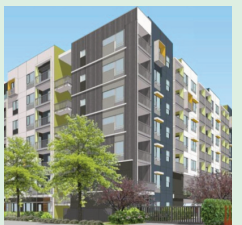


San Jose approves seven-story apartment building in Willow Glen neighborhood  
**PAGE 10**



**Tough success**  
San Jose presents an uphill battle for small businesses  
**PAGE 12**

Foothill student founds new international organization  
**SEE PAGE 4**



MAY 2023 ■ VOL. 19, NO. 5

# Willow Glen Times

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## Vitae Vi Virtus Institute program allows participants to learn sword fighting at two-day event in San Jose

Program partners with Davenriche European Martial Arts School

The Sword Experience (SXP) is coming to San Jose, CA on May 20-21.

Created by the star of the international Highlander franchise, **Adrian Paul** (pictured above), the SXP has held successful events in twelve countries to date, giving people the opportunity to learn sword fighting in epic locations. Paul played Duncan MacLeod on "Highlander."

In the past, the SXP has offered Elite, Convention, Academy, Retreat, and Corporate events. Now, in partnership with Sensei Richard Ganey, the SXP is offering a new program, The Vitae Vi Virtus Institute program. (VVVI).

"We are thrilled to be returning to Northern California for not one day, but two," said Paul. "Once again we'll be partnering with Stephen Fick from the Davenriche European Martial Arts School in San Jose and hosting the experience at their brand-new facility."

The Sword Experience (SXP) creator is Adrian Paul who played Duncan MacLeod on international "Highlander" franchise.

The fun two-day event starts with learning all the techniques of sword fighting. On day two, that's when the fun starts, be an  
*See SWORDFIGHTING, page 3*

## Silicon Valley's Central Bikeway could be a game changer

By Sonya Herrera  
*San José Spotlight*

Santa Clara County residents could soon ride on the region's first bicycle superhighway.

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority could approve the basic design of the Central Bikeway—a 10-mile stretch of protected bike lanes between San Jose and Santa Clara—as soon as next month. VTA's bicycle advisory committee voted unanimously Wednesday to recommend the transit agency's board approve the concept for the project. The VTA board will consider the Central Bikeway on May 4.

"This is a really precedent-setting project," VTA land-use planner Brent Pearse said during the meeting. "We're going to use this when we work with cities (and) we're going to use this when we work on future bike superhighways."

VTA initially had about a dozen routes to choose from, and eventually narrowed the choice down to three. More than 1,400 residents gave their input on the best route for the superhighway, 30% of whom don't currently ride a bicycle or only ride for recreation. Resident feedback was gathered through social media, surveys and VTA pop-ups at events like Viva Calle for almost two years.

VTA planners ultimately landed on the route dubbed The Shortliner, which goes from Penitencia Creek County Park past the Berryessa



A man rides his bicycle in a leisurely manner in downtown San Jose on April 13, 2023. VTA could approve construction of the Central Bikeway—a 10-mile stretch of protected bike lanes between San Jose and Santa Clara—as soon as next month. *Photo by Sonya Herrera.*

BART Station on Mabury Road, continuing on Taylor Street. The route turns north on Fourth Street and west on Hedding Street, finally turning on The Alameda and continuing north on El Camino Real. The Shortliner ends at Lawrence Expressway, about a mile and a half south of the Lawrence Caltrain station in Santa Clara.

Construction of this unprecedented bicycle highway system—including the landscaping and materials to raise the path above street-level—is estimated to cost \$213 million. The project design is about 10% complete. Funding is expected to come from multiple sources but

has yet to be determined.

### Santa Clara aims to double biking infrastructure in new plan

Pearse acknowledged the cost is intimidating for a bike path. But it's a much longer and more welcoming bike path than has ever been built in Santa Clara County before, he added.

"It is a lot of money, but it's a very high-quality, long distance bike facility," Pearse said. "It's transformational, it's regional... It's also on par, cost-wise, with some of our other large projects. So we don't feel like that cost is super extreme."  
*See BIKEWAY, page 3*

## Willow Glen Lifestyles Home Tour May 6-7

You're invited to experience the history, beauty, and charm of featured homes in the Willow Glen neighborhood at the Willow Glen Lifestyles Home Tour May 6-7.

