

TRANSFORMING INTO A NEXT-GEN CITY

San Leandro

San Leandro's many female business leaders are helping to drive the city's growth. From left, CEOs Martha Trela, Kristin Anderson, and Olgica Bakajin are together on the San Leandro Tech Campus near the "Truth Is Beauty" sculpture.

PROFILES, PAGES 14-15



Creekside Plaza Partners

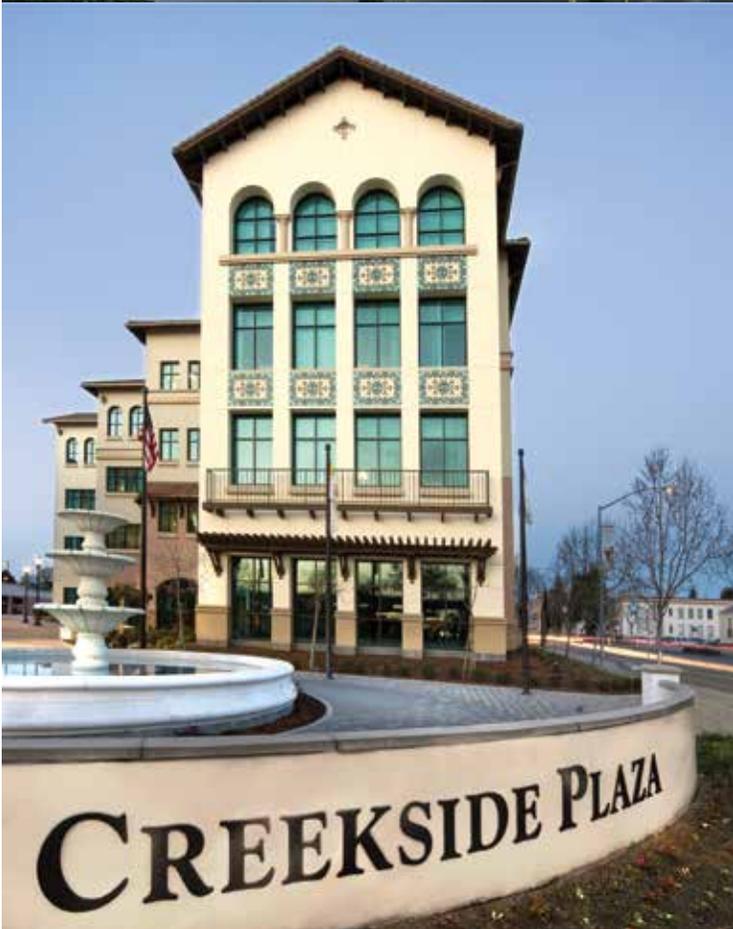
Creekside Plaza Office Park celebrates the creative team who designed and built this beautiful addition to San Leandro and the wonderful tenant-partners who are a vital part of our community.



It's been a privilege to work with the City of San Leandro for over 24 years. Thanks to the pro-business City Council, City Planning, and Community Development staff, San Leandro continues to attract top tier businesses, community services and new residents to our great city.

David C. Irmer
Co-Partner

T. Lawrence Jett
Co-Partner



FROM THE SAN LEANDRO CITY MANAGER

San Leandro's Next-Gen Transformation



Jeff Kay,
City Manager,
San Leandro

“People here feel pride that this is a city that makes things, pride in our transformation into an innovation and advanced-manufacturing hub, and excitement about being a lively, welcoming place for people to live and work.”

San Leandro is an ambitious city that strives to be a vibrant, diverse and forward-looking place for this generation and the next. The catch-phrase *We Make Things* builds on San Leandro's deep manufacturing history, with innovative companies working on solutions for business, environmental and social problems. Our exciting startups are pushing the envelope in 3-D printing, hardware, food technology and sustainable energy.

Over the past decade, San Leandro's planning and investment have laid the groundwork for transformation. Today, the results are in plain sight. Downtown San Leandro is reinventing itself into a transit-oriented-development district, with over 1,000 new housing units and 350,000 square feet of new or renovated office space in the pipeline. The area around the Bay Fair BART station is also primed for development into a mixed-use village, with strategic planning complete and a new Opportunity Zone designation. To top it all off, there are ambitious plans for transformation of the San Leandro shoreline, bringing a new hotel, housing, restaurants and a grand park and library to our prime location along San Francisco Bay.

San Leandro's 21st-century update is authentic to the community's roots as part manufacturing town, part residential community, and to its status as one of the most diverse cities in the country. The community's celebration of its diversity and vitality can be seen in everything from vibrant public art and authentic restaurants to award-winning craft beer. The city's business-friendly atmosphere that has allowed legacy businesses and startups alike to grow and women-led businesses to thrive. Innovative new training programs and ambitious sustainability programs are investments in the next generation. Mayor Pauline Cutter's slogan of *A City Where Kindness Matters* resonates throughout.

San Leandro is a great value proposition, with a convenient location, easy access to transportation, a strong business community, ultra-high-speed Internet and a diverse housing base. With excellent public libraries and parks, quality local schools and a wide range of shopping, food and cultural activities, San Leandro is a great place for businesses and families.

Welcome to San Leandro.

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SPACE AVAILABLE FROM
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Helping You Build Your Business

San Leandro features top-tier business parks, retail centers, historic neighborhoods and miles of prime waterfront. For personalized assistance to launch or expand a business in this appealing community, San Leandro's Economic Development Division is at your service.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT YOUR SERVICE

The City's Economic Development mission is to improve San Leandro's quality of life by encouraging reinvestment and economic growth through retention and expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new industry. San Leandro's Economic Development team helps businesses and developers move to or expand in San Leandro, by providing eligible businesses with a point of contact, information on the process, and applications for new development and tenant improvements.

BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

San Leandro's Business Incentive Program provides eligible business and property owners in commercial districts with 50/50 matching forgivable loans to stimulate investment and improve the appearance of businesses in order to make commercial districts more attractive. There are three different program types under the Business Incentive Program: the Commercial Incentive Program, the Restaurant Incentive Program, and the Craft Beverage Incentive Program. For details please visit: sanleandro.org/depts/cd/econ-dev/incentives

"Finding a property owner to take a risk on a new business can be tough, but the City was a supporter at every step, first at the Gate510 complex, where a short-term lease helped us launch our company, and later, helping us land our current property lease. The City really went to bat for us, personally telling the landlord that UrbanBloc was a great fit for the property and city's contemporary maker culture."

Martha Trela,
Co-Owner and CEO, UrbanBloc

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ABOUT THE COVER

The sculpture "Truth Is Beauty" has become a symbol of San Leandro's values of innovation, sustainability and mutual respect. The 55-foot-tall sculpture is by artist Marco Cochrane. The sculpture is lit from the inside by more than 2,500 multicolored LED lights. It is part of a series of three large-scale steel sculptures of women by Cochrane: Bliss Dance, Truth is Beauty and R-Evolution.

Cover photo by Spencer Brown
Stories by Ann Guy
Design by Carol Collier



SAN LEANDRO NEXT BLOG

Visit www.sanleandronext.com to stay up to date on developments, businesses, restaurants, sustainability, and smart city initiatives in San Leandro.

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San Leandro

by the Numbers

San Leandro's location at the intersection of the Bay Area's highways, ports, airports, and public transit systems have long made it an attractive center for business and manufacturing. As those sectors have transformed in the 21st century, San Leandro has been visionary in transforming along with them—actively maintaining its well-known business-friendly climate while installing a fiber optic network that provides ultra-high-speed Internet capabilities; augmenting its diverse housing and employment spaces with high-density, transit-oriented development; and growing its cultural life with public art, festivals, breweries and restaurants. The changes taking shape today are a decade in the making and have transformed San Leandro into an innovation and advanced manufacturing hub. San Leandro businesses earn innovation awards, have space to grow, and make the City's slogan "We Make Things" ring true for the Bay Area's new age of cutting-edge, high-tech and global business culture.

