presence at the speaker and exhibitor reception, providing increased visibility for San José and its economic development efforts.

NVIDIA GTC

OEDCA supported NVIDIA's 2026 GTC conference at the San José McEnery Convention Center in March by coordinating with City departments and key stakeholders on event readiness, transportation, public realm conditions, business engagement, and the overall downtown experience. During the conference period, downtown recorded approximately 360,000 visits - a 16.2% year-over-year increase - including 35,942 event-related visitors - a nearly 78% increase from 20,224 in 2025. Out-of-state event-related visitation increased 50.9%, with visitors traveling from 956 ZIP codes nationwide.

GTC's continued presence in San José reinforces downtown's position as a premier destination for major technology and innovation events while generating measurable increases in visitation and activity that benefit surrounding businesses. NVIDIA has announced that GTC will return to San José in March 2027.

Business Grand Openings

- *STRĀTA* – The new restaurant and bar opened in May at the base of the Miro apartments across from City Hall and is the latest concept from local restaurant group M.O. Hospitality, featuring a chef-driven, seasonal California menu. STRĀTA's opening adds another distinctive dining destination to downtown and represents continued investment by an established San José hospitality group in the city's urban core.
- *T&T Supermarket* – The June grand opening of T&T Supermarket at Westgate Shopping Center generated significant attention across local news and social media. T&T Supermarket, widely recognized as a leading Asian grocery retailer in Canada, offers an extensive selection of prepared foods, bakery items, fresh seafood and produce, specialty Asian grocery products, and cosmetics. The opening represents a notable addition to San José's retail landscape and further strengthens the City's diverse mix of shopping and dining destinations.

- *Las Cazuelas #2* – A longtime San José favorite, Las Cazuelas expanded with the opening of its second location in South San José in June. The expansion builds on more than 40 years of serving the San José community from its original Race Street restaurant and represents an important milestone for a locally established, family-owned business. The new location expands access to Las Cazuelas' traditional Mexican cuisine while contributing to the continued growth and vitality of South San José's dining and small business community.
- *Sakura Market* – Sakura Market celebrated its grand opening in July in downtown. Located at the base of San José State University's Spartan Village, the Japanese grocery and specialty market adds a distinctive new retail destination to downtown, expanding food and shopping options for residents, students, employees, and visitors.

Empréndete 2026

OEDCA, in partnership with Google and ConXión, co-sponsored the annual Spanish-language entrepreneurship event on June 27 at the Mexican Heritage Plaza. Led by the Yacanex Business Group with support from TMC Community Capital, the event attracted more than 200 businesses and featured programming focused on artificial intelligence and digital marketing, with presentations from industry experts and local business owners. The Consul General of Mexico also attended the event.

Empréndete continues to serve as an important resource and convening opportunity for San José's Spanish-speaking business community. The event drew strong participation from both aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners, demonstrating continued demand for culturally and linguistically accessible business resources, education, and networking opportunities.

Small Business Grant Programs

During the past year, the Storefronts Activation Grant Program was redesigned to address a substantial applicant waitlist and streamline administration. The revised program provides grants of \$10,000 per business and requires a minimum of three-year lease commitment. In the spring, a Santa Clara University Leavey School of Business intern supported the development of an updated automated intake form incorporating the program changes. These improvements helped expedite grant processing and enabled the program to achieve its goal of allocating 100% of available funding. Between January and June, the program processed \$490,000 in grants.

The Business Startup Grant Program, launched in January 2026, received more than 800 applications, including submissions in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Following an eligibility review, 430 applicants qualified for consideration, and a lottery and interview process resulted in 21 recommended awards: 10 grants of \$10,000 and 11 grants of \$5,000. An award ceremony is scheduled for August 20, 2026.

The Neighborhood Economic Grant Program launched in July and will provide awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$45,000 to catalyze private investment and business engagement in key commercial corridors. With a total program budget of \$137,000, a minimum of three awards is anticipated. Expressions of Interest are due October 2, 2026.

Business Improvement District Activity

In June 2026, the City Council completed the approval of four new Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and renewed four existing BIDs, including Downtown. The aggregated budget for these BIDs in FY 2026-27 is \$1,493,000, and the total number of active business tax certificates subject to an assessment exceeds 6,000 for the first time. The table below shows the number of active business tax certificates for eight BIDs:

Status	BID	Approved Budget	Number of Active Business Tax Certificates
New	Alum Rock	\$133,000	543
New	East Village	\$51,000	356
New	Story Road	\$129,000	434
New	The Alameda	\$199,000	1,311
Renewal	Downtown	\$540,000	1,884
Renewal	Japantown	\$29,000	219
Renewal	Monterey Road	\$252,000	1,574
Renewal	Tully Road /Eastridge	\$160,000	573
	TOTAL	\$1,493,000	6,894

International Affairs

Dublin Delegation Visits San José

In March, San José welcomed the Lord Mayor of Dublin and a Dublin City Council delegation for a four-day visit commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between San José, California, and Dublin, Ireland. The delegation participated in a comprehensive program of meetings and activities with the Mayor and City Councilmembers, City Manager, City Clerk, City departments, and local business leaders, providing opportunities to strengthen longstanding ties and advance economic, cultural, and civic connections between the two cities.

Foreign Trade Zone 18 Activity

Between February and July, four new Foreign Trade Zone 18 applications were approved by the US Department of Commerce for KLA Corporation, Western Digital

Technologies, Rose Batteries, and Energy Recovery, Inc., representing a 33% increase in company participants since the program's inception (from 12 to 16 companies). Six additional applications are currently under review with the Federal government.

International Innovation & Investment Summit: Welcoming the World to San José

As part of the SJ26 initiative, the Business Development team hosted its inaugural international business and investment event on June 29, convening 94 attendees and speakers representing investors, business executives, international representatives, and economic development partners from nine countries. The event began with a bus tour highlighting San José's innovation corridors, major employers, and key development sites, followed by an executive summit at Zoom headquarters featuring a keynote address by Zoom CEO Eric Yuan.

The summit generated new business attraction, investment, and international engagement opportunities that have continued beyond the event.

Welcoming a New Team Member

The Business Development team welcomed its new Economic Data Analyst in mid-March. In this role, the Economic Data Analyst leads the collection, analysis, and application of economic data to inform policy development, business engagement and support, and strategic initiatives that advance investment, development, job creation, revenue generation, and the City's overall fiscal and economic vitality.

Workforce and Talent Development

San José Works Summer Program Kick-Off

On June 25, the work2future Career Center welcomed more than 200 youth participants for the launch of the 2026 San José Works Summer Program. Participants received program materials, including personalized name badges, San José Works t-shirts, and transportation assistance, and had an opportunity to connect with program staff, address final onboarding questions, and prepare for their worksite placements. The event provided an engaging start to the summer program and helped ensure participants were prepared and supported as they began their paid work experiences.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

August 12, 2026

Subject: Economic Development Activities Semi-Annual Status Report

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