



Impact of the San Jose Arena

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Introduction

As the pride and symbol of downtown revitalization, the San Jose Arena, spanning over seventeen acres, has shown itself to have the excitement and civic pride for the City of San Jose. Situated at West Santa Clara Street and the Guadalupe Parkway, the arena boasts 450,000 square feet of internal space with the capacity to hold 18,500 people for basketball, 16,000-20,000 for multi-purpose events, and 17,190 for hockey.

Not only is the arena home to four professional sports teams, but attracts sporting events from fencing, volleyball, and even Sumo wrestling.

Major events include the 1996 U.S. Figure Skating Championships, the 1997 NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Finals, and the 1997 NHL All-Star Game.

Managed by San Jose Arena Management since opening in September 1993, the arena has hosted more than 275 events with almost 3 million people passing through its doors.

As fantastic as the building may now appear, the arena was not without its opposition.

No other city among a dozen the *San Jose Mercury News* studied, has spent such a high share of public money on its revival.¹ From the Fairmont Hotel to the San Jose Arena, virtually every new venture relies on taxpayer help.

¹ "What Have We Built? S.J. Residents Love the Results, But Success Carries High Price," San Jose Mercury News, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

Also, residents in the surrounding neighborhood were fearful of the traffic nightmare that would surely come if an arena was built.

When voters approved the arena, they were told it would cost no more than \$100 million. But after the Sharks came along, changing the design, the city's cost went to \$133 million.²

Just nine months away from the opening of the arena, residents near the complex were preparing for the opening day. Homeowners like Patricia Hill had plans to move and Sandy Christiansen was determining a route that would allow him to get home from work on hockey and concert nights.³ And others like Theresa Rodriguez wondered whether it would be more painful to stay in her Autumn-Montgomery neighborhood or to move from the home she has lived in all her life.

Though there were some negative economic aspects, there were more positive ones that outweighed the negatives. There was also a strong overall positive social and psychological impacts as well that helped San Jose feel more of a real city. As much opposition as the arena had, like the traffic impact and the enormous cost to build the arena, the traffic nightmare never surfaced due in part to the extensive planning involved, and the arena had both positive economic and social implications that outweighed the final cost of the arena.

² San Jose Mercury News, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

³ San Jose Mercury News, Nov. 16, 1992, p. 1A

Economic

When the Arena was first proposed, proponents pointed out the added tax revenue the Arena would add to the city from the various businesses such as restaurants and bars.⁴ New jobs were to be seen on the horizon for both the Arena and local business. Businesses in downtown would benefit greatly from the sports facility. Before the opening of the arena, businesses along The Alameda were hoping the arena would bring them a lot of business. Some hoped to have extended hours and hire more staff.

Looking to lure some of the crowds visiting the arena, Norbert Geldner, owner of Greenlee's Bakery on The Alameda, spent \$300,000 to give his storefront a face-lift and outdoor seating.⁵

However, not all business owners shared the same optimism prior to the opening of the arena. Bill Mundy, owner of Schurra's Candy Factory, located nearby on The Alameda, several blocks away from the arena, had said that he would move his business if parking becomes a problem.⁶

"People are already downtown to go to the arena, but before and after the event, they have all these other options like the restaurants, nightclubs and sports bars," said Scott Kniew, executive director of the San Jose Downtown Association. "You can spend a lot of time eating downtown without hitting the same restaurant twice."⁷

⁴ "Arena," San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 5, 1993

⁵ "Shopkeepers and Restaurateurs are waiting to see if San Jose Arena spurs business in the neighborhood," San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 12, 1993, p. 1E

⁶ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 12, 1993, p. 1E

⁷ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 12, 1993, p. 1E

Some arena neighbors hoped to cash in by being close to the arena and adding “arena” to their business. A new hotel has named itself the Arena Hotel, while another store has changed its name to Arena Showcase, and yet another business changed its name to Arena Body and Paint.

Strange, to have a body and paint shop name itself Arena Body and Paint, especially when it has little to do with the arena, besides the fact that it is located near it. Businesses are simply trying to cash in on using the building’s simple moniker.

Edgar Gonzalez of D.N.T. Automotive, who was in the plans to make the name change, wondered why more businesses weren’t lining up to make the switch.⁸ He said that it makes people remember his location better.

Ann Kruskamp, vice-president of Pacific Hotels, owner of the 89-room Arena Hotel, told the *San Jose Mercury News*, “The arena being that close, we just tied in with it. We name our hotels by location. It makes it easy for us, easy for people calling up for reservations.”⁹

Though Gonzalez doubts the arena will do much to attract new business, the Arena Hotel expects events to help fill up their rooms. Out-of-towners, visiting press and even locals who don’t want to drive home after an event are expected to be their customers.

Aside from the name changes, the Arena has definitely benefited some restaurants, bars, parking lots, and a select number of hotels. Notice however, that only *some* not all, reaped benefits of the Arena. Even though the food, parking, and lodging industries tended to fair best, the downtown retail establishment felt little if any increase

in their wallets and were disappointed at the lack of impact the Arena had on them. But overall, restaurants and bars mostly made out well.

As one might expect, for restaurants and bars to share in the Arena's profits, location played a major role in determining their success. Restaurants and bars within a one mile distance from the Arena fared much better than their counterparts just a few blocks away.