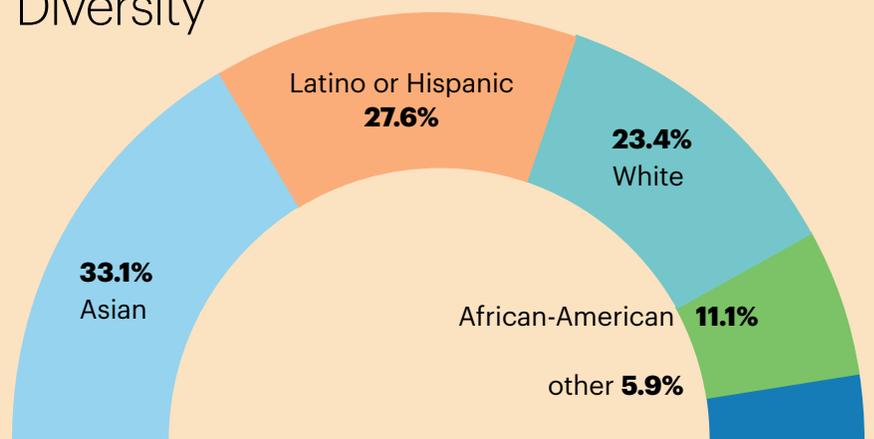
Population



89,910
Population

40.8
Median age

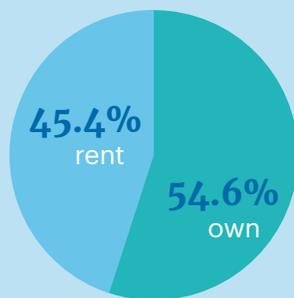
Diversity



Housing and Income



\$88,938
Median Household Income



\$657,700
Median single-family home value

\$2,011
Average monthly rent

Recreation

943 acres
of open space with

- 23** parks
- 3** public pools
- 2** golf courses



Business Base

45,900
Number of jobs

\$30 million
Annual sales tax revenue

Top manufacturing employers

- Acco Engineering
- Coca Cola
- Columbia Cosmetics
- Ghirardelli
- Kennerley-Spratling
- OSIsoft
- Mi Rancho
- PCC Structural

Commercial space

Industrial space
20.9 million s.f.
total space
\$0.97/s.f.
market rent

Retail space
6.2 million s.f.
total space
\$2.12/s.f.
market rent

Office space
2.3 million s.f.
total space
\$2.66/s.f.
market rent

Transportation



Conveniently located between Interstate Highways 580 and 880



Two rail lines

Two BART stations: San Leandro and Bay Fair



Oakland International Airport	3.7 miles
San Francisco International Airport	27.8 miles
San Jose International Airport	34 miles
San Francisco Bay Bridge Toll Plaza	13.2 miles



Port of Oakland	9.6 miles
Port of San Francisco	21.8 miles
Port of Richmond	22.6 miles



Historic home of Daniel Best, one of San Leandro's manufacturing pioneers.

PHOTOS BY SPENCER BROWN

DOWNTOWN SAN LEANDRO

Transforming Downtown Into a Next-Gen City

Smart, walkable, sustainable and fun

We've done a lot of planning and laid a lot of groundwork," says San Leandro Economic Development Manager Katie Bowman, of her city's downtown transformation. "Now it's all coming to life." Results from 10 years of planning—including a transit-oriented development strategy, an ambitious Capital Improvement Program and master plans for a fiber optic network and bicycle and pedestrian improvements—are now in plain sight, all part of the forward-thinking city's long-term, strategy to reinvent its downtown.

The Tech Campus, a new business complex directly adjacent to BART, has two completed buildings that are highly visible emblems of this change. One is occupied by software giant OSISOFT and the second houses Ghirardelli Chocolate's new corporate offices. The complex is at the center of the mixed-use central district that features a variety of new offices, retail spaces and housing in easy walking distance from BART.

"We have a BART station in our downtown—that's a huge asset we knew we had to take advantage of," says City Manager Jeff Kay. The downtown development plan leverages this key link in a transportation network of freeways and buses that provide easy access to Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, the Port of Oakland and Oakland Airport. LINKS, a free commute-hour shuttle, carries riders from BART to the city's industrial area.

But being convenient isn't enough, according to the city's 2013 "Next-Generation Workplace" study. There's a new generation of people working at the technology, maker and advanced-manufacturing companies that define San Leandro's growing business sector, the study found, and they want lifestyle amenities like restaurants, breweries and gathering places—they don't want to just go home after work. "Successful, appealing commercial areas are a job attractor for the whole city," Kay says.

Laying groundwork for change

The downtown had plenty of character to build upon, Kay says, but its mid-20th-century infrastructure needed updating to a more environmentally sustainable, human scale and to high-tech-grade telecommunications.

Lit San Leandro, the fiber optic network encircling the city, was an early, and giant, first step. The public-private partnership was launched by OSISOFT CEO J. Patrick Kennedy and the robust Internet capabilities have helped attract new companies and benefit existing ones. While some cities struggle to provide enough bandwidth, Kay says, "Our businesses have more service than they know what to do with—that's a really great problem to have. It's exciting to see people innovate with that extraordinary capacity."

The addition of office space also makes downtown a place where small businesses and start-ups can come to



Revelers pour into downtown for the annual Cherry Festival.

incubate and accelerate. For example, TerrAvion, a tech start-up that digitizes agricultural data to help farmers improve efficiencies, started on the second floor of an old insurance building and when the company grew, it moved to a bigger downtown space. "We like the convenient access to BART and the accessibility of our office from all directions, including the proximity to the airport," a company spokesperson said.

Other infrastructure projects the City of San Leandro has completed include downtown's pedestrian-friendly cluster of shops and restaurants, a well-lit pedestrian and bike path connecting the shopping district to BART; and improvements to San Leandro Boulevard.

These improvements laid the groundwork for the planning that was taking place. "We want to maximize the likelihood that people can get anywhere they need to go without getting in a car—for environmental reasons and also for quality-of-life reasons," says Kay. Downtown's

Downtown Festivals

Civic organizations and private companies work together to bring downtown San Leandro to life throughout the year.

CHERRY FESTIVAL - Started when San Leandro's orchards earned the city the moniker of "The Cherry City," the annual summer festival celebrates its 110th anniversary this year with a parade, a live music, food trucks and a pie-bake-off. First Saturday in June

FARMER'S MARKET - If it's Wednesday afternoon, that means downtown fills with farm stands selling fresh fruits and vegetable and information booths from community organizations. Wednesdays, April through October

IT'S A WONDERFUL NIGHT HOLIDAY FESTIVAL - A tree lighting, horse-drawn carriage rides, an entertainment stage, and outdoor movies help create holiday magic at Estudillo Plaza. First Friday in December

TRUTH THURSDAYS - Downtown's answer to First Fridays, the summer event features live music and food trucks center around the "Truth Is Beauty" statue. Fourth Thursdays, May through August



restaurant offerings are diverse and growing, including everything from Korean, Chinese, Mexican and Vietnamese cuisines to a gastropub, sports bar, and Peet's Coffee.

Developers as partners

A section of the downtown shopping area was built by Innisfree Companies founder David Irmer. When Irmer first got a call about a project in the late 1990s, he had not strayed far from projects on the Peninsula and in his home county of Marin, so he took several weeks to get to know the city. The impression was indelible.

"Driving around, I saw well-cared-for homes, kids dressed neatly for school... people out using the parks—all the nuances of community," Irmer recalls. Business people and residents he spoke with echoed his observations about San Leandro's community values. Most of all, Irmer found an economic development group committed to a vision of growth. Development projects are typically rife with obstacles, he says, but the City of San Leandro's team "was encouraging, diplomatic, and helpful. They said, 'How can we help you to make a decision to come here?' In 40 years of development, I've never had a city come forward with that attitude."

Other developers followed. Westlake Urban built the Tech Campus. Maximus Real Estate Partners is building a 687-unit apartment complex on mostly vacant land on Alvarado Street. The project calls for replacing the adjacent Filarmonica Artista Amadora de San Leandro Music Conservatory with a 4,300-square-foot conservatory across the street—a plan to integrate the new development with existing city institutions and show deference



Clockwise from top left: "Chime Way" in Joaquin Plaza is part of San Leandro's focus on public art; street musicians play at the 2019 Cherry Festival; a clocktower is the focal point for downtown's walkable restaurants and shopping ; a patron enjoys a trim at Goodfellas barbershop, one of many services in downtown San Leandro.



for the city's Portuguese history.

Irmer's Creekside Plaza Office Park—a 235,000 square foot, three-building Mediterranean style complex directly across the street from BART—purposefully invokes this Portuguese history, employing elements like arches and patterned tiles. The project also called for a public greenway along the adjacent San Leandro Creek. "Our tenants use it like crazy," he says."

San Leandro Mayor Pauline Cutter says building and maintaining relationships like these is central to the city's values and character. "We remain a city committed to the community values of kindness, mutual respect, and mutual benefit, even as we grow and change to address the needs of a new generation," she says.

Public-private ethos

Art is another way the City partners with businesses for everyone's benefit. Colorful murals adorn walls and electrical boxes on both public and private property. The City also encourages each new development to include a piece of public art. "And then we've gotten out of the way," Kay says. "It's been important to me that we don't play it safe if we're taking on art—that's contradictory to the point of doing it in the first place." Nowhere is that bold stance more visible than the Tech Campus's "Truth Is Beauty," a 55-foot-tall graceful female figure, selected by Westlake Urban. The community has embraced its message that San Leandro is a place where women can be both safe and powerful.

