

**HISTORIC RESOURCES ASSESSMENT**  
**EXPANSION OF THE CENTURY CENTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA**  
**AND MIXED-USE PROJECT**  
**THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSÉ**  
*DOWNTOWN SAN JOSÉ*

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This investigation constitutes a review and assessment of historic resources in Downtown San José, Santa Clara County, California that may be affected by a proposed expansion of the Century Center Redevelopment Plan area and a related Mixed-Use Project that is planned for properties located both within and near the amended redevelopment plan area. The expanded redevelopment project area consists of about 54 acres that are located within the boundaries of East Julian Street, North and South Fourth Street, East and West San Fernando Street, and North and South Market Street. The Mixed-Use Project may include an adjacent parcel of about 2-plus acres located south of East San Fernando Street between South Second and South Third Streets, a portion of the block on the northwest corner of West San Fernando and South First Streets. Also being considered is a parking garage to be located on the city block bounded by West San Fernando Street, South Almaden Avenue, Post Street, and South San Pedro Street, known as the Greyhound Bus Terminal site. In addition, the project may also include Plaza de César Chavez Park located within the east and west legs of South Market Street between West San Fernando and West San Carlos Streets (see project location section next page for specific boundaries). The project is outlined in a “Revised Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mixed Use Project and Expansion of the Century Center Redevelopment project Area” issued by the City of San José Director of Planning, Building & Code Enforcement dated March 16, 2001. The project applicant is the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José (SCH #20011022071). The City of San José has determined that a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to address the proposed expansion to the Century Center Redevelopment Plan area and Mixed-Use Project. The project includes a number of new public and private facilities and other improvements proposed in the areas. Additionally, this assessment includes an intensive level of investigation conducted on properties that were identified by the Redevelopment Agency in late summer of 2001 as “potentially impacted” by the proposed Mixed-use Project.

This report identifies recorded and/or potentially significant historical and architectural resources located within the plan and project areas; presents the results of an assessment of the impacts of the expanded plan area and project on these properties; and suggests mitigation options for known or potential resources that may be impacted. This review has been prepared to meet both state and city regulatory and planning requirements for historical resources in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and historic preservation policies of the City of San José.

This assessment was prepared by the firm of Dill Design Group. Leslie A. G. Dill, Principal of Dill Design Group, Charlene Duval, Consulting Historian, Amber Engle Grady, Preservation Specialist, and Franklin Maggi, Consulting Architectural Historian meet the Secretary of Interior’s professional qualification standards to perform identification, evaluation, registration and treatment activities within their respective professions of Historic Architect, Historian, and Architectural Historian.

### ***Research and Review Results:***

There are approximately 117 properties within the study area. There are approximately 86 buildings located on these 117 properties, and of these 86 buildings, 64 are over 50 years in age. Twenty of these buildings are currently vacant. Forty-three buildings and sites in the study area are listed or eligible for listing on the San José Historic Resources Inventory. Twenty-nine structures and sites are presently listed as contributing structures or sites to either the National Register Downtown Commercial Historic District, which is within the plan area, or National Register St. James Square Historic District, which is partially within the expanded plan area. Fifteen of these contributors are individually listed as San José Landmark Structures or as Contributing Structures or sites to San José’s St. James Square Historic Landmark District, and an additional seven are outside of the National Register Districts and individually listed as San José Historic Landmark Structures. There are an additional seven structures that are potentially

eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. There are no California State Landmarks or Points of Interest located in the expanded plan or project areas. One building, the historic Bank of Italy, is potentially eligible as a California State Landmark.

## 2.0 PROJECT LOCATION

The Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan area and Mixed-Use Project area consists of private and public properties located within all or a portion of ten city blocks in downtown San José. The current Century Center Redevelopment Plan area, adopted in 1985, consists of three city blocks adjacent to the seven block expanded area. The expanded redevelopment plan and project areas totals about 54 acres that are located within the boundaries of East Julian Street, North and South Fourth Street, East and West San Fernando Street, and North and South Market Street. The Mixed-Use Project also includes two sites adjacent to the Century Center Redevelopment Plan area. One of these is less than one acre in size and is located at the northwest corner of South First Street and West San Fernando Street (located within the Pueblo Uno Redevelopment Plan area). The second is a 3-plus acre site south of East San Fernando Street between South Second and Third Streets (located within the San Antonio Plaza Redevelopment Plan area). A parking garage may be proposed for the project that is to be located within the city block bounded by West San Fernando Street, South Almaden Avenue, Post Street, and South San Pedro Street, known as the Greyhound Bus Terminal site. In addition, the project may also include Plaza de César Chavez Park, located within the east and west legs of South Market Street between West San Fernando and West San Carlos Streets (see project map, page 8).

The survey of San José prepared by Chester Lyman during the mid-nineteenth century labeled the city blocks in the downtown area by block and range. The blocks are now specifically identified as either north or south, with the dividing line being San Fernando Street. The ranges begin with number one and run in an easterly direction, the first range generally consisting of the blocks to the west of First Street. Areas further west of Range-One were not so labeled.