Enjoy an afternoon in one of San Jose's most treasured neighborhoods.

We invite you to experience the history, beauty, and charm as you tour select, featured homes in the Willow Glen neighborhood. Admire and be inspired by the exceptional architecture and design highlighted both inside and out of these enchanting Willow Glen homes.

The Tour is open May 6th and May 7th from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. each day. Funds raised support the San Jose Day Nursery.

The tour typically takes 1.5 - 2 hours, please note houses close promptly at 4 pm. Children



under 12 are not permitted on the tour. All attendees must have a ticket. Event will occur rain or shine.

At one designated "garden home," attendees will be able to enjoy beverages and refresh-

ments in a garden setting, mingle over complimentary wine tasting and purchase snacks and gift items from local vendors and artisans.

### Garden Boutique

Take a moment to soak up the natural beauty around you while indulging in some afternoon shopping at the Garden Boutique. Complimentary wine tasting, food, garden decor and other treasures for sale from local, small business artisans, and pop-up vendors will be available at the boutique.

### San Jose Day Nursery

100% of the proceeds from this event benefit San Jose Day Nursery, a non-profit early learning center in downtown San Jose.

Since 1916, SJDN has supported infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families with quality daycare. Funds raised from the tour will enhance SJDN programs and provide scholarships for children of low-income working parents.

For more information, visit [www.willowglenhometour.com](http://www.willowglenhometour.com).

**SEE OUR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE - PAGE 15**



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2023

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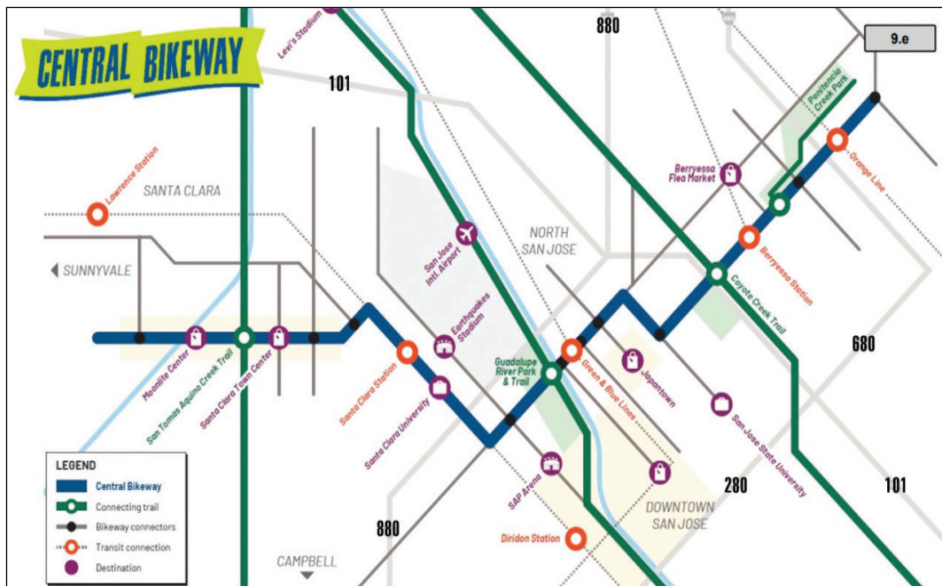


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Times **Cover Stories**



The route for the proposed Central Bikeway extends from Penitencia Creek County Park in North San Jose to El Camino Real in Santa Clara. *Image courtesy of VTA.*

**Bikeway**

*Continued from page 1*

He said the cost is comparable to a roadway interchange project or a new light rail corridor.

Aside from cost, at least one member of the bicycle committee was concerned that commuter cyclists would be sharing the path with recreational cyclists, which could deter commuters from using the bikeway at all.

“I think that’s going to encourage a lot more of the (experienced) bicyclists to ride on the street, and not in the bikeway,” said committee member Herman Wadler.

The idea of a superhighway stems from VTA’s Santa Clara Countywide Bike Plan released in 2018. Santa Clara County

already has 800 miles of bikeways, including dedicated bike lanes on roads such as San Fernando Street in downtown San Jose. In addition to bike lanes, there are 200 miles of dedicated bike trails, but many are not connected through a continuous, uninterrupted path.