Retail

Others business establishments particularly those located in the Pavilion Shopping Center felt few if any impact positive or negative from the arena. Retail establishments especially had poor returns from the arena. Owner of B & M Jewelry Bryan Keizer said, "Most people do not want to shop when they come to an arena event. They may have dinner, but won't come down here [to the Pavilion Shops]." ¹⁰

Keizer said that the arena "had no affect whatsoever" on his business, due to the fact that the "arena is too far from [the immediate] Downtown" area. The overflow of the arena visitors rarely come down to shop near the Pavilion Shopping Center he said. There is "10% or less occupancy at the Pavilion" Keizer points out and that the Downtown area died when Valley Fair expanded and that there was little chance that anything could make the Downtown area alive. "The arena is great for the bars and restaurants, but not the retail establishments," comments Keizer. The Warriors have also "been a bust", not bringing very many visitors to his jewelry store. People tend to simply

⁸ "Arena Neighbors Hope to Cash in on Name," San Jose Mercury News, Aug. 15, 1993, p. 1B

⁹ San Jose Mercury News, Aug. 15, 1993, p. 1B

park and then go directly to the arena. Many of them simply find that this part of Downtown is too far to walk to from the arena, and the majority of them would rather eat, than shop. Keizer credits the lack of business to the arena's distant location from the prime area of Downtown. He notes that in New Orleans, their arena was built in the middle of the city, and that now the "businesses are thriving there."

Not all food establishments are doing well as a result of the arena. The manager of Hannah's Cookies located on the ground level of the Pavilion Shopping Center simply states that the arena "had no affect" and their "sales are unaffected" by the arena.¹¹

The local Walden Books store, manager David Truhe said they "get marginal people," but not enough to significantly increase sales.¹² Anytime there is hockey or basketball, they get some customers. They don't get a lot, and it's "barely noticeable."¹³

At Balloons & Bears also located at the Pavilion, assistant manager Carolyn Thomas said, "It hasn't changed. Even when they had the Success Seminar, the traffic, cars that is, wasn't impacted."¹⁴ Even without the arena built, "business would still be the same." Their main customers are business workers and tourists, "but not people who live here" Thomas said.

However, the Pavilion Shopping Center had already suffered greatly from lackluster sales long before the arena was built. Lack of residential neighborhoods in the downtown area also contributed to the Pavilion failure. Business establishments at the Pavilion may have been doomed from the beginning and no major facility may have cured

¹⁰ Owner of B & M Jewelry, interview with Bryan Keizer, March 1997

¹¹ Manager of Hannah's Cookies, interview with manager (name unknown), March 1997

¹² Manager of Walden Books, interview with David Truhe, March 1997

¹³ Manager of Walden Books, interview with David Truhe, March 1997

¹⁴ Assistant Manager, interview with Carolyn Thomas, March 1997

their financial problems. Not even the new cinema complex, seen as the cure to revive the center and other local businesses did not greatly affect them. In essence, as far as the Pavilion Shopping Center is concerned, the arena had failed them, though many businesses were not counting on it either way. Though the primary reason the Pavilion shops had little if any affect, was due to the far distance from the arena. Located about two miles away from the arena, most arena patrons are not willing to walk that far, and would rather settle for more convenient establishments located closer to the sports facility. Aside from the Pavilion Shopping Center, other businesses, particularly restaurants did much better.

Restaurants, Bars, & other Food Establishments

Many restaurants and other food establishments knew that the arena would draw thousands of customers to their business whenever there was an event. With circus, hockey, concert fans by the thousands, all looking for a bite to eat or some evening entertainment while visiting the arena.

Other restaurants admit they do better business because of the arena. The Sports City Café confidently said they “obviously do more business.” This café, located at the Pavilion Shopping Center, is one of the few businesses that have experienced an increase in sales there.

Henry’s World Famous Hi-Life restaurant and bar, easily within walking distance of the arena, geared up for more business by hiring two more workers for the kitchen and table service. Today Manager Richard Aranda said that January is usually the slowest month, but this year when the arena hosted the All-Stars game, sales were up about

45%.¹⁵ The arena brought in a lot of people, more than when there was no arena. However, with all the added foot traffic, it has scared off all the normal clientele now that Henry's Hi-Life is usually packed. Therefore, when there are no Sharks or Warriors games, business tapers off quite a bit. The Sharks brought in a lot more revenue than the Warriors he said. Perhaps a "3 to 1 ratio." Children's event like Sesame Street, don't usually attract too many customers though. Most sporting events bring in much more revenue. Aranda also noted that Henry's Hi-Life has developed a late night business which it never had before. They used to close at 9 p.m., but now with the arena, they close at 2 a.m. on sports event nights. They also need seven workers added to the regular seven normally on duty when the Sharks play. If the home team wins, then bar sales increase and customers purchasing power is also affected.

At Café Zucco, located on South First Street, owners Dave Brennan and Ralph Bueno s had a "somewhat lightly"¹⁶ impact. They credit their lack of arena spillover to "there's not very much alcohol" at their café.

Next door at the Flying Pig Pub, owner Stratin Seremetis, said they were "affected a little bit, but not a lot."¹⁷ But he thinks that's due to the fact that his pub is just two years old. Each year he gets more patrons, especially from the arena as more and more people learn about his pub. Seremetis sees some impact on Shark's and Warrior's game nights, but as he puts it the arena customers are the "gravy or icing," it helps but not enough to make it the main course. When he first established the Flying Pug Pub, he

¹⁵ Manager of Henry's World Famous Hi-Life, interview with Richard Aranda, May 25, 1997

¹⁶ Owners of Café Zucco, interview with Dave Brennan and Ralph Bueno, March 1997

¹⁷ Owner of Flying Pig Pub, interview with Stratin Seremetis, March 1997

didn't even look at the arena as a factor. His primary customers remain young adults and business people.