For the purposes of this report, the properties within the study area, as currently identified by the Santa Clara County Assessor, are grouped according to Block and Range. Plaza de César Chavez and the block that is presently occupied by the Greyhound Bus Terminal are outside of the block and range numbering system; the notation pertains to their current uses. Following is a description of the blocks, grouped according to the plan and project area zones. The property listing within the matrix on page 35, as well as the property summaries in Appendix I, however, are grouped numerically according to Block and Range.

### 2.1 Century Center Plan Area

#### Block 1 Range 2 North (B1R2N)

*Bounded by South First Street East Santa Clara Street, South Second Street, and East San Fernando Street.*

#### Block 1 Range 3 North (B1R3N)

*Bounded by South Second Street, East Santa Clara Street, South Third Street, and East San Fernando Street.*

#### Block 1 Range 4 North (B1R4N)

*Bounded by South Third Street, East Santa Clara Street, South Fourth Street, and East San Fernando Street.*

## **2.2 Expanded Century Center Plan Area**

### **Block 2 Range 1 North (B2R1N)**

*Bounded by North Market Street, West St. John Street, North First Street, and West Santa Clara Street.*

### **Block 2 Range 2 North (B2R2N)**

*Bounded by North First Street, East St. John Street, North Second Street, and East Santa Clara Street.*

### **Block 3 Range 2 North (B3R2N - St. James Square West)**

*Bounded by North First Street, East St. James Street, North Second Street, and East St. John Street.*

### **Block 3 Range 3 North (B3R3N - St. James Square East)**

*Bounded by North Second Street, East St. James Street, North Third Street, and East St. John Street.*

### **Block 4 Range 1 North (B4R1N - partial)**

*Bounded by North Market Street, West Julian Street, North First Street, and Devine Street.*

### **Block 4 Range 2 North (B4R2N - partial)**

*Bounded by North First Street, East Julian Street, North Second Street, and St. James Street.*

### **Block 4 Range 3 North (B4R3N - partial)**

*Bounded by North Second Street, East Julian Street, North Third Street, and East St. James Street.*

## **2.3 Mixed-Use Project Development Sites - Outside of Plan Areas**

### **Block 1 Range 1 North (B1R1N – partial)**

*Bounded by South Market Street, Post Street, South First Street, and West San Fernando Street (Development Site B).*

### **Block 1 Range 3 South (B1R3S – partial)**

*Bounded by South Second Street, East San Fernando Street, South Third Street, and the (former) Paseo de San Antonio (Development Site C).*

## **2.4 Related and Potential Parking Sites**

### **Greyhound Bus Terminal Block (Related Project Parking Site)**

*Bounded by South Almaden Avenue, West Post Street, South San Pedro Street, and San Fernando Street.*

### **Plaza de César Chavez (Potential Project Parking Site)**

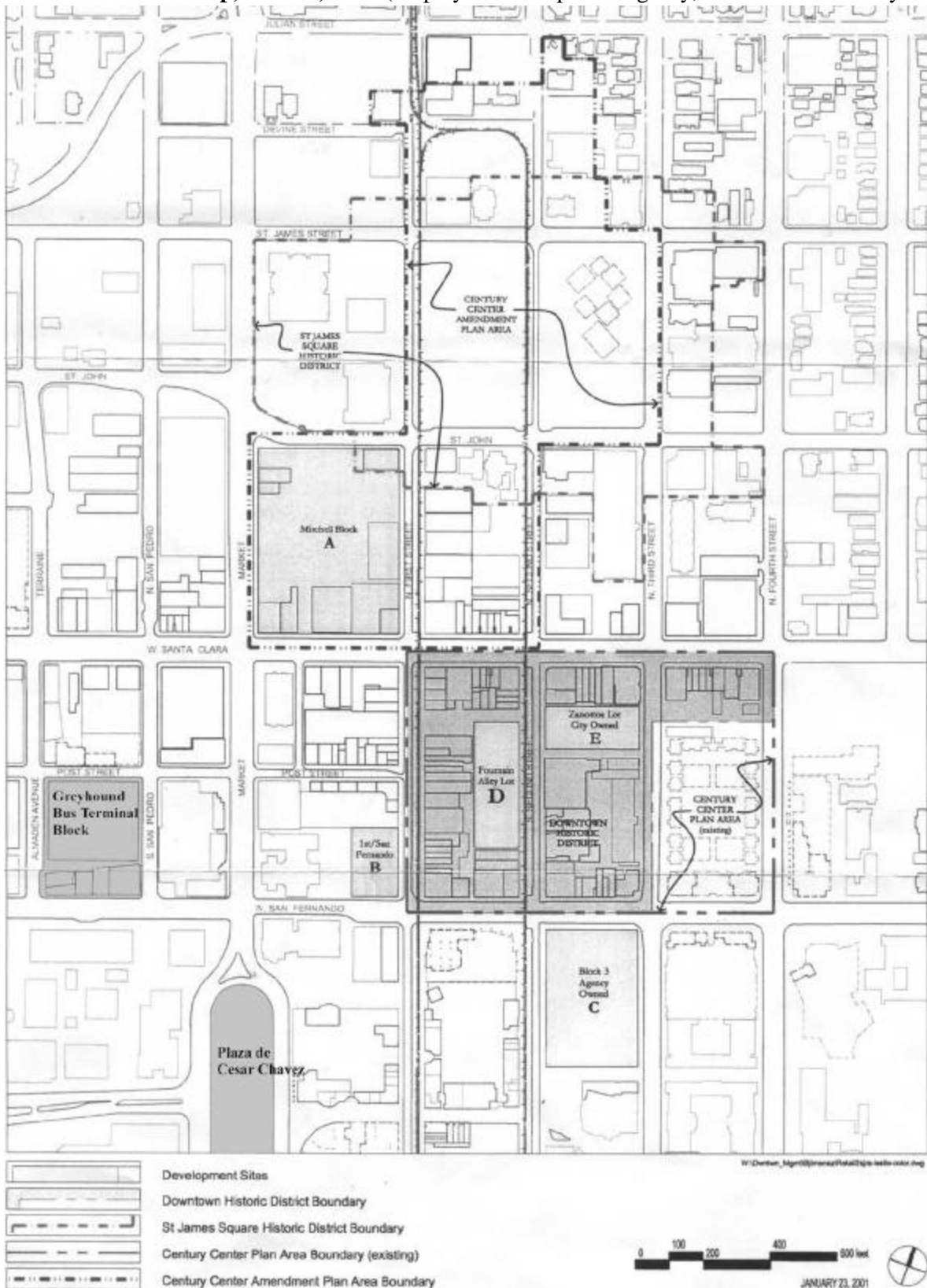
*Bounded by West Market Street, West San Fernando Street, East Market Street, and West San Carlos Street.*

