

**For Immediate Release**  
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## ***San José innovation competition names 4 semifinalists*** ***The winning ideas will receive funding and space to prototype***

**San José, Calif. – San José Mayor Sam Liccardo today will announce the four semifinalists** who rose above the more than 140 ideas received in the first phase of the city’s “Unleash Your Geek” competition at the [Think Tank By Adobe: Future of Work](#) event, part of the Bay Area NewCo Festival.

“We have the most innovative community on the planet, and they brought fresh thinking to a space that hasn’t had innovation in years,” said San José Mayor Sam Liccardo. “We received ideas for autonomous vehicles, robots and nonstick spray — all of which could dramatically improve the speed that we clean up graffiti and lower the price tag.”

The competition launched last year and challenged Bay Area students, innovators and organizations to submit designs for a device that could dramatically reduce the price of removing graffiti on highways from the current \$60,000/clean-up cost.

The City of San José, working with its partners CalTrans, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Microsoft Silicon Valley, selected the four most promising submissions to receive funding and the opportunity to prototype their idea in space provided by Prospect Silicon Valley, where they will also receive additional training in launching their businesses.

Three of the four winning teams came from engineering schools within San José State University, with the fourth consisting of a team of Bay Area professionals. The top ideas included drones that can recognize and paint over graffiti, a glider paint bot that hooks to the top of the overpass and a modular robot, which the user could reconfigure as necessary. All four ideas will receive a portion of the \$20,000 semifinalist prize pool and space at ProspectSV’s test facility to build and test a prototype.

“ProspectSV is delighted to be working with the City of San Jose, Microsoft, CalTrans and others to provide workspace and support to the winners of the Unleash Your Geek competition,” said Ruth Cox, CEO of ProspectSV. “We look forward to helping the finalists prototype their offerings and ultimately find broad scale markets for innovative solutions that can cost-effectively remove unwanted graffiti from public infrastructure.”

During the next stage of the competition, the four winners will have approximately six months to build prototypes at ProspectSV space.

### **About the ideas:**

- A team from San José State University offered a smart, self-reconfigurable modular robotic system that can crawl alongside a wall and easily paint over the graffiti
- A team from San José State University provided an autonomous drone that recognizes graffiti and paints over it.
- A team of San José State University students created a graffiti removing glider that could mount to a wall and paint over graffiti.
- A team of young Bay Area professionals proposed a smart drone system that would fit inside of a car trunk and paint graffiti based on tablet input.

**Teams are available for interview upon request.**

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### **About City of San José**

Known as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San José is the nation's tenth largest city, and the largest city in Northern California, with an ethnically diverse population of more than one million. San José was founded in 1777, once served as the state capital of California, and now encompasses 180 square miles. Facts about San José can be found here:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/780>. The City's website is [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov).