



The Sparkler * *

Promoting a cleaner and friendlier downtown San Jose
 Newsletter of the San Jose Downtown Property-Based Improvement District

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Call 287-1520 for service

Downtown Sparkles

Groundwerx once again scored high in a rating of its cleaning, ambassador and beautification services. Surveys by residents, merchants and commercial property owners have been especially complimentary since the Property-based Improvement District (PBID) began services in January 2008 to address specific conditions in downtown San Jose.

In a survey completed in March 2010, 91.6% of respondents approved of Groundwerx clean teams; ambassadors received a 71 percent approval rating; and the 2009 PBID beautification project received an 84.5 percent approval rating.

Also, 88.6 percent of respondents feel the overall appearance of downtown San Jose has improved since Groundwerx started



PBID orb planters on First Street.

cleaning downtown. All the results can be found on sjdowntown.com.

“The survey results are stunning,” said Chuck Hammers, downtown Property Owners’ Association president. “It is hard to get 90 percent of anyone to agree on anything, much less property owners who have likely taken a hit on value in the last year.”

Despite a strong start, the PBID is committed to further improving its services. A new San Jose Service Center website: <http://sanjose.myworksites.com>, allows anyone with Internet access to report issues – with photo if necessary – to Groundwerx. The built-in tracking system provides users with email updates. Once a report is made, Groundwerx

supervisors are immediately deployed to assess the situation. A follow-up call from Groundwerx can be anticipated within 30 minutes. Service Center was implemented in April.

Groundwerx program director, Rich Mongarro, has also committed to making improvements to the ambassador program.



Groundwerx Ambassadors

Mongarro has trained ambassadors to take a more proactive role in identifying and reporting potential crime and public safety issues, such as enrolling members in the STOP program. STOP is a tool that helps property owners and businesses deal with loitering issues in coordination with the San Jose Police Department.

Mongarro also wants the ambassadors to provide more public safety escorts. Groundwerx ambassadors are available to walk individuals from one location to another – simply call 287-1520. Ambassadors are available seven days a week, 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Sunday - Wednesday, with extended hours until 11 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Survey Highlights	2007	2009	2010
Improved overall cleanliness	46.3%	87.9%	88.6%
Improved overall condition	78.6%	93.7%	91%
Approve of clean teams	n/a	83.4%	91.6%
Approve of ambassadors	n/a	71.7%	71%
Approve of beautification projects	n/a	80%	84.5%

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Groundwerx's Finest

Jorge Cortes received the Groundwerx Ambassador of the Year award. Cortes is a clean team member who typically operates the Green Machine sidewalk sweeper and goes about his work with a friendly and positive attitude. Cortes received a plaque in his honor and a monetary reward for his achievement.



Groundwerx Ambassador of the year, Jorge Cortes.

Cortes has been with Groundwerx for more than a year. Originally a pan and broom cleaner, he quickly climbed the ranks and is now trained on the Green Machine, Warrior walkbehind sidewalk scrubber and M20 ride on scrubber. Cortes is so proficient on these machines, he's now the primary trainer for the Green Machine and Warrior.

“His work ethic is unmatched here at Groundwerx and he is our official ‘Jack of All Trades’,” said Rich



Cortez pitching in on a paint project.

Mongarro, Groundwerx program director. “When Jorge is given an assignment, it will be completed thoroughly. He is one of the most respected employees here at Groundwerx.”

Seat Open at the Table

Three seats on the Property-based Improvement District (PBID) board of directors are up for election in 2010. Downtown property owners and residents interested in joining the board should contact Eric Hon, PBID operations manager (ehon@sjdowntown.com) by July 30. The slate of candidates from the

nominating committee will be sent to members in August and the election will take place at the PBID Annual meeting on October 8.

PBID board members serve a three-year term with a limit of two consecutive terms. The downtown resident candidate must reside and own residential property in the district. Eleven members comprise the board, meeting every other month. The board includes seven commercial property owners, one business and residential property representative. The City of San Jose and the Redevelopment Agency are also represented on the board. The City and RDA representatives are appointed by the San Jose City Council.

Oldies but Goodies

The 12 original Transit Mall benches along First and Second streets (six on each street) were restored to their original luster in April. Installed in 1988, the benches were completely taken apart, with each individual piece of wood sanded down on all four sides and resealed. This process revealed a distinct purple wood color.

The benches are made of a hardwood commonly referred to as Purpleheart, an exotic wood noted for being extremely dense and having a natural purple tone. Ultraviolet light exposure darkens the wood to a brownish color, which is why the purple color has not been visible for two decades. Purpleheart, immensely popular among craftsmen, is often used in cabinetry and fine furniture making.



Refinished bench at Second and Santa Clara St.

Call 287-1520 for service. Contact Eric Hon at 590-0241 or ehon@sjdowntown.com with suggestions.

Edited by Rick Jensen