

ABOUT YOU

Please provide your name as it will appear on the ballot: Gabby Chavez-Lopez

What office are you seeking? San Jose City Council District 3

Are you an incumbent in this office? No

Do you now or have you ever held elected office(s)? If so, please list title(s), jurisdiction(s), and years in each office. No

Where's your hometown? Fresno

What is your current city of residence? San Jose

What is your highest level of education? Bachelors Degree

What is your current primary vocation/occupation? Executive Director/Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley

Do you have an arts background of any kind? Yes, I have a background in performing arts and dance. Growing up, I was passionate about expressing myself through movement, participating in various dance performances and theatrical productions. The arts have always been a creative outlet for me, allowing me to connect with others and tell stories in a unique and powerful way.

ABOUT YOUR CAMPAIGN

Please share your candidate statement as it will appear in voting materials. (approx. 200 words)

You deserve strong leadership that listens, takes action, and delivers results. From tackling homelessness and public safety to affordable housing and revitalizing our communities, I'm running to fight for a healthier San Jose for all of us.

I've lived and worked in downtown San Jose for decades, and I'm raising my son in the Hensley Neighborhood. As a business leader, community advocate, policy expert, and working mother, I know what it takes to get things done. I have secured tens of millions of dollars in funding to invest in housing solutions and workforce development that has uplifted San Jose residents, families, and small businesses. We all deserve to feel safe, supported, and proud of the place we call home.

My plan is simple: focus on core city services, accountable and viable solutions for homelessness, safer streets through community policing, cleaner and more welcoming neighborhoods, and stronger support for small businesses. I'm honored to earn the support of CA State Senator Dave Cortese, Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, Valley Water District Director Shiloh Ballard, and hundreds of District 3 neighbors.

This campaign is about working together to deliver results. I'd be honored to earn your vote. Learn more at www.gabbychavezlopez.com.

What is your campaign budget? \$150,000

How much have you raised to date? Please specify if you have loaned or contributed any personal funds to your campaign and how much. \$116,000

How many doors have you personally knocked to date? How many are you committed to knocking before Election Day? I've knocked on over 2,000 doors to date and plan to knock 8,000 before election day.

ABOUT THE ARTS

What is your perception of the current state of arts and culture in San José? (250 words)

San José is a city of innovation, diversity, and cultural history, but our investment in arts and culture has not kept pace with our potential. A thriving arts scene isn't a luxury; it's necessary for a dynamic economy, vibrant communities, and a strong sense of local identity. Yet, too many artists and cultural organizations in our city are struggling - facing limited funding, rising costs, and a lack of accessible creative spaces.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Downtown San José, where arts and culture should be at the heart of our revitalization efforts. Instead of empty storefronts and fading venues, we should invest in public art, live performances, and cultural spaces that attract people, boost local businesses, and make our downtown a true destination. A city that values innovation must also value the arts.

As your City Councilmember, I will fight to expand funding for community-based cultural initiatives, secure more affordable spaces for artists, and forge strong partnerships between the arts, local businesses, and our tech industry. We must stop treating the arts as an afterthought and recognize them as a powerful driver of economic growth and social cohesion.

How would you define the role of arts and culture in San José's economy? (250 words)

Arts and culture are a powerhouse for San José's economy, driving tourism, job creation, and small business growth. Live events, performances, and cultural festivals unite thousands of people, creating a ripple effect that benefits our entire city. When we invest in the arts, we invest in our local economy.

Concerts, theater performances, and festivals draw crowds that support our restaurants, local vendors, and small businesses. Yet, San José has lacked the necessary investment in entertainment spaces that can serve as hubs for music, art, and community gatherings. We need to change that by expanding access to public venues, reimagining underutilized spaces for outdoor performances, and streamlining the process for hosting events.

Were you familiar with SJAA before receiving this survey? Yes

If yes to the above, are you familiar with our current policy priorities? Yes

ABOUT OUR PRIORITIES

Would you support reallocating the current 40% General Fund set aside from the Transient Occupancy Tax (aka TOT or Hotel Tax) to arts, culture, and tourism programs? Why or why not?

I support maintaining the current 40% General Fund set aside from the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) for arts, culture, and tourism programs because these are critical to San José's economy. However, given the city's financial challenges, I believe we must take a balanced approach while ensuring that we continue investing in the creative assets that make our city vibrant. Arts and tourism funding is an investment. These industries generate revenue, create jobs, and drive economic activity, particularly in Downtown San José. Cutting funding now would be shortsighted and could harm long-term economic recovery efforts. That's why I support maintaining the 40% allocation to provide stability for arts organizations, live event venues, and cultural institutions that rely on this funding.

At the same time, we must acknowledge our city's budget realities. If we are in a deficit situation, it may not be feasible to increase this allocation immediately. However, as the financial outlook improves, I would support exploring an increase in arts and culture funding.

As an alternative to reallocation, will you support setting FY25 as the baseline for General Fund revenue from TOT and dedicating net new TOT revenue in FY26 and beyond to arts, culture, and tourism programs? Why or why not?

Yes, I support setting FY25 as the baseline for General Fund revenue from TOT and dedicating net new TOT revenue in FY26 and beyond to arts, culture, and tourism. With the 2026 Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup bringing a surge in visitors to our region, we must maximize TOT revenue and reinvest in the sectors that drive our local economy. By allocating new revenue to arts, live events, and small business support, we can enhance San José's cultural identity, attract more tourism, and create lasting economic benefits.

Will you support efforts to fund updates to the City's Cultural Plan and Public Art Master Plan, both of which expired several years ago? How would you do this?

Yes, I fully support funding updates to the City's Cultural Plan and Public Art Master Plan. These plans ensure San José remains a vibrant, creative, and inclusive city. I would prioritize funding through new TOT revenue from major events like the 2026 Super Bowl and World Cup, public-private partnerships, and state and federal grants.

Will you commit to ensuring local creatives, arts practitioners, and culture bearers are centered in the planning, marketing, and execution of all arts and cultural activities related to major sporting events such as the Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup?

I will support this and any future opportunities to showcase San José's rich culture and creativity, ensuring that local creatives, arts practitioners, and culture bearers are at the heart of planning, marketing, and executing arts and cultural activities for major events like the 2026 Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup. These events provide a unique platform to highlight our city's diversity and support local artists and businesses. I will advocate for funding, partnerships, and dedicated spaces for local talent to ensure our creative community thrives.

OPEN FORUM

What are some other ideas you have for increasing City support for arts and culture?

San José must invest in arts and culture to fuel economic growth and create a more vibrant city. I support dedicating new TOT revenue from major events like the 2026 Super Bowl and World Cup to arts funding, expanding outdoor entertainment spaces, and streamlining permits for live performances and festivals. We should also create a city-backed arts grant program, establish artist residence programs in public spaces and schools.

What do you wish we had asked but didn't?