At Bella Mia, also next door to Café Zucco, manager Chris Casel said, "It's great!"¹⁸, and that the shuttle the arena provides for free, helps. They definitely see an increase when there's an arena event occurring. An arena event can bring in anywhere from \$800 to \$1200 in extra sales. The success of their sales depends largely on the type of arena event. Since they cater to a more expensive clientele, if there's a Wild 107.7 concert, they will have poor business but if it's Barbra Streisand, "we'd be all filled up." They also do quite well with the Sharks. "When there is a weekend Sharks game, attendance at Bella Mia's is big," said Casel. If the arena wasn't built, they'd depend on the Center for Performing Arts and the San Jose Repertory Theater. "We're not totally dependent, but the arena helps," explains Casel.

Moving down the street to San Carlos street lies Gordon Biersch Brewing Company. They have "lots of Sharks people, and the bar always fills up before a Warriors game,"¹⁹ said Host Robley Browne. The restaurant is not as impacted, but it definitely fills up the bars. Though the prior establishment, which was also a microbrewery, had failed before the arena was built, the current microbrewery has no plans to go out of business, most likely due to the arena's presence.

Pizz'a Chicago's manager Eric Santos "sees some trickle in" from the arena."²⁰ "Concerts don't bring in too many people and same with the Warriors. They mostly

¹⁸ Manager of Bella Mia's, interview with Chris Casel, March 1997

¹⁹ Host of Gordon Biersch Brewing Co., interview with Robley Browne, March 1997

²⁰ Manager of Pizz'a Chicago, interview with Eric Santo, March 1997

come from Sharks game. Situated on West San Fernando Street, Pizz'a Chicago mainly receives business from local downtown business.

Walking down a couple blocks one comes to San Pedro Square. Over at the Tied House Café & Brewery on North San Pedro Street, business is booming due to the arena. The employees schedules are planned around arena events according to server Cecilia Wright.²¹ "We are staffed according to the arena," said Wright. On non arena event nights, the Tied House has 7 to 8 servers, while on a Sharks night, they have eighteen servers. She also notes that Sharks night are better than any other night. "We're packed on arena nights," Wright said. Between 6 and 7:30 at night, the Tied House experiences its busiest time on an arena event night serving approximately 350 dinners just in that time frame. "The arena has definitely impacted us a lot," said Wright. When the Sharks season ends, business decreases a lot. The success of the Tied House may also be a result of their continual advertising in arena itself, thus making themselves more known to the arena patrons. Oddly enough, bartender Hythum Kiswani said that if the hockey season would ever be canceled "it's not going to kill us. Not even close...We can survive without the Sharks."²² Judging by Wright's comments though, it would appear there is a contradiction whether or not they depend on the Sharks. What is for sure however, is that the Tied House Café & Brewery definitely does better with the arena around.

Also on North San Pedro Street is Bergin's Shark & Rose. Owner Rich Bergin said that the arena "has a big effect at night for dinner crowds"²³ at Shark & Rose. He's definitely pleased at the amount of business the Sharks' games bring in, but said that the

²¹ Server of Tied House Café & Brewery, interview with Cecilia Wright, March 1997

²² "Businesses expect Sharks delay to take a little bite," *San Jose Mercury News*, Oct. 1, 1994, p. 1B

²³ Owner of Bergin's Sharks & Rose, interview with Rich Bergin, March 1997

Warriors were a disappointment. The type of concert playing also plays part of this restaurant's success. If the concert is geared more for the young adult like the rock concerts, than they won't be seeing any increase in business. If it's Barbra Streisand on the other hand, than "we're busy." Like the Tied House, Bergin's Shark & Rose also plans around the arena. On a Sharks' game, 8 to 9 workers will be serving customers, as opposed to the usual four people on a regular night. He notes that customers tend to come in short bursts, at times at night, it will be slow, then suddenly many customers will arrive. He credits his restaurants success as a result of the city limiting parking near the arena. Therefore, people have to park closer to San Pedro Square and thus tempted to visit the surrounding restaurants. Bergin said the main reason he bought this restaurant was because of the arena and that he heavily depends on the arena. The arena probably accounts for 25% of his sales. On the average arena night, they serve about eighty dinners and with a seating capacity of sixty people, "it's usually filled up on Sharks' nights." Bergin's Shark & Rose like other restaurants, said the Warriors games did not bring in as many customers as were anticipated.

Though some restaurants said they didn't do as well due to their lack of close proximity to the arena, one restaurant Il Fornaio, which is located at South Market Street right under the Hyatt Sainte Claire, said they do quite well due to the arena. Even though Il Fornaio is one of the farthest restaurants, Lydia Chavez, event coordinator, said they're "usually busy when there's any performance, both before and after."²⁴ Some will have a light dinner, and others will come back at night to have dessert. Chavez estimates that their sales have gone up 15% and that they need to have a full staff when the arena has an

event. However, she adds that Il Fornaio would still do well since they're a chain and near the convention center. But still, any extra business is better than having no extra at all. Sometimes, Il Fornaio even serves the stars that perform at the arena. Without the arena, star guests may not have visited the restaurant.

One interesting economic factor depends on the success of the Sharks. If the sharks are not doing as well, say perhaps they are on a losing streak, many restaurants see a decrease in the number of customers. Therefore, not only does the success of restaurants depend on their physical location, but also the psychological feeling of arena visitors and whether or not they feel fit as a result of a winning or game.²⁵

Dependence of local restaurants and other food establishments on the arena was further apparent in 1994 when a Hockey lockout began. Many local businesses were affected by the stalemate.

