

## SAN JOSE BY BIKE

By Bill Fink

» It's sunny and 75 degrees—perfect California weather, with just a hint of a breeze—as I pedal around downtown San Jose. The city's wide, flat streets are conducive to riding, with generous bike lanes and city blocks long enough (and parking scarce enough) to make cycling a great choice for touring the San Jose metro area that anchors the southern end of Silicon Valley.

I'm riding a big blue bike, borrowed as part of the Ford GoBike bike-share program that launched in San Jose in July, with Alaska Airlines as its Founding Partner. The program allows riders to check out one of more than 300 bikes from 33 bike racks around town and ride it for up to 30 minutes before depositing it at another rack (see below for more details). It's a quick and easy way to traverse the city, to tour a few spots during the day, to commute to the train station, or to go to the downtown arena for a concert or San Jose Sharks hockey game. Using these bikes provides an inexpensive, fun and healthy way to navigate. The bikes are fairly sturdy beach cruisers, but they have smooth-shifting gears that are more than flexible enough to get around on San Jose's predominantly level streets. On my trip, I explore city sites ranging from art attractions to a riverside park.

San Jose is rich with street murals and public art. The SoFA District (South of First Area) has the highest concentration of street art, along with quirky galleries. I set my bike in a rack near an abstract floral



wall mural and another painting depicting a Spanish princess. Then I poke my head into a few shops, vowing to return for the neighborhood's festive First Friday events. Afterward, I grab another bike to cruise a few blocks to the San Jose Museum of Art to tour the venue's exhibition space, which hosts modern and contemporary art and includes works ranging from traditional painting to new media.

San Jose is the gateway to Silicon Valley, and I pedal next to one of the city's main showpieces of science and technology—The Tech Museum of innovation. I dock my bike again and soon switch from cycling to flying in a virtual-reality machine in the museum. I also walk the floors with groups of kids exploring interactive exhibits about robotics and bioengineering, and I wonder which of them might become their generation's billionaire tech CEOs.

Keeping with an educational theme, I bike to San Jose State University to walk its lush green grounds dotted with statues. The campus is filled with cool architecture, including the angular, art-filled Dr. Martin

» The bike-share program Ford GoBike, which counts Alaska Airlines as its Founding Partner, launched in San Jose in July. It provides a convenient, low-cost, healthy way to see the many sites of the Silicon Valley city.

### BIKE-SHARE DETAILS

The Bay Area's Ford GoBike program has several pass options. Prices are \$3 for a Single Ride (for 30 minutes of ride time, app required); \$9.95 for a Day Pass (unlimited 30-minute trips within a 24-hour period); and \$19.95 for a 3-Day Pass (unlimited 30-minute trips within a 72-hour period). Keeping a bike out of stations longer than 30 minutes costs \$3 more per 15 additional minutes with these passes. There is also a \$149 Annual Membership, with unlimited 45-minute trips. Visit [fordgobike.com/pricing](http://fordgobike.com/pricing).



San Jose State University has a scenic campus with intriguing architecture, art and landscaping.

Luther King Jr. Library (a collaboration of the university and the city's public library system).

All this touring is hunger-making, so I grab lunch inside the artisanal food court at the lively San Pedro Square Market, where I buy a bowl of poke tuna, rice and veggies to power my pedaling without getting too weighed down. The free wireless access inside enables me to post some photos of my ongoing tour.

I conclude with a pleasant pedal through Guadalupe River Park, recalling the days when Silicon Valley was



primarily farmlands intersected by woody wilderness.

I pop out of the park to finish my tour in San Jose's Japantown, checking out a few local shops—filled with traditional Japanese goods and other intriguing items—before reluctantly wrapping up my two-wheeled tour of the city and docking the shared bike one last time.

For a list of bike-share stations in San Jose and other Bay Area locations, or for more information about the program and its free app, visit [fordgobike.com](http://fordgobike.com). ✕

Bill Fink writes from the east side of San Francisco Bay.

» The San Jose Museum of Art features modern and contemporary art, with a strength in new media.



## SPORTS IN SAN JOSE

San Jose is making a case for itself as a powerhouse of pro sports in Northern California (alongside neighboring San Francisco and Oakland), with several franchises drawing crowds—and battling for championships.

Walking the downtown streets, it's quickly apparent from the many window signs that San Jose is "Sharks Territory," the home of perennial ice hockey playoff team the **San Jose Sharks**, who play in SAP Center at San Jose (aka "The Shark Tank"). Outside of the arena, downtown San Jose transforms into a hockey party before, during and after games, with specials in bars and restaurants all night. Anchored by a veteran core of players, plus several younger ones, the Sharks hope to make a run this season rivaling the one that took them to the Stanley Cup Finals in 2016. Alaska Airlines is a sponsor of the San Jose Sharks.

San Jose also enthusiastically supports its Major League Soccer team, the **San Jose Earthquakes**, who play in Avaya Stadium. With a fanbase that includes supporters of all ages, this franchise may well be the face of future sports in the city.



In 2014, football's **San Francisco 49ers** team moved from its longtime home in windswept Candlestick Park to Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, just north of San Jose (though the team name still credits San Francisco). The stadium is also the home of the **Pac-12 Football Championship Game**, held this year on December 1.

From spring to early fall, the **San Jose Giants** baseball team showcases minor-league talent in its Single A franchise. Here, players battle their way to the big leagues, hoping to mirror the success of major-league stars Madison Bumgarner and Buster Posey, who both launched pro careers in San Jose. —B.F.

» **Tomas Hertl**, above, plays center for the **San Jose Sharks**, who are regular playoff contenders. **Chris Wondolowski**, left, of the **San Jose Earthquakes**, is also among the city's stars.