## 2.5 Key to Block and Range

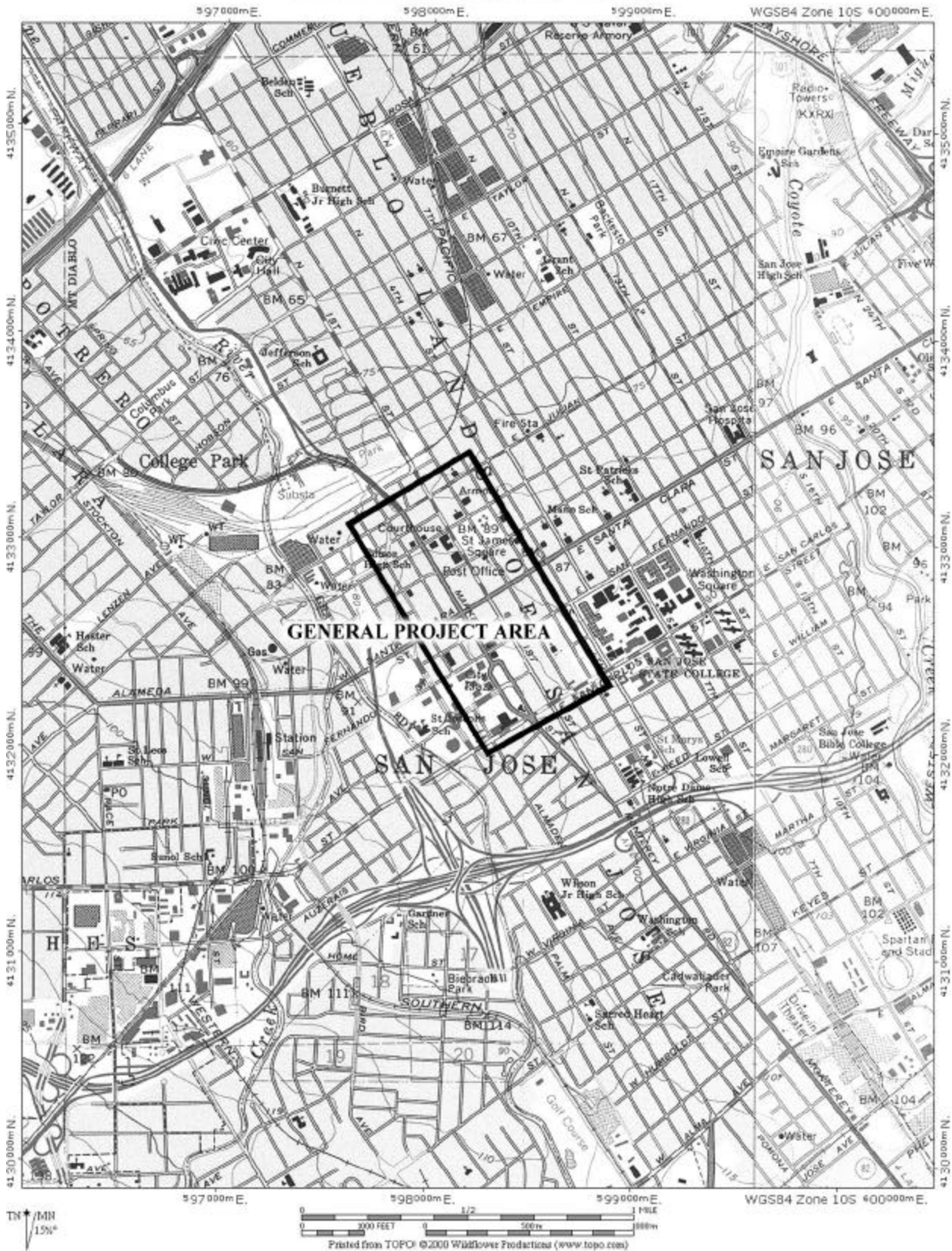




**2.6 The Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José, Mixed-Use Project and Century Center Plan Amendment map, Jan. 23, 2001 (Map by Redevelopment Agency, with enhancement by DDG).**