The commitment to public art is right in the wheelhouse of "The 'Dro" —an affectionate nickname coined by locals—as a place for makers and innovators. The beautiful part, says Kay, is that the downtown transformation, like the rest of the city's 21st-century update, is one-hundred percent authentic to San Leandro's deep roots as part manufacturing town, part residential community, and to its status as one of the most diverse cities in the country. "This is fundamentally who we are. It's not the latest fad in economic development that we just dropped on top of a community—it's genuine," Kay says. "People here feel pride that this is a city that makes things, pride in our transformation into an innovation and advanced-manufacturing hub, and excitement about being a lively, welcoming place for people to live and work."

San Leandro gets "Smart"

"Each city defines for itself how it will utilize technology, data and modern infrastructure to deliver outcomes important to its community," says San Leandro Chief Technology Officer Tony Batalla. "San Leandro is focused on broadband, transportation, sustainability, public safety and enhancing the quality of life."

FIBER OPTIC NETWORK – "Lit San Leandro" is a state-of-the-art infrastructure that supports up to 10GB ultra-high-speed Internet robust enough to support cloud-based business operations and carry transportation and infrastructure data to enable more efficient systems.

FIBER OPTICS MASTER PLAN – Future plans call for launching an inclusion program to address the digital divide and incentivizing fiber expansions in future commercial and residential developments.

FREE PUBLIC WIFI – Free public wifi makes social equity and public access key components of a smart city.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT – The first BRT line in the Bay Area will run along East 14th St. between Oakland and San Leandro BART. The technology prioritizes buses in traffic and expedites passenger boarding, making buses function more like a light-rail system.

SMART STREET LIGHTS – The citywide system converted 4,000 light poles to LEDs linked by a network dashboard, where individual lights can be monitored and controlled for maintenance and public safety.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN – The plan recommends a network of high-quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities to improve mobility, connectivity, safety, public health and recreational opportunities.

EAST BAY GREENWAY – New segments of the bike-and-ped trail from Berkeley to Hayward will provide easy and scenic access to both San Leandro and Bay Fair BART stations.

San Leandro Development

RESIDENTIAL

1	Marea Alta & La Vereda	400 San Leandro Blvd.	200 Affordable Units	Complete
2	SLTC Housing	1600 Alvarado St.	197 Housing Units	Approved
3	Eden Housing	1604 San Leandro Blvd.	62 Affordable Units	Approved
4	Alvarado-Antonio Apartments	899 Alvarado St.	687 Housing Units	Approved
5	Broadmoor Village	311 MacArthur Blvd.	20 Townhome Units	Proposed
6	Bancroft Housing	1388 Bancroft Ave.	Multi-Family Units	Proposed

MIXED-USE

7	The Davis @ 1188	188 E 14th St.	197 Housing Units	Proposed
8	Town Hall Square	1199 E 14th St.	150 Housing Units	Proposed
9	268 Parrott St.	268 Parrott St.	26 Condo Units	Approved

MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL

10	Comstock Industrial	2388 Williams St.	160,000 sq ft	Complete
11	San Leandro Business Center	100 Halcyon Drive	550,000 sq ft	Construction
12	Marina Gateway	2000 Marina Blvd.	327,000 sq ft	Construction
13	DCT Industrial	2001 Williams St.	72,000 sq ft	Complete
14	Alvarado Commerce	2756 Alvarado St.	159,450 sq ft	Construction

OFFICE & RETAIL

15	SL Tech Campus	1600 Alvarado St.	264,000 sq ft office	Complete
16	Creekside Plaza	500 Davis St.	77,000 sq ft office	Approved

HIGH-GROWTH AREAS

17	Monarch Bay	Shoreline	Housing, Hotel	Proposed
18	Bay Fair Transit-Oriented Development	Bay Fair BART Station	Mixed-Use Development	Specific plan



Marea Alta
1400 San Leandro Blvd.
• 115 affordable housing units



La Vereda
528 W Juana Ave.
• 85 affordable senior housing units

Oakland International Airport Terminal 2

Oyster Bay

17



Monarch Bay
Expand public park with recreational amenities
• 200 room hotel
• 2 restaurants & banquet hall
• 500 housing units
• New Mulford-Marina library

San Francisco Bay

Flood Control Canal



4 Alvarado-Antonio Apartments

899 Alvarado St.

- 5.73 acre Transit Oriented Development
- 687 residential units mix of studios, 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms



7 The Davis @ 1188

1188 East 14th St.

- 197 housing units
- Specialty grocer and retail



9 Parrott St.

268 Parrott St.

- 26 residential units



18 Bay Fair Transit Oriented Development

Bay Fair BART Station

- Guide for future development of a sustainable, vibrant, walkable, and safe transit oriented village with a diversity of land uses serving local and regional populations.



11 San Leandro Business Center

100 Halcyon Dr.

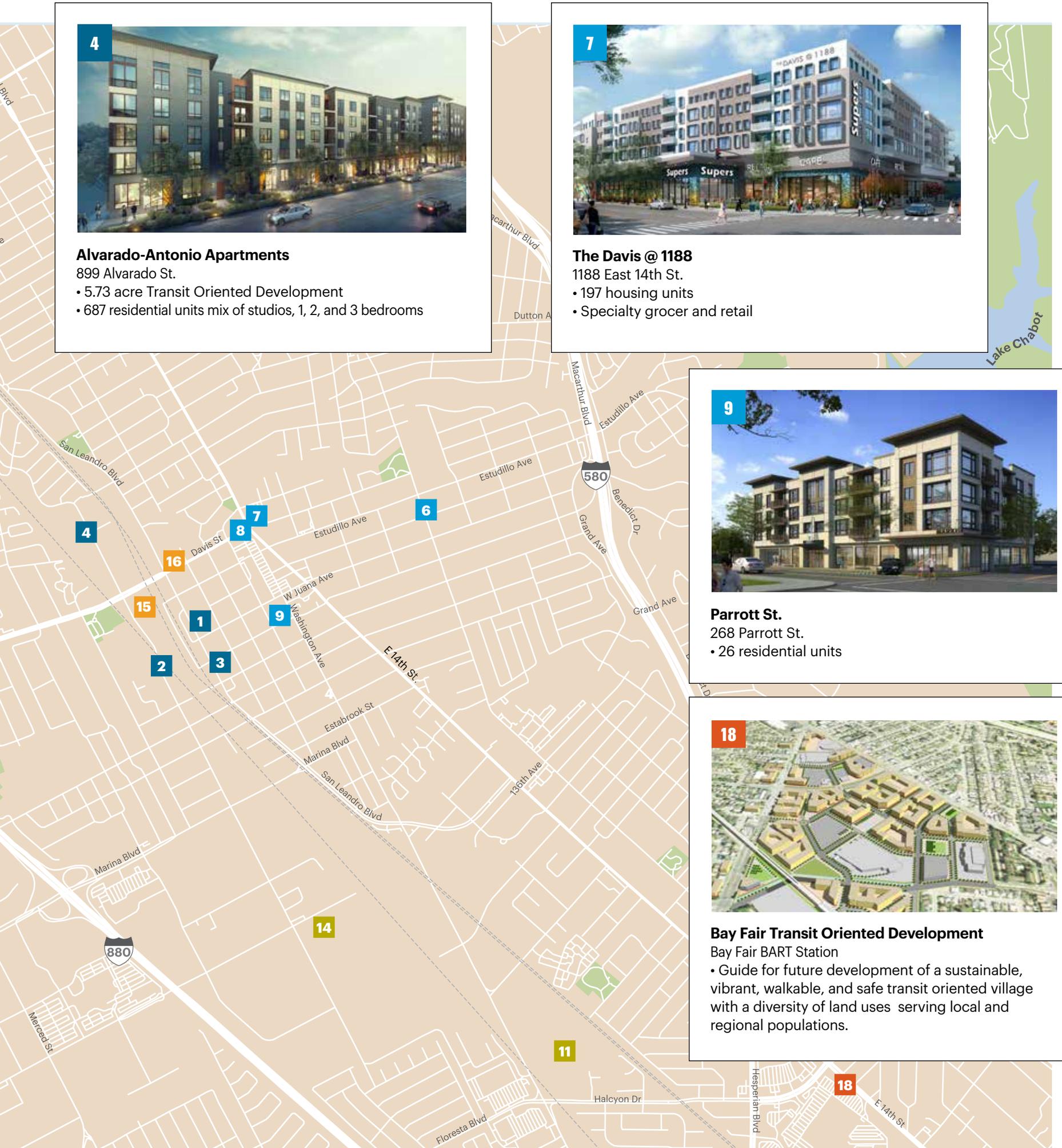
- 550,000 sq ft of Class A Industrial in 3 buildings
- Public improvements and 4 large murals



12 Marina Gateway Industrial Center

2000 Marina Blvd.

- 327,000 sq ft Class A Industrial Building
- Torani syrups bringing 150+ jobs





INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED MONARCH BAY MASTER PLAN

- 220-room hotel
- Two new restaurants
- 280 units of multi-family housing
- 53 townhomes
- 147 houses
- An 18-acre public park
- New library
- Golf course



SEBT / TODD JOHNSON

Above: Scott Cooper of Cal-Coast Development at the San Leandro shore. Left: Proposed development for the shoreline.