Sandhya Laddha, policy director for the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, said the group supports construction of The Short-liner route for the region’s first bike superhighway.

“We look forward to the Central Bikeway project to lay a great example of what a bicycle superhighway could look like, changing the experience of bicycling on our arterials,” Laddha told San José Spotlight. “Hence inviting more people to experience the joy of biking.”



Pictured is a few of last year’s graduates of the Sword Experience (SXP) which is scheduled May 21-22 in San Jose with Highlander star Adrian Paul who played Duncan MacLeod.

**Swordfighting**

*Continued from page 1*

actor in a storyline based in a castle, or fight in a cool location full of historical weapons.

**Castle break-in story-line**

Participants have the opportunity to join a story-line involving a small group that break into a castle full of historical weapons. They become surrounded by castle security, intent on arresting them

for trespassing. But the leader of the group, his hands now holding a priceless sword, has other ideas. The break-in wasn’t just about admiring ancient weapons.

For tickets and a full breakdown of the event visit: <https://swordxp.com/event/elite-event-san-jose-california>

*Editor’s note: The event will be held at Dav-enriche European Martial Artes School 395 E. Taylor St, Santa Jose, CA 95112. Time: 8:00 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Pricing: \$55-\$465; (408) 857-0121*

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NOTEBOOK

# Valley Currents

cur | rent (adj.) Present, topical, timely, newsworthy. (n.) Movement in a definite direction, a flow.



As more people recognized the work of Gold Bear Foundation, the organization garnered more support, expanding from a small group of seven members to an international organization of more than 50 members.

## Foothill student founds international organization

*Gold Bear Foundation: Assuring those in need never feel neglected*

By William Bellou  
Publisher

Ten percent of the world experiences food insecurity every day; a number that is 10% higher than it should be.

After being challenged to simulate homeless conditions on a camping trip, Jiya Patil, a sophomore at Foothill High School, couldn't fathom how anyone survived without a consistent food supply.

Consequently, she decided to build on her love of cooking to begin making biweekly meal donations to Building Futures, a homeless shelter in San Leandro. However, after a few months of donating trays of pasta and bread to the shelter, Patil wanted to interact with the people she was donating to. She chose to begin donating meals to a homeless encampment in Oakland.

There, Patil spoke to many people on the streets through her donations of sandwiches and

brownies, and one woman in particular stood out to her. As this woman grabbed a sandwich on her way out of the church, she noted, "You know, it's so hard out here." She paused to point at the tents behind her. "When they hurt me, the hospitals wouldn't even help me. And then they took my car and left me with nothing. God bless y'all for helping me out today."

As a result of this interaction, Patil became increasingly determined to try and reach as many people as she could; she began selling handmade bath scrubs on Etsy and working a job to raise money for those who were economically disadvantaged. As she raised over 1000 dollars in less than six months, she began donating items such as hygiene products to nearby homeless shelters, such as Tri-Valley Haven and Building Futures San Leandro.

As her peers at school became interested in supporting her efforts, she turned her passion

See FOUNDATION, page 8



## Philharmonic Orchestra performs Elgar and Britten in a concert dedicated to youth and families

By William Bellou  
Publisher

The San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet, presents its 2022-23 Season Finale Concert to be held on Saturday, June 3rd, 2023, 2 p.m. at the California Theatre, 345 S. 1st Street, San Jose, CA.

This premier orchestra, made up of the most advanced students in the San Jose Youth Symphony, will open the concert with Elgar's Wand of Youth Suites, which feature his earliest musical works composed for a family play, spirited and lively, and full of child-



Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet

like charm.

The orchestra will also perform

Britten's The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, an intricate theme and variations, that is meant to teach children about all the different instruments of the orchestra, as a narrator takes the audience through this instrumental journey.

The performance culminates in a musical work of extreme power as all the instruments join to play together at the end. This is a great treat for the whole family!