**2.7 United States Geographic Survey, San José West and East, Calif. 1980 photo revised.**



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## 4.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Beginnings of *El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe*

The settlement of the Santa Clara Valley by Euro-Americans began in 1769 with an initial exploration to the valley by Spanish explorers. The Portola Expedition was encamped along the coast north of present-day Santa Cruz when a small contingent of men, led by Sergeant José Francisco Ortega, crossed the coastal range and unexpectedly came across the bay and valley. Within a few years, Franciscan missionaries and other Spanish expeditions into the region, such as those led by Juan Bautista De Anza, identified the valley as an ideal candidate for permanent settlement. Early in 1777, Lieutenant José Joaquín Moraga and Fray Tomás de la Peña established Mission Santa Clara de Asís on the west bank of the Guadalupe River, near present-day Trimble Road. Later that year under orders of Viceroy Antonio Maria Bucareli, a site was selected for a civilian settlement by Governor Felipe de Neve, and on November 29th, *San José de Guadalupe* was founded on the east side of the river about two miles southeast of the first mission site. The Guadalupe River became the boundary between the lands controlled by the mission and those allocated to the pueblo.

The Spanish colonization strategy in the Americas utilized three institutions--military, religious and civil. The military government, installed in Alta California shortly after Portola's Expedition, was intended to protect the Spanish frontier in *España Nueva* from encroachment by other countries of Europe, and particularly was directed against Russian expansion into North America during this historical period. The first presidios at *Yerba Buena* (San Francisco) and Monterey were established to address this threat. They served to protect the missionaries and colonists from attack by Native Americans who occupied the region. Franciscans established the mission system to proselytize this large aboriginal population. The missions were the dominant colonizing influence in Alta California during Spain's jurisdiction over the providence between 1769 and 1821. Each mission's sphere of influence radiated from its center, with buildings for worship, housing and industries, outwards to surrounding grain fields and livestock grazing lands.

*El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe* was the first civil settlement established by the Spanish Crown of Carlos II in Alta California. The pueblo's primary function was to supplement the crops grown by the missions to support the garrisons at Monterey and *Yerba Buena*. The founding of *San José de Guadalupe* by Lt. Moraga occurred with the relocation of fourteen families, totaling sixty-six people from *Yerba Buena*. These *pobladores* had originated from the northern region of *España Nueva*. They arrived on two colonizing treks: the 1774 expedition led by José Francisco Ortega up the coast of the Baja Peninsula from Loreto, and the 1775/1776 second expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza that had crossed the Sonoran desert to Alta California from Túbac (in present-day Arizona).

Moraga laid out the town, allocating house lots (*solares*) and cultivation plots (*suertes*) to each settler. The Spanish government retained underlying title to the land and the settlers could not convey their land or divide it; therefore, much of the property within the pueblo remained in possession of the descendants of the original colonizing settlers until the region came under the jurisdiction of the United States at mid-

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<sup>1</sup> This historical background and setting is based on the original script prepared by the late Glory Anne Laffey, historian for San Jose's 1991 citywide survey of historic resources. This linear context statement, which is a summary statement compiled from a large number of local histories that have been written over the last 170 years, is used as a basis for historical and architectural evaluations conducted on project related assessments in San José. The overview presented in this document incorporates language from Laffey's background and setting statement, but was modified to specifically address the context of the central core area of the city as it pertains to the expanded redevelopment plan area and project

nineteenth century. The common lands (*ejido*) surrounding the pueblo were used primarily for grazing the livestock of the settlers.

The original location of the pueblo was near the Guadalupe River, in the vicinity of present-day Hobson Street, approximately 2,500 feet northwest of the northern boundary of the Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan area. The actual location of this site has not been precisely determined by contemporary historians. This original site was subjected to severe winter flooding during the first years of the settlement, and the site of the pueblo was moved approximately one mile south to higher ground during the 1790s. Historical literature refers to a petition for relocation occurring in 1785, but the actual relocation may have occurred anytime between 1791 and 1797. As early as 1871, San José historian Frederick Hall theorized its exact location of *Pueblo Antigua*, and the duration it served as town site. Subsequent histories have not expanded his research to any substantial degree (Hall 1871).

The *Plaza*, which extended along present-day Market Street, between approximately St. John Street and San Carlos Street, was the center of the second and final pueblo site. The houses faced both sides of the plaza, generally in a north/south alignment. The apparent randomness of the placement of the buildings of the second pueblo, when viewed in plan, would appear to indicate an unstructured development process. The original pueblo site near Hobson Street had been sectioned in a grid, reflecting Renaissance town planning methods. Dynamic, late-Baroque forms of town and regional planning, rather than solely static, orthogonal forms were being adopted in both new and old Spain by the late eighteenth century. These “organic” town designs were intended to fit into the natural environment, both for aesthetic and utilitarian reasons, particularly oriented around the water supply. They commonly also had a *trivium* system, three roads converging at a focal urban point, and there existed a variety of open spaces for different kinds of public uses, instead of the typical sixteenth-century central plaza (Muntanola-Thornberg 1988). The description of a single central plaza in the pueblo was published in the Munro-Fraser history of San José and was a recollection of an early resident; a sketch drawn by *pobladore* José Fernandez, published in Francis Fox’s book on the Peralta Adobe, also describes this urban form (Munro-Fraser 1881; Fox 1975). The plaza, in reduced sized, continues to exist today as Plaza de César Chavez.