SHORELINE

Monarch Bay: San Leandro's Coastal Transformation

Everyone's drawn to the water—it's beautiful, majestic, and tranquil," says Scott Cooper, vice president of development and acquisition with Cal-Coast Development. Cooper has been working hand-in-hand with City staffers, the City Council, and San Leandro residents on a vision to transform the waterfront and marina into a destination where waterfront restaurants, shared outdoor spaces, a new hotel, and desirable housing will enliven and rejuvenate the city's shimmering expanse of San Francisco Bay shoreline.

"San Leandro is working to transform the northern portion of our waterfront, providing a range of amenities for the whole community," said Katie Bowman, San Leandro's economic development manager.

The proposed master plan for the Monarch Bay Shoreline Development Project includes an 18-acre public park space that features pedestrian promenades and public plazas, converts the marina basin into an aquatic park and upgrades a public boat-launch area. Two citizens advisory committees worked closely with the staff and developer to inform the project proposal. "The feedback from the community was, 'Let's make this something everyone can use,'" says Bowman. "Our residents fully utilize the existing Marina Park to the south and there's a diverse contingent—including kayakers, dragon boat groups, and a Hawaiian outrigger canoe group—who would enjoy increased access to the shoreline."

New bike lanes will connect to the Bay Trail, the scenic regional multi-use pathway. The executive golf course design will bring a modern upgrade to the existing nine-hole course on the land, Bowman says. The park, whose concept has been designed by Gates and Associates landscape architecture, will offer opportunities to relax and reflect, with interpretive nature signage, public art and historic memorials. The new park will return over 300,000 square feet of parking lot area to green space. "It's a transformation that will bring nature back to this portion of the shoreline and make it more approachable for all kinds of users," Bowman says.

The development, named for the butterfly whose local breeding grounds are one of only a few in the region, proposes to include a mix

of market rate, affordable and workforce housing—285 multifamily units, and 200 single-family and townhome units—to accommodate the growth of the city's employment sector and address regional housing shortages. A new 2,500 square foot Mulford-Marina Branch Library more than doubles the size of the existing branch and provides opportunities for community gathering and nature programs.

The project is 10 years in the making, including environmental impact reports and feasibility planning in addition to the extensive community input. Cooper says working with the City has helped smooth the way

during the long process. "They understand the hurdles that developers face," he said. The project is focused on being sustainable and resilient, physically as well as financially—the design of everything from the hotel to the park takes into account sea level rise and the commercial elements are structured to support the park and other public amenities.

Restaurants and a hotel will form the core of commercial tenants. Two new restaurants, including one with an upstairs event space, and a small market or café will join the long-time local favorite Horatio's as waterfront eatery options. In addition, a 220-room hotel is

planned on Monarch Bay Drive, providing a second hotel option in the area. As the city grows, demand is increasing for comfortable hotels near both Oakland Airport and San Leandro's business and industrial centers. "We have multinational businesses who have clients and staff across the world," says Bowman. "They are always looking for a great business class hotel."

This year, the focus is on completing development agreements and getting project entitlements. Construction will follow, including formidable engineering tasks like new infrastructure and a large-scale grading operation to protect against sea-level rise.

Developers hope to break ground by the end of 2020 and move in the first residents by 2022. Cooper says this public-private venture will create a self-sustaining commercial district while also serving the public. "The City is very forward-thinking and very pro-development," he says. "They are definitely thinking into the future and making that a part of the planning process today."

Cal-Coast's Scott Cooper says working with the City has helped smooth the way during the long process. "They understand the hurdles that developers face."

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Bay Fair: A Vibrant Transit Village Is Born

Opportunity Zone primes transformation from mall to human-scale neighborhood

An East Bay institution is getting a 21st-century update. After an intensive community-based planning process, in 2018 San Leandro adopted a plan to transform the Bay Fair neighborhood—the mall and surrounding areas—into a vibrant transit village. The shopping plaza has been a local destination since its opening in 1957, and, buoyed by its BART-station location, has remained a lively retail center even as retail trends have shifted. It is currently anchored by Target, Macy’s, Old Navy and Bed, Bath and Beyond, and is home to popular amenities like the 16-screen Century Theater, a 24-Hour Fitness and a Saturday farmer’s market.

But malls everywhere are looking to update their land use model to be more relevant, says Tom Liao, San Leandro’s community development director. “The vision that emerged for the Bay Fair area is a robust, high-density, mixed-use neighborhood,” Liao says. “Grids of smaller blocks create a community and a self-sustaining, human scale.” The plan calls for open spaces like parklets and pedestrian areas, and community gathering spots for summer concerts and festivals—spaces that create a sense of place to attract residents, workers, businesses and the surrounding community.

It’s a model that is at once a mobility plan, a housing solution with market-rate and affordable offerings, and, with its low-carbon, transit-oriented design, a climate-action strategy. BART and AC transit lines on East 14th Street will connect with first- and last-mile solutions, like bike rentals and bike racks, to get people between home



Conceptual Bay Fair Plan area development scenario.

“There’s been a broad-based coalition working together from the start.”

TOM LIAO, SAN LEANDRO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

and transit. That includes the Alameda County Transportation Commission’s extension of the East Bay Greenway, a regional bike and pedestrian path that will go right by the BART station. “That’s a game changer,” Liao says. “It incentivizes people to get out of their cars and creates a nice, clear path to the planned village area.”

The density will concentrate in the central area near BART, with building heights getting lower as development gently integrates with the surrounding residential neighborhoods, according the plan, which estimates up to 2,500 housing units, 300,000 square feet of office and an evolving retail picture as that sector’s space needs continue to adapt to online sales. “We were careful not to be too prescriptive in our language,” Liao says. “It’s important to let the market dictate exactly the right balance of housing to commercial, office and retail.”

The project’s designation as an Opportunity Zone will help projects get funded. In addition, fewer landowners and larger size parcels compared to traditional development contribute to a smoother land-acquisition path for developers. But what’s really unique about the Bay Fair project, Liao says, is the public-private cooperation. Some land is owned by BART, some parcels cross into unincorporated Alameda County, and Madison Marquette owns the Bayfair Center mall; the Metropolitan Transportation Commission funded the plan. Unlike most privately-owned projects, he says, “Many entities have a stake in us succeeding—there’s been a broad-based coalition working together from the start.”

With the planning process now complete, over the next several years the City is addressing nitty-gritty issues, like amending zoning codes to implement higher density development. The plan unfolds across 2035, but it’s already off and running, with one large parcel already on the market. “The pace has already exceeded our projections,” Liao says.



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The Tech Campus boasts modern office space with bay and hill views and amenities that tech companies expect—all in easy walking distance to BART and downtown's diverse restaurant options and brew pubs.

OFFICE

Tech Campus Launches Era of the “Smart City”

Tech Campus and Lit San Leandro spur the city's innovation economy

It was 2011, and OSISOft, one of San Leandro's biggest employers, was growing. The global software company provides a variety of industries with sophisticated data monitoring and management systems. Dr. J. Patrick Kennedy, the company's founder and CEO, a longtime San Leandro resident himself, began working with the City: OSISOft would be the anchor tenant for a new Class A office park called the San Leandro Tech Campus, and Kennedy would invest in a state-of-the-art fiber optic loop to support the high-speed, high-performance Internet that his company required. Importantly, Kennedy would share the benefits of his technology-infrastructure investments with the City.

Today, the new Tech Campus, located directly adjacent to the Downtown San Leandro BART station, is the first major commercial development approved and completed under the City's acclaimed long-term downtown transit-oriented development plan, which connects high-density development to BART, bus rapid transit along East 14th Street and an improved network of bicycle and pedestrian paths. OSISOft has moved into Phase I, its new 132,000 square foot headquarters; the second building—Phase II—is complete and partially leased; and two more phases of the campus are entitled, according to developers Westlake Urban, a subsidiary of Westlake Realty, a family-owned real estate investment and management firm.