*Editor's note: Tickets now on sale online, visit: <https://sjys.org/product-category/tickets> You can also purchase tickets on Concert Day at the Box Office, one hour before the concert at 1 p.m.*

## Willow Glen Times

Times Media, Inc. / (408) 494-7000

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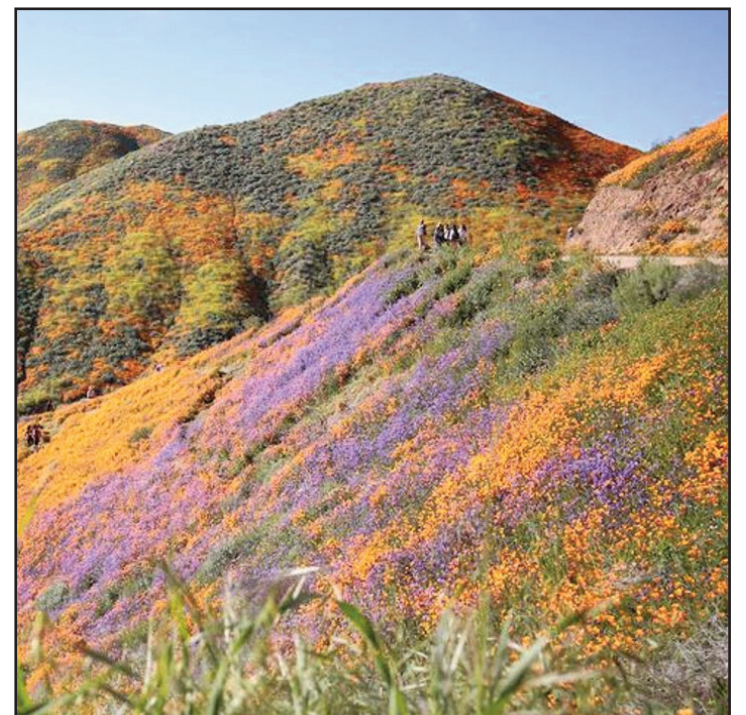
Why not stretch your legs after the long rainy season?

Want to stretch your legs after all the rain?

Why not make your way over to any one of our 28 Santa Clara County parks in the coming weeks – perhaps you'll even be lucky enough to catch the "super bloom" which is on its way!

Walking has been shown to help relieve stress and improve our mood; and spring is a wonderful time to see the wildflowers in bloom.

There is a wealth of information on the Parks' webpage: <https://parks.scc.gov.org>



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Times Feature

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Senator Janet Nguyen, California Senate Minority Caucus Chair stated that more than 120 people are dying each week in California from the poisoning effects of fentanyl during an April 19th news conference. At the event, family members of Californians who died from fentanyl shared their stories of loss and the struggle to secure justice.

## Californians demand lawmakers act on fentanyl crisis

*Grieving families, law enforcement, Republican legislators tell Public Safety Committee that inaction will cause more deaths*

Families of fentanyl overdose and poisoning victims, law enforcement officials, public safety advocates and lawmakers met at the State Capitol to demand action on California's fentanyl crisis on April 19.

Across the state, overdoses have only accelerated since 2021, as 500 Californians per month are losing their lives to fentanyl. Nationwide, 300 Americans lose their lives from the drug each day.

At the event, family members of Californians who died from fentanyl shared their stories of loss and the struggle to secure justice. Representatives of law enforcement highlighted the need to raise awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and impose additional penalties to deter criminals from continuing to sell the drug.

"The stories we heard today were heartbreaking – fentanyl has devastated families and communities across our state," said Assemblywoman Laurie Davies (R-Laguna Niguel). "From raising awareness, like my bill to teach students about the dangers of fentanyl, which is being held by the Educa-

tion Committee, to holding dealers accountable, the Legislature should do everything in its power to fight the fentanyl epidemic and save lives."

In recent months, the Assembly Public Safety Committee killed a number of common-sense bills to fight the fentanyl epidemic, including AB 18, to warn dealers they could be convicted of murder if someone dies from drugs they sold, and AB 701, to impose fines on fentanyl dealers for the damage they inflict on our communities.

In March, the Chair of the Public Safety Committee announced it would stop considering bills relating to fentanyl for the remainder of the legislative session, including AB 1508, which would recognize the extremely potent nature of fentanyl and increase penalties for dealers, AB 33, to create a Fentanyl Addiction and Overdose Prevention Task Force, and AB 955, to increase penalties for selling fentanyl through social media.

The press conference featured a dump truck capable of holding 28,000 pounds, roughly the same weight of fentanyl that was seized in California last year, as well as small vials of inert materials representative of enough fentanyl to kill more than 1,000 people.