The colonists’ first activity was to build a dam above the settlement that collected water in a pond for distribution throughout the pueblo by way of an *acequia* or ditch. The *acequia* provided both household and irrigation water. The colonists’ homes, structures constructed of adobe blocks or adobe and wood, were clustered in along the east side of the *acequia*, around the plaza, and at the crossing of the roads to Monterey, Santa Clara Mission and the embarcadero at Alviso. The major transportation route during this period was *El Camino de Real*, which entered the pueblo from the south and exited to the west at about where present-day Santa Clara Street is located, where it led to the Santa Clara Mission. Other *arroyos* meandered through the pueblo, the largest appearing to be the *Sanjon*, which may have served as a drainage ditch or sewer. The alignment of the *Sanjon* appears to have bisected, in a north/south direction, the block identified as Development Site A in the Mixed Use Project (Hendry and Bowman 1940).

With the change of governmental control from Spain to Mexico in 1822 and the secularization of the missions, came changes in land utilization and ownership patterns. In 1824, Mexico passed a law for the settlement of vacant lands in an effort to stimulate further colonization. Any citizen, whether foreign or native, could select a tract of unoccupied land so long as it was a specific distance away from the lands held by missions, pueblos and Indians. The grantee petitioned the governor for a specific tract. After investigation and if there were no objections, the land was granted.

The Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan area lies largely outside the center of the early pueblo. In the early years of Alta California, the slaughter of cattle, or *matanza*, was solely for domestic needs. Cattle supplied beef to be eaten fresh or dried for future use: hides for shoes, lariats and outerwear, fat for cooking and tallow for candles and soap making. During the period of Mexican rule, the

*matanza* became more systematic and extensive. Hides were carefully stripped from the carcasses and the lard and tallow was rendered. The lard was retained for domestic use, and the tallow was saved for export. The malodorous killing fields could be detected for miles and were presided over by the vultures, coyotes and other scavengers feeding on the unwanted flesh. These fields during the early years of the pueblo were located to the east of the town. The Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan area lies primarily in the domain of this early agrarian activity, which later extended eastward from the pueblo towards the Coyote Creek.

With the relaxation of immigration regulations by the Mexican government in 1828, more foreigners began to settle in California. San José's first "foreign" settler was Antonio Suñol, a native of Spain who arrived as a seaman on a French ship that weighed anchor in San Francisco Bay. Of the approximately 700 people who lived in the pueblo in 1835, forty were foreigners, mostly Americans and Englishmen. The first overland migration arrived in California in 1841, and by 1845, the American immigrants had increased the population of the pueblo to 900.

The American immigrant presence in San José was rapidly changing the character of the pueblo from a quiet Mexican village to the bustle common to American towns. Charles Weber arrived in San José in 1841, and established a general merchandise store, a blacksmith shop, a bakery, and a restaurant/saloon that catered to foreigners. Weber's store was located on the east side of present-day Lightston Alley at what is now the rear of the vacant Woolworth's Store, soon to be House of Blues. While this site is not within the Amended Century Center Redevelopment Plan area, it was a pivotal site in the topological transformation of the town that began in the late 1840s. The alignment of the grid of streets in the downtown frame appears to emanate from Weber's street frontage.

#### **4.2 The Early Development of the City of San José**

Superimposition of American culture on the former Hispanic culture occurred quickly after 1846. In May 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico and shortly thereafter, the American flag was raised in Monterey and San José. In San José, after an unsuccessful attempt to raise the American flag by James Stokes, Thomas Fallon obtained a second flag in Monterey, brought it to the Plaza and raised it over the *Juzgado* (jail) on July 14, 1846. In 1848, Mexico ceded California to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Closely following California's new status as an American territory, the discovery of gold in the Sierra foothills precipitated a sudden influx of population to the State. This event served to accelerate California statehood, achieved in 1850, with San José serving as the first State Capital. The Capital building was located on the east side of the Plaza near today's Fairmont Hotel.

San José was a supply center for hopeful miners as they passed through the area. Large numbers of these miners were farmers from the eastern United States and Europe who recognized the agricultural potential of the Santa Clara Valley. After a period in the Mother Lode, many of these miners returned to the valley to take up farming. The high cost and scarcity of flour, fruit and vegetables during the early Gold Rush made agricultural and commercial pursuits as profitable and more dependable than mining.

During this frontier period, a combination of many factors formed the beginnings of the San José that we know today. Each town colonized by Americans in the West during the nineteenth century began with a pre-conceived plan expressed by the gridiron survey. The reason for the grid plan's popularity was its simplicity. It was easily laid out by semi-skilled surveyors, it apportioned land quickly and efficiently, lots were a suitable shape for the erection of buildings, and the plan was easily expanded beyond its original limits. It also facilitated the transfer of property ownership and tax assessment.