Rich Bergin and Joyce Searls, as mentioned before, opened a new seafood restaurant Bergin's Shark & Rose, on September 28, when it was the night of the Sharks' last pre-season game. Upon opening their restaurant, they had to turn people away due to lack of space. The next day, when the hockey lockout began, business quickly dried up. When the Sharks had their playoff in 1993, San Jose's newly refurbished downtown became alive. However, in the fall of 1994, during the hockey standoff, calmness had replaced the liveliness of downtown. When the NHL's board of governors decided to cancel the National Hockey League All-Star Game,—an event that was supposed to showcase the arena as the success of downtown redevelopment—Steve Tedesco, president of the San Jose Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, estimated that local

²⁴ Event Coordinator of Il Fornaio, interview with Lydia Chavez, May 24, 1997

merchants would lose \$10 million from hotel rents, food sales, and other merchandising income the game would have brought in. Though the city would not lose any direct income from the Sharks, it will lose some money from the hotel room taxes.²⁶ Restaurants and bar owners had feared losing millions more. At the Tied House, general manager Gene Walsh said his business was cut in half by the hockey stalemate. Instead of serving 500 to 700 meals on game nights, he was only serving 200.²⁷

An Irish pub called Paddy's on Santa Clara Street attracts sports-minded crowds. Owner Patrick McMahon said his business had dropped by 20 to 25 percent. He was expecting to go out of business if the stalemate had not been resolved by June of 1995.

At the arena, about 800 part-time employees and concessionaires had faced losing their job due to the stalemate. Though the arena had drawn big events like Eric Clapton, they had yet to fill the Sharks vacancy which at the time, had canceled fourteen dates.

Furthermore, Tim Nondorf, general manager of the San Jose Hilton & Towers had said his hotel had booked 700 rooms for the games, many of which held for the week before the game. Though he estimated his loss to be \$100,000, he was confident that small conventions and business travelers would fill some of the canceled rooms.²⁸

The strong dependence of restaurants and bars as shown during the hockey lockout further illustrate and prove how many of the downtown food establishments are dependent on the area. Even though many of the restaurants said they could survive if the

²⁵ Server of Tied House Café & Brewery, interview with Cecilia Wright, March 1997

²⁶ "All Gone for All-Star Game, NHL Body-Slams Tourism Bonanza," San Jose Mercury News, Dec. 9, 1997, p. 1A

²⁷ "Hockey Dispute Hurts Eateries, Solemnity Replaces Joy In Downtown S.J.," San Jose Mercury News, Dec. 10, 1994, p. 1B

²⁸ "All Gone for All-Star Game, NHL Body-Slams Tourism Bonanza," San Jose Mercury News, Dec. 9, 1994, p. 1A

arena wasn't built, when the hockey lockout began, that's when they realized they have grown to be dependent on it.

Hotels

Hotels in downtown were predicted to do quite well. However not all of downtown's hotels had greatly benefited. The benefit seemed to come mainly from the larger and well-known hotels and benefited only a select few.

Looking at when the arena had just opened up to the present year, the total downtown occupancy rate has gone from 68.84% in 1993-1994 to 74.88% in 1996-January 1997.²⁹ Though there was an increase of 6 %, Public Relations Manager Sony Y. Bradley from the San Jose Convention & Visitors cautions that that increase may not necessarily be a result of the arena.³⁰ Back in 1993, there was a recession she notes, and now in 1997 the economy has picked up dramatically here in San Jose. So the increase in occupancy may be due to the new resurgence in the economy. This hotel occupancy rate is comprised of the entire greater downtown area and not just to the center of downtown. The occupancy rate sheet comprises of DeAnza, Fairmont, Holiday Inn Park Center Plaza, Holiday Inn Silicon Valley, Homewood Suites, Hyatt Sainte Claire, Hyatt San Jose, LeBaron, Marriot Courtyard, Radisson Plaza, Red Lion, San Jose Hilton & Tower, Summerfield Suits, and Airport Inn International. Since a majority of these hotels are not

²⁹ "Hotel Occupancy and Average Rate Summary", San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau, San Jose, California, February 1997

³⁰ Public Relations Manager of San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau, interview with Sony Y. Bradley, February 1997

located near the arena, this data should not be heavily relied upon to show that hotels were affected by the arena.

The San Jose Hilton & Tower hotel had “some minimal effect”³¹ according to general manager John Southwell. The downtown Hilton accommodates some of the hockey and basketball teams. When singers like Barbra Streisand sang at the arena, she stayed at the Fairmont, while the majority of her crew stayed at the Hilton. Many of the visiting hockey teams have also stayed at the Hilton as well as the hosts of the Success Seminar which was held at the arena. Southwell is “glad the arena’s here” as any extra business is better than none at all.

Over at the Hyatt Sainte Claire, night manager Kim Cronk said that they were “not that much affected as far as staying over, we’re a little too far, about six blocks away.”³² When there’s an arena event on the weekend they have “about five to ten rooms full, it all depends.” When Pavarotti was over they had ten rooms occupied. When the arena has more “upper scale events” they have more rooms occupied. “It’s been a nice benefit to downtown. We do get more foot traffic and more culture. It’s added something more to downtown,” Cronk adds.

Unfortunately for the Holiday Inn Silicon Valley, this hotel appears to be one of those smaller hotels that is not having an affect of the arena. A spokesperson for the Holiday Inn bluntly said they “are not affected”³³ at all by the arena.

Parking Garages

³¹ General manager of San Jose Hilton, interview with John Southwell, March 1997

³² Night manager of Hyatt Saint Claire, interview with Kim Cronk, May 24, 1997

³³ Spokesperson of Holiday Inn, interview with unknown person, March 1997

One of the biggest winners of the success of the arena are the parking garages and lot facilities that are usually overlooked when analyzing the economic impact of the arena. City Park, a private company has parking lots at San Pedro Square with 132 parking spaces and at the Route 87/Santa Clara Parking Center that has 180 parking spaces. President Al Schlarmann said, "When there is an event, we try to keep arena visitors out of the San Pedro garage since people tend to clog it up."³⁴ To keep people from parking at the San Pedro Square lot and blocking restaurants customers from parking closer to the restaurants, City Park tries to keep people out by raising the parking fee to five dollars, then drop it back down to three dollars after an event has occurred. It's in their "mutual interests to support each other [the restaurants] with various policies,"³⁵ said Schlarmann. During the morning they keep parking prices at four dollars, then drop it to three dollars. At night the almost completely depend on the Arena. The occupancy for the parking lots can go all the up to 100% when the Arena is heavily attended.³⁶ With about 225 events last year, City Park and other parking garages undoubtedly did well.