The fiber optic loop became Lit San Leandro, a public-private partnership that has helped transform San Leandro into a state-of-the-art high-tech city. “Lit San Leandro has a bold vision that allows both public and private innovation to flourish” says Tony Batalla, the San Leandro's chief technology officer. While the City owns the conduit in the ground, private entities own the fiber optic strands and lease them to Internet service providers, who then sell gigabit broadband Internet to more than 350 local businesses. The City owns 10 percent of the fiber strands and has used them to connect public facilities and schools, launch free public Wi-Fi and build a “smart” street light system.

“Available office space of this quality, quantity and central location is hard to find in other Bay Area cities.”

JESSICA SMITH, WESTLAKE URBAN

Bringing the campus to life

As Lit San Leandro's fiber lights up with users, Phase II is starting to come to life with tenants. Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, based in San Leandro since the 1960s, recently moved its corporate headquarters into 22,000 square feet—the building's entire top floor. “We are excited to be relocating part of our organization to the new Tech Campus, and to play a part in this exciting redevelopment of San Leandro,” Ghirardelli president and CEO Joel Burrows said in a statement on LinkedIn.

Available office space of this quality, quantity and central location is hard to find in other Bay Area cities, says Jessica Smith, Westlake Urban senior vice president for portfolio and asset management, and often costs considerably more. The Tech Campus boasts modern office space with bay and hill views and amenities that tech companies expect—collaboration spaces, connected conference rooms, priority bike and scooter parking. It's all in easy walking distance to downtown's diverse restaurant options and brew pubs and to more than 1,000 new housing units on the way. In addition, the building provides opportunities for external signage facing BART train riders or commuters approaching the station from downtown.

And “Tech Campus” isn't just a name, Smith says—the building materials themselves are high-

tech. Designed to LEED Gold standards, the structures include cutting-edge materials that improve energy efficiency and the tenant experience. For example, the project used View Dynamic Glass, a smart window system that optimizes natural light by automatically adjusting window tint to the amount of sunlight. “There's a real focus on tying into innovation and technology.” And, she adds, it helps that the City has embraced and supported the new development. “That makes a huge difference for developers and businesses who want to be here,” she says.

A community presence

In addition to incorporating state-of-the-art building features, Westlake Urban made a bold choice: installing “Truth Is Beauty,” a 55-foot tall, 13,000-pound statue of a graceful female figure at the center of the new campus. Inscribed with the question, “What would the world be like if women were safe?” in 10 languages, the sculpture brings humanity to the development. Westlake Urban, whose president and CEO are both women, says that in addition to the female empowerment message, the artwork was selected as “an iconic emblem of the transformation that is taking place in 21st century San Leandro,” telegraphing not just the technology, but San Leandro's renaissance as the contemporary maker center at the heart of the Bay Area.

The community has gotten behind the sculpture, with the San Leandro Improvement Association partnering with Westlake Urban, OSISOft, Kaiser Permanente and others to host “Truth Thursdays,” a festival with live music and food trucks encircling the statue.

“We love having her as the centerpiece of our progressive and diverse city,” says Mayor Pauline Cutter. “‘Truth Is Beauty’ aligns with our community's values—for personal safety, for treating everyone in our community with kindness, and for the importance of innovation and economic opportunities.”



Students from PilotCity, which operates San Leandro's Workforce Incubator program, pose with MC Hammer at the 2019 East Bay Innovation Awards ceremony.

Training the Next-Gen Workforce

San Leandro's innovation engine is powered by local education

San Leandro Mayor Pauline Cutter wants for her city's young workforce no less than what she wants for her own grown children: a sustainable, livable city where they can build meaningful careers. "The technology and innovation that we're doing here is exciting and people want to be a part of it," say Mayor Cutter. That's why the City supports developing the next generation of workers for its growing high-tech and maker economy. It partners with several training programs that connect its education and business sectors early on, and keep them connected, with training that is directly applicable in San Leandro's in-

"We can have a greater impact on sustainability when we do it together as a city. I think that's part of what's drawing a lot of people to—and back to—San Leandro. We're looking to the future."

PAULINE CUTTER,
MAYOR, SAN LEANDRO

novation sector: high tech, the trades and entrepreneurship.

San Leandro native Derick Lee jump-started the inclusion of native San Leandrans into the local economy with Pilot-City, a work-based learning program that connects high schools with high-tech companies on projects like drones, virtual reality and robotics. After graduating from Cal Poly, Lee was excited about the chang-

EDUCATION

es he saw taking place in his hometown, and he saw an opportunity: If the city's own young people received training in local high-growth industries, the innovation ecosystem would be complete. Lee worked with the Chamber of Commerce to create PilotCity. Launched in 2015 with 27 students and 18 employers, the program has now trained more than 1,000 students from San Leandro and surrounding cities, and continues to innovate, including adding the Workforce Incubator and Industry Incubator programs, which bring select students to onsite, project-based company internships. The program won the 2018 East Bay Innovation Award in the education category.

The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, or NFTE, a national organization, fuels the innovation economy by encouraging and developing new entrepreneurial talent. Recently relocated to San Leandro, the Bay Area office works with students from across the region, including San Leandro High School's Academy for Business and Finance. Students learn entrepreneurial thinking and start-up skills and can compete in the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, a national business-plan competition. Students are guided by NFTE's Teacher Corps and supported by local entrepreneurs and business people.

Like other professional arenas, the trades also must stay current. When the San Leandro-based Northern California chapters of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and National Electrical Contractors Association needed to relocate, the unions seized the opportunity to address changes in their industry. The result is the Zero Net Energy Center—a state-of-the-art training facility that produces as much energy as it uses, meeting California's energy-reduction targets 17 years ahead of schedule. The building maximizes energy efficiency, generates renewable energy through solar panels and wind turbines, and has smart features like vented windows that

maximize natural lighting and heating. The structure is used to train over 2,000 electricians. "We wanted to invest in our apprentices and journeymen to give them the new technologies and experiences they'll have in the new renewable energy fields," Victor Uno, business manager of IBEW Local 595, told ElectricTV.net. The center often partners with other training and civic organizations to support technology and sustainability.

Sustainability is one of San Leandro's central values, Mayor Cutter says, ticking off some of the City's 17 sustainability goals. "Next-gen workers really care about carbon footprint issues, but it's hard to make a difference on your own. We can have a greater impact on sustainability when we do it together as a city," she says, adding, "I think that's part of what's drawing a lot of people to—and back to—San Leandro. We're looking to the future."



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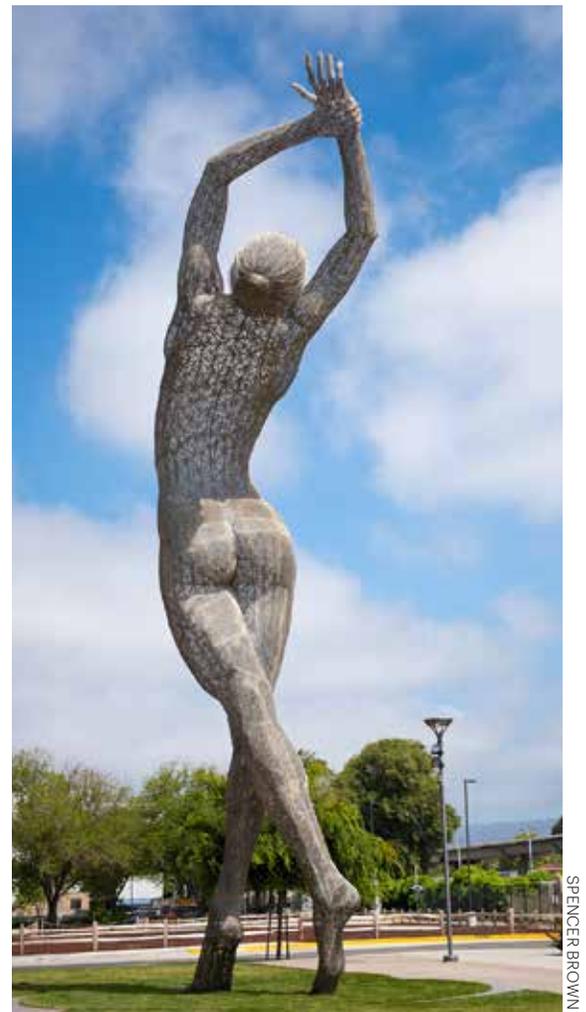
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WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Women Drive San Leandro's Transformation

Female-led companies are a visible force in the city's business community

The power and grace of San Leandro's central "Truth Is Beauty" statue is undeniable. Artist Marco Cochrane has described the 55-foot-tall work as "a woman expressing power and energy" and hoped it would spark conversations about equality. Tech Campus developers Westlake Urban, a woman-owned, woman-run business, selected the piece, and the City—led by Mayor Pauline Cutter for the past six years—celebrates the statue's bold presence with "Truth Thursdays" and other festivals. The statue's message also resonates with San Leandro's large number of female business leaders and owners, whose are a visible force in the business community. These leaders are as varied as their companies, but all celebrate female leadership and a values-driven workplace.