## What an incredible Admitted Spartan Day

The energy was electric, and the atmosphere was buzzing, with a record-breaking number of attendees registered on April 15. Admitted Spartan Day, is an annual open-house experience for admitted students at San Jose State University. Throughout the day, students learn about their areas of study and hear from fellow Spartans about life at SJSU. Photo courtesy of LinkedIn

Times **Feature**

# Valley Water approaching milestone on project to reduce flood risk along Coyote Creek

By Director **Barbara Keegan**

We started the new year with a series of atmospheric rivers that caused flooding in parts of Santa Clara County. These storms reminded us of the impactful February 2017 flood event along Coyote Creek in San José and the work being done to reduce that area's risk of flooding.

I'm pleased to share that Valley Water will reach a milestone in the coming months in our Coyote Creek flood reduction efforts. This June, our agency will begin construction on the first of two flood protection projects, the Coyote Creek Flood Management Measures Project, located along a nine-mile stretch of Coyote Creek.

In preparation for construction of the Coyote Creek Flood Management Measures Project, this winter, our work crews began removing trees and vegetation along the creek.

When construction begins, Valley Water will install floodwalls along three reaches, or sections, of Coyote Creek between Old Oakland Road and Highway 280, including:

- Reach 5: San Jose Municipal Golf Course to Mabury Road
- Reach 6: Mabury Road to Highway 101
- Reach 7: Santa Clara Street to the south end of William Street Park

As we approach the start of construction, Valley Water is coordinating with the City of San José to address unhoused encampments located in areas where the work will be done. This is a safety issue, as construction crews will be working with heavy equipment.

Regarding our second project, Valley Water continues designing the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project, part of the voter-approved Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program. For this project, Valley Water will install floodwalls, passive barriers and berms along five reaches of Coyote Creek between Montague Expressway and Tully Road. We anticipate beginning construction on this project in 2025.

Once completed, the Coyote Creek Flood Management Measures Project and the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project will help protect homes, schools, businesses and highways in historically flood-prone areas. The measures we are implementing will protect against creek flows like the February 2017 flood, which was a 20-year event.

Both Coyote Creek projects are connected to our work at Ander-

son Dam in Morgan Hill. The original Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project was split into two projects to accommodate building a new outlet tunnel at Anderson Dam. Valley Water is accelerating the design and construction of the Coyote Creek Flood Management Measures Project so that the creek can handle the potential release of higher flows from the larger outlet tunnel at Anderson Dam.

Since the beginning of these projects, Valley Water has worked hard to ensure community members have a voice in the proposed solutions. Our agency has held approximately 25 public meetings to hear from neighbors and gather their input – and we are using that feedback to help shape the projects.

The two Coyote Creek projects are a high priority for the Valley Water Board of Directors and represent our commitment to supporting our communities' public health and safety. We are committed to moving these critical flood protection projects forward and getting them built as quickly as possible.

*Submitted on behalf of Valley Water Board Member Barbara Keegan. For further information, contact your elected district representative at [BKeegan@valleywater.org](mailto:BKeegan@valleywater.org). To learn more about these projects, visit [valleywater.org](http://valleywater.org).*



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Times Feature

**Foundation**

*Continued from page 4*

into Gold Bear Foundation: a non-profit organization that she founded in 2021. Patil had a simple mission -- inspired by her trips to homeless shelters and encampments, she was determined to make sure that those in need never felt neglected and with the help of her peers, she established chapters of the organization throughout the Bay Area.

Through hours of group fundraising and planning, the team made donations of hygiene products and meals to homeless shelters, encampments, and economically disadvantaged schools. Just in the last two years, Gold Bear Foundation has been able to donate over 10,000 items to over 2500 people in need.

The Building Futures Office Manager specifically noted, "Thank you so much for your help Jiya. For a group of teens, your age to be helping out so much and giving to this cause so selflessly is amazing. Every time one of our kids or women needs help, we are all so grateful for people like you. Without you and your organization, none of this would be possible, so we are just so thankful for Gold Bear Foundation."

As more people recognized their work, the organization garnered more support, expanding from a small group of seven members to an international organization of over 150 members.