Business Organizations

Some workers from a Mountain View company got together to go to a Sharks game at the arena one season, ate dinner downtown, and thought it would be a great place to move their company to downtown. The company, Ford, Cicoletti and McClure moved its fifteen employees in 1994 to 160 West Santa Clara Street having outgrown its

³⁴ President of City Park, interview with Al Schlarmann, March 1997

³⁵ President of City Park, interview with Al Schlarmann, March 1997

³⁶ President of City Park, interview with Al Schlarmann, March 1997

Mountain View Office.³⁷ Of course, there was more to it than liking hockey. The company saw solid business opportunities here, just what the redevelopment agency has been trying to do for years, attracting businesses to move downtown and the arena helped to reinforce that. The three partners all went to a Sharks game together, talked things over, and soon afterwards decided to make the move.

The downtown revival helped to influence them and other businesses to locate offices here. Prime downtown office space, which at one time went unoccupied, is now almost leased up. And the arena is just one factor affecting that.

The arena has helped both the San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau and Redevelopment Agency market San Jose more easily.

Public Relations Manager Sonya Y. Bradley of San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau, said its made San Jose a bigger place on the map, more identity and good name recognition. "It makes it easier to market San Jose. We can use the Sharks figure as a marketing partner,"³⁸ Bradley said.

Over at the Redevelopment Agency, Paul J. Boggini, senior development officer, said that even though the cost of the arena was high, the success of the arena makes it easier to present to the public when they want to show them another redevelopment project.³⁹

³⁷ "At One With the Arena: Price Tag Aside, the Big Draw Downtown Has a Lot," San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

³⁸ Public Relations Manager of San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau, interview with Sonya Y. Bradley, February 1997

³⁹ Senior Development Officer of the Redevelopment Agency, interview with Paul J. Boggini, March 1997

The arena also helps to promote the local downtown area. The area where the arena now stands was once an old run down area, but now the arena has helped clean it up. The place is more livened up.

When asked if property values have been affected, Boggini said "it's too soon to tell."⁴⁰ There's probably an increase, but it's still unproved. Some residents fixed up their properties to make it more desirable since the arena was bringing livening up the area.

With the local business doing well, commercial real estate will most likely be more valuable than when the area was simple industrial and residential area. Residential real estate would probably not increase, especially since it's not too desirable to want to live near a huge sports complex.

⁴⁰ Senior Development Officer of the Redevelopment Agency, interview with Paul J. Boggini, March 1997

Environmental

Traffic Impact

Back in 1988, many residents living in the Victorian style homes west of the Guadalupe River voted against building the sports arena.⁴¹ They feared having a storm of cars passing through their neighborhood. Four years later, just a year before the arena would open, their nightmares appeared to be coming closer. Near the arena, there was no extra parking spaces available, since the city had no more money budgeted towards parking lots. Though the city had pledged to provide about 1,800 parking spaces by opening day, neighbors still said that was not enough. Fearful that arena visitors would park on their streets, they urged for a permit parking plan that would keep arena guests of their street.

Before the arena could be opened, extensive planning was involved in determining the traffic impact. At the Department of Streets and Traffic, Jennay M. Harrison and associate civil engineer was assigned to be the Arena Traffic and Parking Management Coordinator.

Many steps were implemented before the arena construction began. Some of those that were implemented were: through traffic restrictions on Julian and Hanchett Streets at The Alameda, traffic signal improvements to increase capacity at several intersections, residential permit parking areas in four neighborhoods with enhanced

⁴¹ "Arena Neighbors Brace for Day 1 Some Won Over; Others Adopt Wait-and-See Attitude Toward Facility," San Jose Mercury News, Sept. 6, 1993, p. 1B

enforcement, shuttle service in conjunction with County Transit Agency, and a state-of-the-art Motorist Information System.⁴²

An extensive study was also conducted called the Transportation and Parking Management Plan (TPMP) by the City of San Jose, Department of Streets and Traffic. The TPMP was created as a result of a Council Resolution on October 24, 1991, between the City of San Jose and the San Jose Arena Management Corporation.⁴³ The TPMP was first conducted in 1991 following three other revisions. A council amendment was created to ensure that the TPMP was responsive to the new challenges and opportunities that arose with respect to arena transportation and parking concerns.⁴⁴ In doing so, the TPMP published a document in order to develop a plan to manage traffic and parking access and circulation serving the San Jose Arena.

The TPMP was headed by Jennay Harrison. The TPMP spanned from 1991 to 1994, six months after the arena began full operating. So, in planning, the City of San Jose did as much as they possibly could, which would later prove worthwhile and time well spent.

As expected, many of the residents were very concerned before the arena was built. They expected the worse. Harrison and her department held many local meetings to discuss the future traffic flow through their neighborhood. "They were very concerned,"

said Harrison. The meetings were also well attended, she noted.

⁴² Associate Civil Engineer, Arena Traffic and Parking Management of City of San Jose Department of Streets & Traffic, interview with Jennay M. Harrison, March 1997

⁴³ City of San Jose: Department of Streets and Traffic, San Jose Arena: Transportation and Parking Management Plan, June 1994

When the arena was about to open in September of 1993, the Autumn-Montgomery, Parkside, and St. Leo's neighborhoods were preparing for the worst since these neighborhood would be the epicenter of the traffic explosion. They decided to take a wait and see attitude even though many had already braced for the impact.