SPENCER BROWN

Porifera



"That's what we need—to see role models. Leadership becomes normal when someone is just there doing it."

OLGICA BAKAJIN, CEO AND FOUNDER, PORIFERA

Aptly named for the sponge family, organisms whose bodies purify water, Porifera makes membranes that use osmosis to pull water out of liquids— "very complex liquids that usually clog or foul other systems," explains CEO and founder Olgica Bakajin. Bakajin earned a doctorate in physics at Princeton, then spent a decade at Lawrence Livermore National Lab, where she helped develop carbon nanotube membranes, a powerful natural filtration technology. "We wanted to get this technology out into the world and do something

useful with it," she says, so she and her team acquired a license from the Lab and in 2009 started Porifera.

After initial grants from NASA and DARPA, Bakajin and her team continued innovating, developing a process that uses their proprietary membrane to form concentrates. The technology has applications across a variety of industries. It concentrates food while preserving taste, color and nutrition to an unprecedented quality, creating vast opportunities for food and beverage manufacturers. Bakajin has forged partnerships with the Departments of Defense and Energy and the California Energy Commission. NASA is using some of the high-tech membranes to convert astronaut waste to potable water.

Bakajin is accustomed to being a female in a male-dominated field. At first, she resisted labels. "I wanted to be a physicist, not a 'woman in physics,'" she recalls. But over time her attitude evolved. Now, she acknowledges the special skills and challenges women bring to the workplace. "Especially after you've had kids, you figure out how to be efficient because you have to," she says. She mentors younger women to let them know they can pursue both family and a rewarding career. Attending Chamber of Commerce functions, she noticed a lot of other women business leaders in San Leandro. "That's what we need—to see role models," she says. "Leadership becomes normal when someone is just there doing it."

Torani



"Our goal was 100 percent retention... San Leandro was the sweet spot."

MELANIE DULBECCO, CEO, TORANI

Trying to explain how a female-led business is different, says Melanie Dulbecco, who's been Torani's CEO for 28 years, "It's like asking a fish how it breathes water." The Italian syrup maker was launched in North Beach by husband-and-wife team Rinaldo and Ezilda Torre in 1925, then run by Ezilda after Rinaldo's sudden death in the 1930s. Today, Torani prides itself on being a values-driven, women-led family-owned compa-

ny, including the founders' granddaughter, Lisa Lucheta, who chairs the company's board.

Those family values extend to Torani's workforce. After years of steady expansion, the company finally outgrew its South San Francisco base, so leaders looked for a place where they could grow, but also bring along their workforce, many of whom live in the East Bay. "Our goal was 100 percent retention," said Dulbecco, a Stanford M.B.A. who is also part owner of the company. They surveyed their options in the region. "San Leandro was the sweet spot," she says. They are excited to join an established community of food manufacturers, like Ghirardelli Chocolate and Mi Rancho, and be part of the city's diverse new maker economy. The company heads to its new 327,000 square foot headquarters later next year.

Torani's central corporate ethos is creating opportunity—for its workforce and the surrounding community—so Dulbecco says they plan to build relationships with local schools to offer apprenticeships and internships and provide growth opportunities for their team members as well.

If opportunity is the soul of the company, flavor remains its heart. Naturally, the CEO can't name just one favorite: black and white chocolate syrups in coffee, balsamic fig in sparkling water, and white peach in champagne cocktails. "If I were having a celebratory drink, I'd definitely go for that one."

Columbia Cosmetics



“Companies need to move forward at all times, and that’s also what San Leandro is doing.”

RACHEL RENDEL, CEO AND OWNER OF COLUMBIA COSMETICS

My business was like my first child,” says Rachel Rendel, CEO and owner of Columbia Cosmetics, which manufactures high-end cosmetic lines for custom brands. “Every aspect was very important to me and I wanted to build it with a team of people who felt like family.” The result, she says, is a team that works hard together and is proud of delivering superior products and services. And, she stresses, “We never lose sight of

our goal, which is to have this place be great not just for the people we sell to, but inside—where people are happy to come to work.” The success of her approach can be seen in loyal customers, a strong reputation for quality, and employees who have remained with the company for decades.

Cosmetics is a female-dominated industry, and Rendel has seen similar values in the numerous woman-run business she works with, many of which have grown into lucrative companies. As women battling daily challenges, she says, “They’re nurturing their families and their businesses. They know what they need from people and they find a way to make it happen.”

When Rendel was looking for home base back in 1982, San Leandro made sense. “It was in the center of everything,” she says. “It’s close to my home, it’s close to freeway, it has the airport, where a lot of my customers fly in. It’s easy to meet customers in San Francisco. It fit the puzzle I needed.” Her customers, often based in major cities, love the easy access of Oakland Airport.

Rendel sees Columbia’s growth trajectory mirrored in San Leandro. “It’s like a bicycle. If you keep pedaling you’re going to get somewhere. You stop pedaling, you’re going nowhere,” she says. “Companies need to move forward at all times, and that’s also what San Leandro is doing.” Recently, she pedaled her way to expansion, buying the building two doors down. “I really didn’t want to leave the city,” she says.

Eric F. Anderson



“This maker movement is great. It’s bringing back a wave of people who want to work with their hands.”

KRISTIN ANDERSON, CEO, ERIC F. ANDERSON

Kristin Anderson, CEO of Eric F. Anderson, the family-owned commercial construction business started by her grandfather Eric, a Swedish carpenter, has seen the edge of San Leandro’s industrial district develop into a busy shopping plaza and hub for artisanal and high-tech entrepreneurs since the business relocated here in 1989. “This maker movement is great,” she says. “It’s bringing back a wave of people who want to work with their hands and build something. It’s driving the trades to grow again.” She’s also watched the downtown getting built up to accommodate the new generation of workers. “There are restaurants and breweries and it’s taking on a new vibe of younger people,” she says.

Grocery retailers have been the company’s niche market throughout its lifetime. But Anderson especially loves building smaller, more personal endeavors, like The Cooler, a craft beer tavern and bottle shop in downtown San Leandro. “Those are really rewarding projects, to be part of making someone’s life dream come true,” she says. The company also recently built an Amazon Go, the high-tech retail store where customers scan their phones as they walk in, then enjoy frictionless checkout. “Learning how to integrate technology into the business was an important step,” she says. “That’s part of where we’re taking the company overall – evolving to respond to the types of projects in demand today.”

The company has evolved in other ways. In the early years, the only women in the office were secretaries. “That was just 30 years ago,” Anderson marvels. Today, women play key roles, including two of the owners. She hopes to bring in more women, many of whom have optimal skillsets for today’s high-tech construction engineering and project management, she notes. How would her grandfather react? “He’d be very proud seeing the legacy of the Anderson name after three generations,” she says. “Integrity, honesty, and being good contractors—those sound like buzz words but we still live and grow and change by those core values.”

UrbanBloc



“Women in the still-emerging modular-building industry are rare.”

MARTHA TRELA, CEO AND CO-OWNER, URBANBLOC

The Yard at Mission Rock, a gathering place for Giants fans, is built from industrial-chic “upcycled” shipping containers made by UrbanBloc. The San Leandro company also built two kiosks at Oakland’s popular Hive complex. Martha Trela, co-owner and CEO, brings more than two decades of executive experience to the entrepreneurial enterprise, which she started in 2014 with her business partner and chief innovation officer, Jerry Jameson, an architect and furniture maker with a strong design-build skillset.

From an operational standpoint, San Leandro was a perfect location, Trela says. “We’re close to the port, so there’s easy access to get containers to and from the factory. When you’re dealing with these giant 40-foot steel boxes, that’s fantastic.” And, she adds, San Leandro’s manufacturing infrastructure includes key supply houses, including electrical, plumbing and construction businesses.

Finding a property owner to take a risk on a new business can be tough, Trela says, but the City was a supporter at every step, first at the Gate510 complex, where a short-term lease helped the partners launch the company, and later, helping them land their current Alvarado Street lease. “They really went to bat for us,” she says, personally telling the landlord that UrbanBloc was a great fit for the property and city’s contemporary maker culture.