With the additional help, Gold Bear Foundation was able to donate about 1900 items to a homeless shelter across the country in



**Jiya Patil** - Foothill High School - Founder of international organization

New Jersey, as well as a water filtration system to a village in India to help over 300 students cope with unbearable heat waves. As Patil continues on her mission to help those struggling economically, she hopes to expand the organization even further to support as many people as possible.

If you're interested in joining Gold Bear Foundation or learning more about the organization, please visit [www.goldbearfoundation.org](http://www.goldbearfoundation.org).

*Patil had a simple mission – inspired by her trips to homeless shelters and encampments, she was determined to make sure that those in need never felt neglected.*

**Season of the Salix**

By Matthew Frazier

Qualified Stormwater Manager

For those who have been gracious enough to read my entries in *The Times Media Newspapers*, I thank you with full measure.

With the rains and the winds which are assaulting Santa Clara Valley as of recent, there is a flurry of activity in gardens and yards to preserve and protect our botanicals.

For the shrubs and trees, these elements of rain and wind are a gift in disguise. In particular, Weeping Willows. Known by their Latin name of *Salix Babylonica* ... This is a true treasure for any vast garden or landscape!

With the ability and capacity to pull up large volumes of water, *Salix* will counter the massive torrents of rain and wind with which we are being assaulted and battered this late winter and early spring season. Not just this valley is being affected but especially this valley. Throughout Santa Clara Valley, one can find heritage oaks but also a fair number of weeping willows which add a dimension of aesthetics to the environs and scapes of our terrain.

From June 2006 to July 2008 I worked for Almaden Valley Nursery, amongst master gardeners. A salesperson, I advised customers about which trees fare well in the gardens and landscapes of this and the neighboring valleys of Santa Clara County. Among these, were weeping willow. With wisping foliage and bold branches, they can absorb the turbulent winds of winter

and drink the rains which the skies yield!

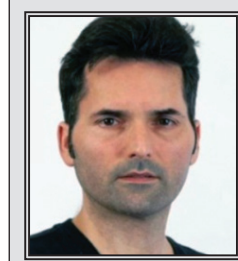
A vision of fantasy and majesty, the mighty willows of Willow Glen are no exception. Nestled deep within San Jose, Willow Glen is home to many alluring and beautiful trees. Among them are the weeping willows. Even the local cemeteries bear this wondrous tree. With a stout body and powerful presence, I recommend this wonderful addition to any garden and landscape impacted by excessive rains and high winds. They will protect your homes while giving the illusion of a wind-swept aerial ballet of myth to one and all who lay eyes upon them.

Our local garden centers and nurseries don't usually carry the weeping willows but this can change with the right amount or asking. With the flooding which

has impacted San Jose and Santa Clara County twice now since February 2017, there is no better time than the present to welcome this majestic tree to your gardens and landscapes. It is only a matter of time until the rains and winds pick up again once more and lay claim to our properties. With the beauty and the protection of the mighty willows, we can mitigate such an attack.

Willow Glen is home to many beautiful garden and landscapes for such a small region. What better way to usher in a rainy spring than with the addition of these beautiful willows. The time is now ... the season of the *Salix*.

*Matthew Frazier is a Certified Water Manager, Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper, and Qualified Stormwater Manager. You may contact him at: (408) 656-5622 – Mobile/Text; or by email: [kitchenfrazier@hotmail.com](mailto:kitchenfrazier@hotmail.com).*



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Tuesday, Thursday 6:15pm-7:05pm

\$23 per session  
8 sessions: \$140  
12 sessions: \$180

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(6155 Almaden Expressway)  
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Friday 4:00pm-4:50pm

\$23 per session  
8 sessions: \$140  
12 sessions: \$180

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## Times Feature



A rendering shows what a 206-apartment complex could look like when complete at 1050 St. Elizabeth Drive in San Jose. Image courtesy city of San Jose.

### San Jose approves seven-story apartment building in Willow Glen neighborhood

By Joseph Geha  
San José Spotlight

More than 200 apartments are set to be built in San Jose's Willow Glen neighborhood, after getting the green light during the city's planning director hearing Wednesday.

Cupertino-based KCR Development plans to demolish a nearly 30,000 square-foot vacant building that most recently served as a senior assisted living facility and put up a seven-story apartment building on a 2.2-acre lot at 1050 St. Elizabeth Drive, city reports said.