"It's kind of there, and there's not much you can do about it,"⁴⁵ said Ted Nunes, who has a home on Lakehouse Avenue. In 1998, Nunes voted against the arena, but has since changed his mind. "San Jose needs some kind of sports deal because we don't have much. It's a nice building,"⁴⁶ he told the *San Jose Mercury News*.

Other neighbors were fearing for the worst. Picturing the neighborhoods being swamped by hundreds of motorists seeking shortcuts or free parking. The city had placed up signs on blocks warning of \$50 fines for any cars parked without a residential permit. One homeowner, Victor Hill, even got a ticket for parking in front of his own house on Autumn Court. Though he's not too happy about the arena's traffic, he says "It's going to be good in the long run, but right now, people have to adjust."⁴⁷

Some residents wanted increased police patrols or have new street lights, and discussed possible solutions of improving the neighborhood.

Downtown City Councilman David Pandori, who represents some of the neighbors near the arena, said that the city had done as much as it could for the neighborhood. He noted a new shuttle between the arena and downtown trolley stops, a

⁴⁴ City of San Jose: Department of Streets and Traffic, San Jose Arena: Transportation and Parking Management Plan, June 1994

⁴⁵ San Jose Mercury News, Sept. 6, 1993, p. 1B

⁴⁶ San Jose Mercury News, Sept. 6, 1993, p. 1B

⁴⁷ San Jose Mercury News, Sept. 6, 1993, p. 1B

sign network leading drivers to and from parking lots and freeway exits, and a permit-parking programs to neighborhoods who requested it.

Pandori did suggest however that the city could try a to consider a voluntary relocation program for people living in the Autumn-Montgomery area, a neighborhood that is closest to the arena, for those who can't tolerate the 150 or more planned games, concerts and other events throughout the year. "I just don't know what more can be done for (that) neighborhood,"⁴⁸ Pandori said.

On Tuesday, September 7, 1993, judgment day came for local arena neighborhoods. With all the tense blood pressure building up and expectations of traffic snafus, opening night actually proved to be much simpler than previously expected, especially for the thousands who had arrived an hour or two early.⁴⁹ Searching for a parking space wasn't hard either. And returning home was just as easy. Many people had came to downtown early, trying to determine where to park and possibly eat dinner.

Except for a few traffic snarls, as the arena's first event, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus began, traffic planners were satisfied with the smoothness of traffic.

Wally Kron and Sharies Hession of Foster City, said about finding parking, "No problem. We just wheeled right in. It was a real pleasant surprise. It looks like they got their act together."

Equally impressive was the trek back home. After the circus event had concluded at 10:05 p.m., pedestrians filled nearby streets. Police helped to control traffic by

⁴⁸ San Jose Mercury News, Sept. 6, 1993, p. 1B

⁴⁹ "Parking was as Easy as 1,2,3(4,5,6,7—\$, that is)," San Jose Mercury News, September 9, 1993, p. 5A

stopping cars at three locations simultaneously, then letting cars pass through at the same time.

By 10:30 p.m., the main arena lots were devoid of any cars.

“Basically, most all the lots have emptied and traffic is back to normal operation,” said Ron Northouse, an engineer with the city of San Jose. “So far so good.”⁵⁰

Police liaison to the arena committee, said, “For a first event, for never having done it before, it went real well.”⁵¹

Traffic planners expected 3,000 to 3,500 cars for the circus, but the final count may have been closer to 5,000. Even with the unexpected amount of cars, the arena planning in conjunction with the police all helped to ameliorate any foreseen problems.

A few months back during the traffic planning stages, Joanne Buckley, a member of the resident’s Arena Oversight Committee who lives near the arena had commented, “The problem is they do all these studies. Until we actually see one of the events start to flow, we’re not going to know the real impact.” After the arena’s first night, she now has her answer.

Much of the traffic flow ease is due in part to the City of San Jose, Department of Streets and Traffic. On the 10th floor of the Horizon Towers building in downtown San Jose, a traffic control center informally known as “Signal Central” can monitor the flow of traffic and correct any arising problems. There engineering technicians can monitor various downtown intersections by watching television monitors hooked up to cameras around downtown.

⁵⁰ San Jose Mercury News, September 9, 1993, p. 5A

⁵¹ San Jose Mercury News, September 9, 1993, p. 5A

With the click of an icon on a computer screen, Mayuko Tzanavaras, can change the message on the sign above cars to allow two lanes, instead of one, to turn left toward the closest parking spots. If needed, she can change red lights to green lights to better control the flow of traffic, although that task is usually left up to the computer.

The purpose of Signal Central is to make sure that people make it to the game as quickly as possible and don't overflow the lots or neighborhoods surrounding the area.⁵²

"We know from experience where traffic is coming from," said Joe Garcia, a civil engineer who helped develop the plan for arena traffic. "What we did was look at those movements and develop a plan for timing the signals."⁵³

Signal Central was born out of a planned \$24 million effort to automate the city's traffic signals. There are about 220 of the 650 signal lights that are part of the system. Eventually 540 will be connected.

Signal Central is mainly staffed during major events, though some smaller ones may be staffed as well. If the arena has a crowd of about 5000-6000, then Signal Central will not be monitoring.⁵⁴ Normally there is only one person staffing Signal Central, but once in there might be no more than two people.

The traffic flow during a Sharks event usually doesn't require that much close attention, since most of the people are repeat arena visitors and already know which streets to take and which ones not to take. Concerts usually require more close attention since many of the people are new to the arena and are not regular visitors.