San Leandro’s growing number of women-owned businesses is just another dimension of the city’s broader acceptance of new ideas and concepts, Trela observes. Women in her still-emerging modular-building industry are rare, and her day-to-day role takes her to other male-dominated business like plumbing and electrical supply houses. But she’s received broad respect for her role as the company’s business lead, and the company was recently honored with a 2019 StopWaste Business Efficiency Award for outstanding achievements in waste reduction. “Mostly,” she says. “I just think about being a good, fair, honest business partner—with our suppliers, our customers and our employees.”

GATHERING PLACES

Brewing up innovation

San Leandro's breweries are leaders in the craft beer revolution

Like a lot of people, Nico Freccia started drinking beer in college. But when he discovered home brewing in the 1990s, everything changed. "I fell in love with the creativity of it, the art of it, the new flavors that could be created," Freccia says. In 2000, working with his friend and fellow brewer Shaun O'Sullivan, he launched 21st Amendment Brewery in San Francisco, where the pair experimented with seasonal ingredients and menu-coordinated flavors.

But as what Freccia calls "the golden age of craft beers" took hold, the popularity of 21st Amendment's unique, small-batch inventions grew, so the brewery also needed room to grow. The East Bay, where both owners live, seemed natural. They quickly focused on San Leandro. "The location is fantastic. It's close to the freeway, it's close to Oakland Airport, it's easy to get into San Francisco and to the Peninsula. So it's a great location for us for shipping and also for our employees," Freccia says.

They took over the old Kellogg's factory that produced Pop Tarts and Frosted Flakes for three decades and built a 95,000 square foot brewery and tap room. "To be able to come into this great, traditional and very American manufacturing facility and turn it into something that's also quintessentially American and San Leandro, and do manufacturing with a 2019, modern-day twist—it's been a lot of fun," Freccia says.

The brewers extended the manufacturing spirit when they established the Tap Room in 2015. White-oak crates



Drake's Barrel House offers a rotating selection of up to 22 beers on tap.

that had transported supplies become tables and they "plopped" a bar in the center of their production space. Later, they built out the space further using the shipping containers their packaging equipment arrived in. "We continue to have the tap room blossom naturally out of our space," Freccia says, "and the San Leandro regulars who have been coming by since we opened are enjoying being a part of it. It's like watching your neighbor's kid grow up."

Neighbors are important in this

corner of San Leandro. Just across the brewery's back fence, Drake's Brewing Company occupies 22,000 square feet of the former Plymouth factory that houses Gate510, an innovation hub. Now distributed statewide, Drake's was an early leader in the microbrew revolution. The company had gained a reputation for quality as a Berkeley-based solo operation started in 1989 by former Triple Rock brewmaster. But sales had dropped off after Lind sold the company. So when Triple Rock founder John

Martin bought Drakes in 2008 with his business partner Roy Kirkorian, it was a perfect fit—the East Bay natives were ready to invest in the business they knew and loved. "I knew the beer had always been awesome," Martin told the Oakland Tribune in 2011. "The business just needed love and money."

The pair stayed focused on top-quality California-style ales and slowly increased production, marketing and their Gate510 footprint. In 2011 they opened Drake's Barrel House Retail Store and

A Tasting Menu of San Leandro Eateries

San Leandro's restaurant scene reflects the community—in both its cultural diversity and its growing density. This selection highlights some local favorites, some critics' choices, and a few of the city's newest establishments.

BLUEBIRD PIZZERIA High-quality, fresh ingredients go into Bluebird's New York-style thin-crust pies – pronounced "authentic" by hundreds of online reviewers. Long waits can be the price to pay for San Leandro's favorite pizza; Bluebird suggests calling in advance for faster service. 496 East 14th St.

CINCO TACO BAR Diners really can't go wrong with any of San Leandro's numerous authentic Mexican cuisine options. Cinco Taco Bar is notable for its hand-pressed, fresh-daily tortillas and contemporary, street-food vibe. 15100 Hesperian Blvd., Suite 308a



Grilled chicken from Papaito's Rotisserie and microgreens from Top Hatter's.

FUSION DELIGHT The giant, Hong-style dim sum house offers some fun, Instagram-able innovations like adorable piggy buns and purple yam balls. Traditional Cantonese fare rounds out the main lunch and dinner menu. 699 Lewelling Blvd., Ste. 212



KENDEJAH This Liberian restaurant gets a lot of attention for being the only instance of this cuisine in the Bay Area, but critics and Yelpers agree that it's the food that keeps people coming back. Expect big flavors and a warm, family-run atmosphere. 197 Pelton Center Way.*

KISMAT INDIAN CUISINE Opened in the Bay Fair neighborhood just this year, the typical menu of southeast Indian cuisine has already racked up over 100 five-star online reviews. Plenty of parking and affordable prices make Kismat the new go-to spot when San Leandrans need their chicken tikka masala fix. 15099 Hesperian Blvd, Suite A.

MAEJOO Despite its tiny, uber-casual dining room, this Korean eatery has distinguished itself with the locals thanks to consistently great food. Favorites include barbecue, fried chicken, and bibimbap. 185 Pelton Center Way.

MOUSSAKA MEDITERRANEAN KITCHEN Named for the savory Greek meat and eggplant casserole, diners will find a mix Mediterranean-region favorites on the menu. Fresh ingredients and generous portions are served up in a contemporary interior. 599 Dutton Ave.

Taproom, where patrons sit among the barrels of aging beer and enjoy a rotating selection of up to 22 beers on tap, along with a food menu of bar bites and sandwiches. Together, the brewery and tap room employ more than 90 beer-loving workers and generously support the local community with beer donations and fundraisers.

Less than a mile and half away, the self-described “small but mighty” Cleophus Quealy Beer Company is known for its eclectic small-batch beers, from fruit fermented sours and barrel-aged Belgian ales to dry-hopped American styles. Cleophus founders Peter Baker and Dan Watson met as Google software engineers and in 2012 turned their shared home-brewing habit into a microbrewery. Their cozy, 10-tap tasting room is open to “dogs, kids, and well-behaved adults,” their website proclaims. The Canasta Kitchen food truck serves an assortment of street tacos, burgers and snacks, and the brewery holds monthly events to promote local nonprofits.

Cleophus Quealy, 21st Amendment and Drakes are all popular local gathering places, and with special happy hours and weekend live music, they’ve become destinations for surrounding cities. All three turn out for San Leandro events, including brewing up special cherry beers for the annual Cherry Festival and participating in the Sausage and Suds Music Festival in October.

The three neighbors once joined forces on a special brew and served it up on tap. Their biggest collaboration is the annual OkDROberfest, a beer, music and lederhosen-themed celebration heading into its fourth year that includes the Brew Hop shuttle to carry revelers between BART and the breweries. As 21st Amendment marketing manager Meghan Andrews declares on the company’s website, for a modest entry fee that includes a beer at each brewery, “*Das ist* a no-brainer.”



“I see a lot of new faces coming in—a lot more people are moving here. That’s good for the city and for business owners like me.”

**SARA UBELHART, OWNER,
ZOCALO COFFEEHOUSE**

A community gathers at Zocalo

When Sara Ubelhart arrived in the Bay Area in 2005 from Kentucky, she settled in San Leandro and got a barista job at a coffee shop just a few blocks from her house. She soon graduated to roasting coffee, and in 2014, when the owners were moving on, she went all-in and bought the business. “I’ve just always felt there’s something special about this space,” she said.

Under her leadership, Zocalo Coffeehouse has become a meeting place for the community. The café serves organic, fair-trade, house-roasted brews and an eclectic menu of egg dishes, sandwiches and crave-able creations like banana brûlée toast, and, most important, Ubelhart says, is Zocalo’s role as the community’s living room. In addition to the usual café denizens and digital nomads enjoying the free Wi-Fi, the café hosts informal meetups from code camps to clothing exchanges to moms’ groups. It has housed community forums, film screenings and music events, and even served up coffee and pastries to Bernie Sanders and his staff on the campaign’s two recent swings through town. “We try to provide a warm, welcoming environment for whoever walks through the door,” Ubelhart says.

It wasn’t an easy road. Ubelhart was pregnant with her first child when she bought the café, so she faced the

double challenge of becoming a new café owner and new mother at the same time. The hours are long—in both jobs. But being one of San Leandro’s many female business owners makes her proud and excited.

“Growing up in Kentucky... most of the women around me were stay-at-home moms, teachers or nurses, or in customer service,” Ubelhart recalls. “While those jobs are absolutely invaluable, I think that it is important that we move forward as a society, entrusting women to utilize their skills at a higher level and become leaders of teams, not just team members,” she says. But, she notes, the dearth of female role models actually made her a stronger leader. “Now, I fully appreciate how important it is to see yourself reflected in leadership roles.”