In response to pressure by American settlers, a survey of the pueblo was commissioned by the *junta* (the ad hoc council of community leaders). The survey embraced lands east of the Plaza to Eighth Street,

north to Julian and south to Reed streets. These lands were all adjacent to the occupied pueblo area. Those with claims to land in the surveyed area were granted legal title, and the unclaimed lands were sold by the *alcalde*. The initial survey in 1847 by William Campbell established the familiar grid of streets now seen in downtown San José, and a more detailed professional survey was completed by Chester Lyman soon after Campbell's initial work. Lyman was commissioned to survey the city and develop the grid plan that included many of the features extant in downtown San José today. He also established the systematic identification of properties by assigning block, range and lot numbers. The blocks were laid out using the Spanish measurement system of *varas* (about 33 inches per *vara*). Each lot was 50 *varas* by 50 *varas*, the standard size of the *solares* of the Spanish-era pueblo. The lands between Market Street and the Guadalupe River were primarily under Hispanic ownership at the time of the survey. This area was included within the city limits, but was not included in the early surveys of the city. Establishing the gridiron to the east of the pueblo may have been respectful of the established agricultural areas between the pueblo and the Guadalupe River, as well as due to property ownership. The city limits established in 1850 were not expanded until the early twentieth century. Santa Clara Street became the main east-west thoroughfare, which it remains today. The earliest commercial district was centered on Santa Clara Street at Market Street, moving east to First and Second streets in subsequent years. In 1850, a later survey extended the city limits to Coyote Creek on the east, and just beyond the Guadalupe River on the west. The city was approximately three miles long, northwest by southeast, and about two miles wide.

Besides the overall effect of facilitating speculation, these early surveys were important elements in the evolution of the urban fabric of present-day downtown San José. Once a street plan has been established it becomes relatively inflexible as structures are erected and money is invested to lay road surfaces. This early plan determined transportation patterns within the town and influenced the development of business and residential districts.

The locations of buildings constructed after 1847 reflect this new rigid gridiron. Although new buildings continued to utilize adobe construction methodologies following the Hispanic techniques, they were oriented to the new street system. A map of the sites of the adobe structures was completed in 1940 by researchers Hendry and Bowman. It identifies a number of sites within the Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan and Mixed-Use Project areas that are associated with the Early American period of the city. These include adobe sites on Development Site C such as the What Cheer Saloon and Planter's House (adobe hotel), the adobe County Jail site of 1854, and an early adobe Courthouse. Within Development Site A, a bowling alley was located near St. John Street and an 1850 adobe residence was located at the northeast corner of Santa Clara and Market. On the adjacent block to the east within the Century Center expansion area were two 1848 adobes (one known as the Mansion House). These post-1847 adobes joined other earlier adobe structures that had been built under Spanish and Mexican jurisdiction over the pueblo. A number of these earlier adobes were also located within the boundaries of the Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan and Mixed-Use Project areas.

After the recession in the mid-1850s that concluded the period of the Gold Rush, urban development in downtown San José began to move at a swift pace. Brick buildings began to appear in the downtown in the late 1850s. Buildings from this era are no longer evident in the downtown, although at least two buildings appear to have interior brick walls associated with this period; the Lido at 30-32 South First Street, and the now vacant Hester Building at 48-50 South First Street. These two buildings, although not included as Contributors within San Jose's Downtown Commercial Historic District, appear to be the oldest extant fired-brick structures in the core area. Natural gas service was introduced in 1861, and the San José Water Company was incorporated in 1866, supplying piped water to a city that had relied on wells for potable water since the early 1850s. The first sewers were also installed in 1866. This investment by the city in infrastructure was followed by a construction boom in permanent brick buildings along First, Market, and Santa Clara Streets in 1866 and 1867. A number of buildings within the plan and projects areas remain as evidence of the implementation of San Jose's first organized



development strategy. A railroad line between San Francisco and San José, completed in 1864, also provided impetus to this commercial development. The extant historic hotel located within the building at 93-99 South First Street replaced a pre-railroad wood framed hotel and was probably built to serve passengers from this line, who would board stages in San José for points south. The introduction of San Jose's first railroad line was followed a few years later with the completion of the Central Pacific line from San José to Niles, connecting San José with the transcontinental railroad in 1869. San José thus became part of the national and world economic network that opened new markets for the agricultural and manufacturing production of the valley. The railroad increased population and agricultural developments and ushered in a new era of land development and use.



(Downtown excerpt) *Bird's Eye view of the City of San Jose, Cal.* Geo. H. Hare, 1869,  
view from northwest.

As San José become a major service center for the expanding agricultural hinterland, commercial and banking activities began to locate in the core. Most of this commercial construction occurred in the heart of the city, radiating outward from the new city center at Santa Clara and First Streets. While most of the buildings constructed in this era are no longer extant, many physical remainders of 1860s brick structures remain hidden behind contemporary facades along North and South First Street between St. John and San Fernando Streets, as well as along the south side of East Santa Clara Street east of the historic Bank of Italy tower. San Jose's oldest surviving bank building, the McLaughlin and Ryland Bank, still exists at 32 East Santa Clara Street, although not specifically identified presently as a local historic resource. Additional buildings from the 1860s remain hidden in the Gross/Holmes Building at 45 North First Street, at George's Jewelry at 33-35 South First Street, and within a series of buildings along the west side of South First Street from the historic Stock and Sons building at 71 South First Street southward to the historic Wilcox Block at 93-99 South First Street.

#### **4.3 The Period of Horticultural Expansion**

The horticultural potential of the Santa Clara Valley was recognized early in the Spanish colonization period. The Franciscans established small orchards and vineyards, and the western portion of the pueblo was cultivated to provide food for both the presidio and the pueblo residents. By 1852, the first pioneer nurserymen were importing and experimenting with various types of fruit trees, and by the 1860s, orchards were being set out in East San José, Milpitas and the north valley. Orchard products dominated agricultural production by the end of the century and fruit production peaked in the 1920s. The fruit canning and packing industry quickly grew to become the urban counterpart of the valley's orchards.

With agriculture as the primary product of industry in the valley, commercial growth in San José boomed during the 1880s to support this industry and continued with steady growth toward the end of the century.

During the 1870s, business in downtown San José flowed eastward on Santa Clara Street and onto Second Street into an area that initially had been developed with wood frame houses. Taller brick buildings began to appear during this period. The two-story western portion of the Odd Fellows Building at 82 East Santa Clara Street appeared in the early 1870s, and the three-story Bassler & Haynes Building at 35-39 East Santa Clara Street was constructed in 1876. The Bassler & Haynes Building is the city's oldest surviving three-story brick building, and was built and occupied by local woman entrepreneurs. Chinatown, located adjacent to the Plaza, burned in 1887, and a new city hall was erected in the middle of the Plaza by 1889, spurring further development in the downtown area. Large bank buildings were built on all four corners of First and Santa Clara Streets in the 1880s, establishing the intersection as the region's "banking corner." In the 1880s through the early years of the twentieth century, the business district moved southward along First Street and in both directions on Santa Clara Street. San Jose's "Electric Tower" was also built during this period over the intersection of Market and Santa Clara Streets. It would be the visual focal point of the downtown from 1881 to 1915. The major force in downtown development however, at the turn of the century, was T. S. Montgomery who constructed many large commercial buildings and business blocks.

The first automobiles appeared in the valley in the late 1890s. Several pioneer automobile factories, the first in California, were established in San José after 1900. Clarence Letcher opened the first "garage" in the West in 1900. In 1902, he opened the first service station, which boasted "a gasoline station of 110 gallons which measures the amount of gasoline sold" (James and McMurry 1933:142). George Osen and A. E. Hunter started one of the earliest auto manufactories in the area, and opened the first auto sales firm. Letcher's Garage/Osen Auto Sales, located adjacent St. James Park at 200 North First Street, within the Expanded Century Center Redevelopment Plan area, is a contributing structure within the St. James Square Historic Landmark District. This building is the oldest extant reminder of the start of this industry in San José. The building to its immediate north, at 218-220 North First Street (historically 214-224 North First Street), actually housed Letcher's operation for a longer time than the corner building. This building is noted as the site of the infamous murder/suicide involving Letcher and his wife. Both facades of these two building are no longer extant, and other buildings associated with the first auto row in San José are now gone.

The first steel frame "Tall" building in San José was the seven-story Garden City Bank constructed on the corner of South First Street and East San Fernando Street in 1907 shortly after the 1906 Earthquake. The downtown core suffered severe damage due to the earthquake, particularly the older brick buildings. Brick continued to be used as a structural material for commercial building after the earthquake due to the efforts of worker unions and manufacturers, but the rapid rebuilding that soon took place in the downtown turned to modern steel and reinforced concrete construction methods, which has continued to dominate the industry today. The William Binder-designed Montgomery Hotel and YMCA building are the two remaining examples of this pre-war introduction of concrete in commercial building construction.

Three additional "Tall" buildings (over ten stories in height) were constructed over the next 25 years. Construction of this building type remained rare until modern day redevelopment efforts. The Garden City Bank building was demolished during the early stages of "urban renewal." Of the three remaining "Tall" buildings, two are located in the Amended Century Center Redevelopment Plan area. Both constructed circa 1926, the tallest is the City Landmark Bank of Italy Building, designed by Henry A. Minton, at the southeast corner of East Santa Clara Street and South First Street. The other is the National Register-eligible Commercial Building at 22 North First Street, designed by William Binder.

#### **4.4 Inter-War Period**

After World War I, San José entered a period of great prosperity. During the post-war period, population growth continued to expand the urban boundaries as orchards were replaced by residential developments. By 1928, all the city streets had been paved and old wooden bridges were being replaced by concrete bridges. San José in 1930 had the greatest weekday auto traffic count in the State and was the only California city whose weekday traffic count exceeded that of holidays. During the 1920s, the downtown reached its zenith as the business, social, and cultural core of the greater San José area. Downtown development during the early part of the Inter-War Period continued to thrive, tempered by the beginnings of suburban development in the late twenties. The automobile initially catalyzed development activity in the downtown area following World War I; however, it was the automobile that later spurred development beyond the original city limits. By the late twenties, this suburban movement slowed the downtown regeneration process.