⁵² "The Puck Stops Here, Think Arena Action is Fast? Try Signal Central," San Jose Mercury News, Apr. 28, 1995, p 1A

⁵³ San Jose Mercury News, Apr. 28, 1995, p 1A

⁵⁴ Engineering technician of Department of Streets and Traffic, interview with Mayuko Tzanavaras, March 1997

“They don’t know the easy ways to get out. Sharks games are much easier, people know the place,” said Tzanavaras.

The usual monitoring time frame for Signal Central is from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. When the Sharks play, Signal Central’s one-person crew usually leaves at around 10 p.m. But when a concerts playing, the crew won’t be able to leave until 1 a.m. at the latest and they usually need to begin monitoring at 5:30 p.m. rather than 6 p.m.

Much of Signal Central’s work has helped to ease the traffic problem at the arena, which has only 1,800 parking spaces.

After the arena had opened, Jennay Harrison from the City of San Jose, Department of Streets and Traffic, as mentioned before, had to do follow up meetings for the local neighborhoods. At the meetings, attendance was very low, people obviously must have been satisfied at the traffic flow. At one meeting, a few residents had complained about a traffic problem and asked the Department of Streets and Traffic to fix it. Surveys were then passed out to the residents, asking if there was such a problem, and asking if it needed to be fixed. When the surveys were returned, a large majority of the residents had said there was not a problem and thus no need to fix anything. This further illustrates how the once foreseen traffic jams, never materialized. For the meetings to have low attendance shows how the residents by way of not attending, no longer felt that their foreseen traffic woes were a problem.

After the opening of the arena, the TPMP implemented the following: manual traffic control of up to 13 critical intersections during events, an Arena Events Operations Committee to coordinate all event operations, and a Community Relations Subcommittee

consisting of representatives from the five arena neighborhoods to monitor neighborhood impacts from arena operations.

“The most stunning accomplishment is that none of the scenarios of miserable traffic or neighborhood disintegration came to pass. Visitors learned to park downtown and walk—or take the shuttle bus.”⁵⁵ What better quote would show how well planned the arena traffic situation was managed and how well they had anticipated any potential disasters.

⁵⁵ “Year One: San Jose Arena’s First Anniversary, Popular Venue is the Biggest Success in the City’s Rebuilt Downtown,” San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 1A

Social

Not only did the Arena have economic ramifications which were forecast such as the economic factors, but also social and psychological impacts. The social and psychological impacts equally impressive and positive if even greater.

Ten years ago, 81 percent of the respondents to a *San Jose Mercury News* survey classified downtown as poor or fair.⁵⁶ Today, a wide majority say it is a good place to work, eat or seek entertainment like the arena.

Perhaps even more significantly, downtown has become a regional draw. Its popularity does not decrease significantly among people who live outside the city.

Not only has the arena given people a reason to go downtown, it has become a source of civic pride. Even some of the arena's longtime opponents concede its benefits.⁵⁷

"It's a great addition to the city," said photographer Casey Fuller, who worked on the anti-arena campaign. "Very costly, but a great addition."⁵⁸

San Jose Mayor Susan Hammer said, "It really exceeds our wildest dreams and expectations, what it's done for the city of San Jose. 'Build an arena and we'll come.' And by golly, they came."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ "What Have We Built? S.J. Residents Love the Results, But Success Carries High Price," *San Jose Mercury News*, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

⁵⁷ "At One With the Arena, Price Tag Aside, the Big Draw Downtown has a Lot," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

⁵⁸ *San Jose Mercury News*, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

⁵⁹ *San Jose Mercury News*, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

Mark Ritchie, a real estate broker whose firm handles much of the leasing of office space downtown said, "When I came here in 1987, its was like going to Siberia. Now it's totally different. People are saying, "What's going on down there?"'"⁶⁰

Aesthetic Beauty

In architecture and image, San Jose's core has been transformed from embarrassment to showpiece. A *San Jose Mercury News* poll showed two-thirds of San Joseans said rebuilding downtown was worth the money.⁶¹

The arena itself is something to be proud of especially since it was originally expected to have been an "architectural dud."⁶² Well-known architects were passed over and early designs for the arena were not exactly something to rave about. And worst of all, the building is a hybrid of the two lowest forms of architectural life: created by a commercial development deal and a public works project. With such a strange background, the arena should have been awful.

But strangely enough, the arena's weak background became a beautiful landmark at Santa Clara and Autumn streets. San Jose has been blessed with a proud public landmark. Its distinctive stainless steel walls set it apart as a civic building. Its concrete-ribbed concourse experiences the bustling and excitement of arena visitors. Dozens of big and small design decisions have come down on the side of comfort and delight.

⁶⁰ *San Jose Mercury News*, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

⁶¹ *San Jose Mercury News*, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

⁶² "A Room With A View: Inside and Out, San Jose Arena Is A Source of Civic Pride," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 5, 1993, p. 1 (Perspective)

Though the boxy form of the arena may appear to lack substance, careful attention to detail has been applied to the building of it. Those humble design shapes such as the corrugated stainless steel skin, are modern material, pragmatic and functional, but also one with an industrial strength beauty to give the arena the distinctive heft of a civic monument. The gleaming low maintenance steel picks up light and reflections in an ever-changing display.

The skin of arena is a rich and fitting and a relief from the stucco and granite of the old industrial buildings along Autumn Street gave their lives so the arena could be built.

With so much architectural attention, the arena has certainly proved to stand out in downtown, and has complimented the Redevelopment Agency's quest for beautifying downtown San Jose. Such a grand building deserves to be showed off, as many San Joseans undoubtedly do.