While some neighbors are opposed to the dense residential development, the developer's consultant, Erik Schoennauer, said the 92-foot-high project conforms to city standards and will provide much needed housing.

"What's being proposed is exactly consistent with what is called for in the city's general plan and the city's zoning code," Schoennauer told San José Spotlight. "People can have their opinions that they don't like taller buildings, or denser buildings, but that's what the city's adopted plan says should be built."

The apartment complex will have five stories of apartments atop two stories of parking, with a total of 311 parking spaces for cars, including 66 tandem spaces, 52 motorcycle parking spaces and 73 spaces for bicycles.

The site is within about a half-mile of a VTA light rail stop, but Schoennauer noted Willow Glen is an area where many residents rely on cars, so parking is necessary for the project to get financing and be marketable.

KCR has owned the building slated for demolition since 2013, Schoennauer said. In 2016, KCR leased the building to Somerset Senior Living for a fixed term, which ended in 2022, and the facility shut down.

During a 20-day open comment period for review of the project's environmental documents, some residents wrote to the city to say they were concerned about a former senior housing facility being replaced by market-rate apartments. Others worried about potential traffic impacts and said the project was too dense or said that renters would hurt the

neighborhood.

"This building impacts thousands of current residents by bringing in short-term apartment renters who have no vested interest in the area and will have a long-term impact on the current look and feel of this quiet neighborhood, and not in a positive way," Lindsay Geier wrote.

Geier also said she was concerned about impacts to the special education school for children with autism that's next to the development site.

"Way out of character for Willow Glen," Barbara Black wrote to the city. "Put that building downtown where we can at least walk everywhere or take transit."

City planners said the project will not have significant impacts to traffic, and noted the project site is within 2,000 feet of the Fruitdale light rail station at Fruitdale Avenue and Southwest Expressway.

Several residents said at the planning director's hearing they wouldn't oppose a project that was shorter but thought seven stories was too big.

"It is going to completely transform, negatively, our neighborhood," resident Nick Raygoza said. "I purchased my home to live in a quiet community, it's no longer going to be a quiet community."

Raygoza said he feels the city is ignoring residents' concerns around traffic calming improvements and their input on the project.

"We've lived here forever, this is our neighborhood, this is our home and we're not being considered," he said.

Schoennauer pushed back against those concerns at the hearing, noting the city's guidelines allow for up to 120-foot building heights in the neighborhood, and the city and state's housing goals mean more development is likely on the way.

"This is the adopted plan of the city. There are going to be many more seven-story buildings in this neighborhood," he said.

Schoennauer said the developer will need to get demolition and building permits from the city following Wednesday's approval. Construction of the new apartment complex could begin as early as the first quarter of 2024, he said, and could last about two years.



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## Times Feature

# San Jose an uphill battle for small businesses

By Loan-Anh Pham  
*San José Spotlight*

California is ranked as the 25th least expensive state to start a business, but local business leaders say entrepreneurs in San Jose face significant challenges in launching a company.

A recent study by SimplifyLLC analyzed a variety of factors to rank each state, including business filing fees, labor costs, utility costs, lending rates and start and failure rates of businesses. Despite California landing in the middle of the list, economic experts and business owners in San Jose said the survey doesn't illustrate the increasing business costs and difficult permitting processes that create additional barriers for local entrepreneurs.

"While San Jose remains a world-class destination for a dynamic customer base and highly skilled

employees, we continue to struggle with the high costs of goods and services, slower permitting times and the high cost of housing, which can drive up wages," San Jose Chamber of Commerce CEO Derrick Seaver told San José Spotlight.

California placed in the middle of the list overall, compared to Nevada at the top and Minnesota at the bottom. The study, which adjusted numbers for population, found California also fell in the middle in terms of lending for small businesses, lending about \$37.7 million in 2020 compared to North Dakota, which topped the list at about \$67.5 million. Despite its ranking, California had the third-highest utility costs in the nation, with an average monthly commercial electric bill of \$992.86.

San Jose is currently home to approximately 60,000 small businesses, with some being threatened by displacement due to new housing and transit development projects. City officials said 98% of San Jose businesses are small businesses with less than 35 full-time employees. Additionally, entrepreneurs fighting to stay in San Jose are battling increasing rents as the city works to offer relief through grants to offset the growing operation costs. Meanwhile, on the government side, vacancies in the city's planning department have led to a permitting backlog.