In San Leandro, a spirit of leadership is all around her. “People here are involved in their neighborhoods and in the local government. I’ve run into the mayor at my kid’s elementary school, in the grocery store, and here at Zocalo,” she said. “Our leaders are out and about in the community.” She’s drawn to this small-city feel, but lately, she’s noticed some changes. “I see a lot of new faces coming in—a lot more people are moving here. That’s good for the city and for business owners like me.”

NOODLES PHO ME This busy family-run Laotian eatery provides a complimentary broth sampler to help new diners get to know the Southeast Asian cuisine’s three distinct broth styles of the well-known meal-in-a-bowl. Gluten-free noodles and ample vegetarian options make all eaters feel welcome. 377 Bancroft Ave.*

PAPAITO ROTISSERIE The newly opened downtown restaurant bills itself as Latin-influenced “modern California cooking.” With offerings like a no-bun burger, passion ceviche, and Papaito’s trademark rotisserie chicken, the combination makes delicious sense. Look for the Antigua coffee bean flan and a side-dish menu a mile long. 500 Davis St.

PARADISO An exposed wood-beam ceiling adds ambiance to this Italian-inflected fine-dining favorite. High-end entrees like prime rib and rib-eye steaks, lobster tail and rack of lamb are balanced by a selection of pastas and wood-fired pizzas. 685 Bancroft Ave.*

SONS OF LIBERTY ALEHOUSE The locally beloved gastropub offers an eclectic

selection of beers, wines and house-made cocktails. The beer-hall-style menu runs from standards like grilled cheese, burgers, and a blue-cheese wedge salad to more creative fair like smoked brisket nachos. 150 West Juana Ave.

TOP HATTER’S KITCHEN & BAR Named for the building’s long-time millinery tenant, this much-anticipated chef-driven eatery recently opened its doors. The creative menu is seasonally inspired and pan-ethnic, with a selection of small and large plates designed to encourage sharing. 855 Macarthur Blvd.

XIANG YUEN XIAO LONG BAO San Leandro offers several good dim sum options, but for brunchers looking for a change from the more prominent Cantonese-style dim sum, Xiang Yuen specializes in xiao long bao soup dumplings – known as XLB – along with other Shanghai-style dim sum and entrees. 1668 East 14th St.

*Featured on KQED’s “Check, Please! Bay Area”



The newly opened Top Hatter’s Kitchen & Bar brings contemporary chef-driven, pan-ethnic cuisine and craft cocktails to San Leandro.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Gate510 Incubates Innovation

High-tech and artisanal entrepreneurs find space and community at 24-acre complex

Everything about Gate510 invites innovation and collaboration. From the gargantuan industrial scale of the place to the “Town Center,” where tenants can share meals and exchange ideas on white boards, the 24-acre self-styled incubator community, on the second floor of a converted Dodge Plymouth auto factory, is all about creation.

B3 Investors, a commercial real estate group, invested in the property in 2018 and has continued the long-standing mixed-use profile, with big-box retail on the bottom floor and second-floor divided into Gate510’s office and small-manufacturing spaces. “The spaces themselves haven’t changed a lot. What’s been changing is what’s happening in San Leandro and the Bay more broadly,” says Peter Lennon, a partner with B3. “There’s been an influx of these advanced manufacturing and biotech type users,” he says.

A look at some Gate510 tenants reveals what Lennon aptly calls “a microcosm” of the Bay Area’s contemporary business community. Prime Roots Foods,

“Being part of an ecosystem of innovative companies contributes to inspiration.”

ARCADY SOSINOV,
CEO, FREEWIRE

which produces a seafood-mimicking mushroom-based “super protein” is one of several sustainability-focused food-tech companies. The start-up won the 2019 East Bay Innovation Award. Tiny Farms, another Gate510-based food-tech company, makes a protein powder from crickets

and a methane-free organic soil additive from their waste. The complex also hosts lower-tech makers from kombucha brewers to coffee roasters.

A number of Gate510-based companies use robotics, artificial intelligence and other high-tech tools to improve or disrupt existing tech or address emerging societal issues. Gantri, for example, is disrupting lighting with powerful tools that help designers quickly realize ideas, including a design platform, 3-D printing and an online marketplace. In a sci-fi-sounding pursuit, Airspace Systems creates software and drone-detection systems that patrol for malicious or malfunctioning drones—technology that helps places like stadiums and airports protect their airspace from accidents, mischief, and even terrorism. PhaseSpace makes a high-speed, high-resolution motion-capture system used in biomechanical engineering, entertainment and a variety of virtual reality (VR) applications, from games to military training. One of Gate510’s longest-running tenants, PhaseSpace struck a unique public-private partnership with the San Leandro Police Department is creating cutting-edge VR simulation training on high-danger situations. In return, police provide feedback to help the company improve the technology.

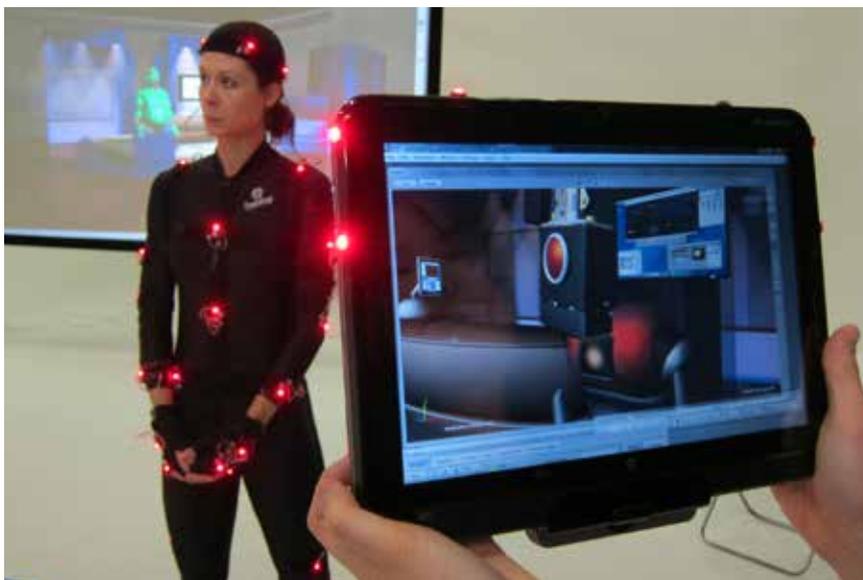
While these businesses are a world away from many ’80s and ’90s-era makers who used the space, Lennon says, “Gate510 has retained its essential character as an affordable, centrally located place for people to start their business on a small scale and grow it over time.”

Drake’s Brewing Company is perhaps the best-known business to start and grow at the complex. Geltor, a biotech firm that makes animal-free cosmetic ingredients, also started small and has expanded as their socially conscious products have gained popularity.

FreeWire Technologies, which provides a clean, mo-



FREEWIRE



PHASESPACE

Above: FreeWire’s Arcady Sosinov (right) and Volvo’s Zaki Fasihuddin pose with the Mobi, a mobile car-charging device.

Left: PhaseSpace’s motion capture technology is used in entertainment, virtual reality gaming and training applications.

bile power source to charge electric vehicles and power a variety of industries, has also grown over time. The company started working on its idea in a few thousand square feet, then slowly took over a larger footprint as it went from product development to production. “As a fast-moving startup, it didn’t take long for us to grow out of our smaller space at Gate510,” says FreeWire CEO Arcady Sosinov. “Now we’re a full-scale technology company with multiple business functions in-house. We’re constantly expanding our team and customer portfolio and need a flexible space.”

Whether they program robotics or roast coffee, all Gate510’s tenants value the ultra-high-speed fiber optic network encircling the city. “That’s one of the first questions people have,” Lennon says. Being able to point to the work the City of San Leandro has done has been super helpful to us,” he says. FreeWire’s Sosinov notes that the shared Town Center space is valuable for holding team meetings and talking with other tenants. “Being

part of an ecosystem of innovative companies contributes to inspiration,” he says.

LINKS, the City’s free commute-hour shuttle between BART and the industrial district, is another service valued by many Gate510 businesses and employees. The complex’s location at the Davis Street exit of I-880—the gateway to the industrial corridor—simultaneously symbolizes San Leandro’s transformation to a 21st-century innovation incubator and its legacy as a manufacturing center.

“People in the United States talk about how manufacturing is going away, but our experience is that it’s transitioning into something different, and it’s been an exciting transformation,” says Jeff Kay, San Leandro’s City Manager. “I believe it matters to a lot of people who come and set up shop here that they are building on this history of old-school manufacturing,” Kay says. “It’s a very natural extension of what this city has been for a long time.”



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