Identity

San Jose, a sprawling city surpassing San Francisco in population in the last decade has reconstructed a new downtown. A city with the usual parks, performing arts centers theaters, etc., but lacked the very central core or heart of a city. San Jose has remained a second city in the Bay Area, a place known to many in the Bay Area as a "dull and charmless town."⁶³ A place where everyone left when they wanted a night on the town. However, all that is changing. The arena has brought San Jose into the big leagues of sports and entertainment. Combined with a partially revitalized downtown and "lively

arts scene,” San Jose has finally given its citizens something to actually brag about. The arena even gives some San Franciscans a reason to drive 40 minutes down to San Jose.

Such a drive on a Friday night is the return home of the National Hockey League Sharks, the Cinderella team in the Stanley Cup playoffs, to just wanting to hear Luciano Pavarotti or Barbra Streisand.

Luciano Pavarotti, the famous opera singer pitched a high note at the arena 1994 as thousands of opera enthusiasts packed the arena listening attentively.

Barbra Streisand chose San Jose also in 1994 as one of only five American stops on her concert tour. Recognition that San Jose is finally receiving. As one of the tenth largest cities in the United States, San Jose truly feels like one of the big cities. Gone are the days when Dionne Warwick’s lyric, “Do you know the way to San Jose” were once the only images that appeared upon hearing the city of “San Jose.”

Fortunately for San Jose, “no one is singing that song anymore” said Mayor Susan Hammer⁶⁴ The Sharks and other Arena attractions have given this bustling city of 821,000 citizens “something to rally about” and has poured “millions and millions of dollars in spin-off revenues” into the city coffers.⁶⁵

Even a *Detroit News* hockey beat writer Cynthia Lambert ranked the arena as one of the top five in hockey, along with such venerable showplaces as the Forum in Montreal and the Boston Garden.⁶⁶

⁶³ “San Jose Leaps Into Big Leagues,” *New York Times*, May 6, 1994, p. A16 (microfilm)

⁶⁴ *New York Times*, May 6, 1994, p. A16, Mayor Susan Hammer (microfilm)

⁶⁵ *New York Times*, May 6, 1994, p. A16 (microfilm)

⁶⁶ “At One With the Arena, Price Tag Aside, the Big Draw Downtown has a Lot,” *San Jose Mercury News*, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

Before, few people knew where San Jose was located, knowing it was some high-tech center that made some kind of silicon chips.

The residents of Silicon Valley were hungry for local entertainment as noted by the brisk 59 minutes the Pavarotti concert tickets sold for. Those waiting for the Streisand concert sold in 26 minutes while those of the Sharks' playoff tickets sold in 11.

Put simply, when filled with people, the arena may be the most lively public street in San Jose.

Civic Pride

"The arena is by far the most popular San Jose Redevelopment project."⁶⁷ In it's first year, 1.7 million customers poured through the arena, from Disney on Ice to Sharks games to a Barbra Streisand concert. Though some were repeat visitors, hundreds of thousand more came downtown for entertainment rather than to drive to San Francisco or Oakland. Even some living from San Francisco and Oakland came to see Sharks games.

"People love the arena."⁶⁸ The building itself, as mentioned above, to a parking plan that encourages people to wander downtown and spend money. Many San Joseans generally seem to be proud of it.⁶⁹

However, with the \$146 million arena tab, many taxpayers though shouldn't have cost that much and that private parties should have financed it more. "But few today say it shouldn't have been built at all."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

⁶⁸ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

⁶⁹ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

⁷⁰ San Jose Mercury News, Sep. 8, 1994, p. 6B

Conclusion

As doubtful as the problems of the Arena first posed, the traffic situation has been compromised, the economic impact has effected many but not all, and the social identity San Jose has gained as well as a boost in civic pride have all been beneficial.

The extensive studying the city had done along with the continuous updates with local residents all helped to ease and comfort the residents. Though some had complained that they were long are useless, few would argue today that they were unnecessary given the success of those studies.

Eleven years ago, a Mercury News series concluded that for its size and wealth, San Jose had the feeblest downtown in the United States. By almost any standards—office space, housing starts, tax revenue—it ranked near the bottom.⁷¹

In essence, the Arena has brought positive as well as negative economic impacts to San Jose and that there are various aspects to look at those impacts. Yes, it did help nearby restaurants, but not all, and the retail establishments hoping to benefit as well, were dismally disappointed. Yes, a few select hotels benefited, but only a select few. But there were also many restaurants that were heavily impacted on them and now almost depend on them. In a sense they share a relationship, where the restaurants have grown so attached to the arena, that if it were to disappear, they would be unable to survive.

It seems odd how many of the restaurants said they could rely on themselves and become independent if the arena were to somehow disappear, but when the hockey

⁷¹ "What Have We Built? S.J. Residents Love the Results, But Success Carries High Price," San Jose Mercury News, May 22, 1994, p. 1A

lockout occurred many of the businesses found themselves losing money as a result. They had become so accustomed to arena spill-over, that once it had stopped, and few were visiting downtown, then were they able to realize how much impact the arena really had on their business.

Though economic implications helped some businesses and did prove to be partially successful in the restaurant sector, the social and psychological implications did help the city.

The arena brought great civic pride and identity to San Jose. Long held behind the shadow of San Francisco, San Jose is finally receiving the respect it deserves. Ten years, ago mention the city San Jose, and few wouldn't be able to tell you where it was. And if they did they'd they it's near San Francisco.

But no longer, San Jose is now becoming much more recognized, not just because it's the Capital of Silicon Valley, but also because it now can truly feel like a city with a bonfide sports arena. Something every major city in the United States had, some sort of sports major sports facility, but San Jose seemed to lack.

As one brochure summed it up, "San Jose is now a first class city."⁷²

⁷² San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau, Brochure, San Jose, California, March 1997

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