It was during the Depression that the physical appearance of the downtown began to change. As commercial businesses strived to stay afloat, increased competition for consumer dollars led to changes in the appearance of building fronts as owners modernized to try to attract business. While façade replacements had begun to occur as early as 1900, with renovations such as the New Century Block on the southeast corner of East Santa Clara and South Second Streets, more radical changes began to appear in the mid-1930s. American architects, influenced by the New Modernism that had been introduced in a major exhibit on the International Style in New York City in 1932, began to remove Victorian era ornament from facades and create blank building envelopes in abstract compositions. While the Art Deco style had appeared briefly in San José during the early 1930s, most remodeled facades by the late 1930s and into the 1950s were more abstract in form and composition. As of the summer of 1936, eight façade remodeling projects were underway in the downtown, an additional twelve were in planning, and others were being considered. This “redevelopment” effort organized by the Builders Exchange of Santa Clara County, involved a campaign called “Modernize for Profit.” The committee included the Merchants Association, contractors, architects, and FHA officials, and included outreach to all the business owners in the downtown in which they explained “the advantages of bringing store and building fronts up to date and the ease and economy with which such improvements may be made” (*San Jose Mercury Herald* 7/5/1937). Among the last remaining examples of this early, organized, redevelopment effort is the 1936 remodel of the earlier Heald’s Business College at the northeast corner of South Second and East San Fernando Streets, and the three-story building at 35-37 East Santa Clara Street, remodeled in 1936 by Dr. Adolph J. Baiocchi. The success of this campaign, as noted in local newspapers at the time, is the foundation for future revitalization efforts that have focused on the physical aspects of redevelopment.

#### **4.5 Industrialization and Urbanization after World War II**

Soon after World War II, the business community launched a campaign to attract new non-agricultural industries to San José. A number of large companies established plants in San José, and by the 1960s the County’s economic base was dependent upon the electronic and defense industries. Attracted by the increasing job market, the population of the valley experienced phenomenal growth after 1950. Between 1950 and 1975, the population increased from 95,000 to over 500,000. Correspondingly, the area of the city spread from 17 square miles in 1950 to over 120 square miles in 1970, replacing orchards with subdivisions and shopping centers. San José had annexed 1,419 outlying areas by the end of 1969.

During this contemporary period, the city expanded outward along major transportation arteries. The downtown remained vibrant immediately after the war. After a small recession in the late 1940s, new commercial construction responding to increased consumer spending. The 1930s Art Deco style Hales, and Streamlined Moderne style Harts Department Store were followed in the late 1940s by two large Modern-styled stores, J C. Penny and Roos Bros. These four stores formed the anchor for downtown

commercial development much in the same way that large anchor tenants frame contemporary malls. South First Street became the path between Hales on San Carlos Street and the three major anchors on Santa Clara Street.

A fourth anchor was planned in the early 1950s, to be located on West Santa Clara Street near Penny's. However, the decision of Macy's to be located instead in the newly planned Valley Fair Shopping Center, the area's first regional suburban mall, became the turning point for the continued viability of the downtown in the later half of the twentieth century. Commercial business development began to flow out of the downtown core beginning in 1956 when Valley Fair opened for business. Until this time, the San José City Council maintained a policy that no large-scale commercial zonings would be granted outside downtown core area. The change in this policy to accommodate Macy's and Valley Fair resulted in major and minor shopping centers soon appearing in the suburban landscape to serve outlying residential areas. These in turn attracted additional residential and commercial development. The unfortunate by-product of the commercial migration to the suburbs was the virtual death of a previously vital downtown business core. Symbolic of this focus away from the core of the city was the decision in the early 1950s to relocate San Jose City Hall to North First Street.

With a reduced market for services and aging building stock, many plans for modernization were implemented in the city center as attempts to compete with the suburban malls. These mostly cosmetic changes after the mid-1950s, however, were not successful in addressing the fundamental transformation of American society that shaped the urban city in the last half of the twentieth century. Many of the historic buildings in the Century Center area continued to undergo façade alterations in the 1950s and 1960s in an effort by their owners to create an atmosphere that would bring back their customers. Some historic facades were completely removed and replaced by modern looking unadorned stucco walls. Others were modified with attached curtain walls, the most prominent in downtown San José being the historic First National Bank Building at the intersection of South First and West Santa Clara Street. The most radical remaining from this time-period is the Gross/Holmes Building at 45 North First Street. A one hundred year-old brick building in 1965, that year all remaining finishes and ornament were stripped from both the inside and outside, the brick walls covered with gunite, and large marble panels and curtain wall modules attached to the outside walls creating a building that lacks any semblance of its true age. These 1950s and 1960s remodeling projects, unlike the earlier Depression era that evolved within a concerted community effort, did not result in a resurgence of economic vitality in the core area, and precipitated the eventual change in urban development policy that enacted large scale urban clearance activities in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1958, city officials adopted the first Redevelopment Plan to officially re-start the process of regeneration of the core area, which continues today in the form of the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José. The first redevelopment project areas were Federal chartered, and focused their activity south of San Fernando Street and along the Guadalupe River. Later State chartered redevelopment plan areas were established, including the Century Center Redevelopment Plan, which was adopted in 1985.

The establishment of Century Center followed listing of the Downtown Commercial Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, a process that had its roots in the development of the San José Transit Mall and its federally mandated Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Congress established this program to preserve the historical and cultural foundations of the nation as an integral part of community life, and Section 106 requires consideration of historic preservation within federal actions. The St. James Square Historic District had also been added to the Register earlier, in 1979. A portion of the St. James Square Historic District is located within the expansion area of the Century Center Redevelopment Plan area that is the subject of this historical overview and assessment.