### Too much red tape

Chandra Brooks, a local entrepreneur and member of the National Small Business Association leadership council, said startup costs and delayed permits are some of the biggest obstacles to getting businesses off the ground in Silicon Valley. The study revealed California's average business filing fee is \$70, but in San Jose the base cost is \$210 and can increase depending on the number of employees.

"If you have a brick and mortar (business), it's definitely very expensive because of rent, utilities and everything you need," Brooks told San José Spotlight. "When you're a small business, time is money... We lose a lot of great businesses because people have to wait for this red tape."

Vic Farlie, an analyst with the city's economic development department, said San Jose is also facing increasing labor costs, but still remains an appealing place for entrepreneurs to start a business in Silicon Valley. Farlie said the city has multiple efforts underway to keep businesses thriving, including monthly meetings with neighborhood business associations, free workshops and resources for new entrepreneurs, as well as grants for



California is ranked as the 25th least expensive state to start a business, but local business leaders say there are significant challenges. File photo.

businesses to improve their storefronts to attract more customers.

"San Jose has done well over the past 10 years—more businesses opened than closed," Farlie told San José Spotlight. "It's not easy for every business owner, we know that... Small businesses in many of the underserved community areas within the city, that's our priority at the moment."

Brooks said entrepreneurs of color are disproportionately impacted in the business landscape, struggling with hurdles like loan rejections. She said historically many banks prefer loan candidates with a business record or financial cushion, things not every new business owner has readily available.

That problem prompted a local Vietnamese food vendor to crowd-source funding instead of going the traditional bank route.

"You have to have a lot of capital upfront," Brooks told San José Spotlight. "If you don't have those resources, especially for people of color and families that don't have that type of money in their families or themselves, it's almost impossible to even fathom starting a business."

Silicon Valley Minority Business Consortium founder Walter Wilson said ensuring grants last at least three years is another crucial step in allowing small businesses to get on their feet. Local governments and leaders have to be intentional in supporting racial and gender diversity through the contracting process, he added.

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Dennis King said immigrant entrepreneurs face additional barriers, such as cultural and language differences. For a business to be successful, he said business owners need to rely on the community for support and have a clear path to success in place for them to follow throughout their business journey.

"When people start a business, they're usually pledging all they own," King told San José Spotlight. "As a community, we should really appreciate the risk, the energy and effort that's required to make a business successful."

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Times **In Remembrance**

## Maria Cristina Machado

October 19, 1932 - April 10, 2023  
*Resident of Willow Glen*

**M**aria Cristina Cifuentes de Machado was born in Managua, Nicaragua on October 19, 1932 to Maria and Luis Cifuentes. She eventually immigrated to San Francisco in 1947. She worked as a hairdresser in San Francisco after attending beauty school.

In 1962, Maria met her husband, John D. Machado, in San Francisco at a wedding reception. She later married John in December of 1963. Seven years later they welcomed her daughter, Anna Maria and later moved to San Jose, California where they resided in Willow Glen.

Maria was a loving wife, mother and family member of an extended and blended family of a total of 11 brothers and sisters. She had a great sense of humor, had meaningful relationships with her many friends and family members. She loved to travel and visit her brother Luis Cifuentes on many occasions in Miami, Florida. She traveled frequently with friends and family all over the world enjoying cruises along the way.

Maria is survived by her husband John, her daughter Anna Maria, her son-in-law Michael, her grandson Anthony, and her siblings. She will forever be in our hearts and cherished memories. We will all miss her tremendously and her memory will live on in our hearts forever.

Family and friends attended a Memorial Mass Friday, April 21, 2023 at St. Christopher Church, 1576 Curtner Avenue, San Jose.

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Conductor Dr. Jason Klein talks to the audience about each program piece for the audience before it is performed.

Saratoga Symphony website ([www.saratogasympphony.org/concerts](http://www.saratogasympphony.org/concerts)) has published a concert poster that lists each music piece on the program.

*Editor's note: Lincoln Glen Church is located in Willow Glen at 2700 Booksin Avenue San Jose, CA 95125.*



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