



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Steven Brewster
City of San José Department of Transportation
steven.brewster@sanjoseca.gov
(415) 577-8851 mobile

San José Moves Forward with *Safe Streets for All* in Downtown Core

New ordinance in place to help heighten pedestrian and bike safety on increasingly busy downtown sidewalks and streets

San José, Calif., Feb. 25, 2015—Beginning today, the City of San José will no longer allow bikes on specific downtown sidewalks.

The partial ban, City of San José Ordinance No. 29515, approved unanimously by San José City Council on Dec. 2, 2014, is in effect on San Fernando, First, Second, Third and Fourth streets in the downtown core.

Those violating the ordinance will be subject to fines ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. Repeated violators could be charged with a misdemeanor and up to six months in jail. Exemptions of the ban include children 12 and younger and their guardians, law enforcement officers and situations when bike lanes are blocked.

The partial ban comes after a significant rise in downtown pedestrian traffic resulting from increases and projected increases in residents, employees, students, visitors and company relocations. Key indicators to support this include:

- 39,000 people reside in the one-mile radius of the downtown core—with that number projected to increase to more than 42,000 within four years

- 36,000 jobs—with that number also expected to grow with continued positive economic forecasts
- A rising downtown hotel occupancy rate of 86 percent—a 12 percent increase over the last decade
- Office vacancy rates at 13.6 percent—one of the lowest levels in more than two decades
- Enrollment at San Jose State University rose from 31,000 in 2006 to nearly 33,000 in 2014

In addition, more people are shopping, eating and enjoying downtown cultural, sports and entertainment amenities. This is reflected in the rise of sales tax receipts from \$1.5 million in 2000 to \$3.2 million today.

“Heightened downtown usage means that we must provide safe spaces for everyone—whether that’s pedestrians or people on bicycles. We want to help make it easier to get to and through downtown without a car,” said, Paul B. Smith, deputy director, City of San José, Department of Transportation.

Over the last 18 months, the City of San José sought community input and completed key pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements. This included an analysis of pedestrian activity in the downtown core where there are higher levels of pedestrian activity, and installing street signs and pavement markings that provide notice to walk bikes on sidewalks. The signage and markings are being complemented by an education and outreach campaign that focuses on communicating that “sidewalks are for walking” and that “bikeways and streets are for bicycling.” The campaign targets people who live, work, attend school or shop in the downtown core.

According Martha O’Connell, a resident and former chair of the City of San Jose’s Senior Citizens Commission, the new ordinance will help make the streets and sidewalks safer for San Joseans of all ages. “For senior citizens, walking equates to independence and freedom, and is a key connection to access transit, healthcare services and shopping. I commend San Jose for taking steps to protect all people on our sidewalks.”

While the ban puts priority on those who travel by foot, people on bicycles have access to a network of bikeways on eight downtown core streets.

According to Hans Larsen, director, City of San José Department of Transportation, the sidewalk bike ban ordinance was implemented only after extensive enhancements to the downtown bike infrastructure.

“Providing safe and convenient transportation options is a top priority for San José,” said Larsen. “Whether someone is driving, walking, bicycling or taking public transit, or a combination of all four, we want to help ensure they have a safe and efficient journey. With improvements to our network of bikeways, cyclists have a dedicated, convenient way to access housing, businesses, and restaurant and entertainment venues.”

A combination of bicycle infrastructure, the new Bay Area Bike Share program, flat topography and mild weather make San José one of the most bike-friendly cities in the U.S.

Components of downtown bikeways include green bike lanes on San Fernando St., parking protected bike lanes on Fourth St., and buffered bike lanes on Third, Fourth, Tenth and Eleventh streets. Additional bikeways downtown will be developed over the next two years.

ABOUT SAN JOSE’S BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PROGRAM

Bicycling and walking play significant parts in ensuring residents have an integrated and sustainable way to get from place to place. San Jose’s mild climate and flat terrain provide an ideal environment for people on bicycles and pedestrians. The City has been recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Community. With more than 30,000 daily bike trips on 300 miles of on-street bikeways and trails, San José complements this by offering ongoing children’s walking and bicycling safety training in San José schools. San José is in the midst of expanding to 500 miles bikeways, including a network of trail systems, allowing residents to travel more easily by bicycle. For more information, visit <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation>.

ABOUT THE CITY OF SAN JOSÉ

From its founding in 1777 as California's first city, San José has been a leader, driven by its spirit of innovation. Today, San José stands as the largest city in Northern California and the Capital of Silicon Valley—the world's leading center of innovation. The City, the 10th largest in the U.S., is committed to remaining a top-ranked place to do business, to work and to live. For more information, visit, www.sanjoseca.gov.

###