



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Urban Placemaking Experiment Comes to East Village** *Partnership works with community to transform a parking lot into a creative community space*

DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO – The Downtown San Diego Partnership in conjunction with the East Village Association, RAD Lab and HP Investors is looking to transform a parking lot at 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and J Street into a creative urban community space.

The Downtown San Diego Partnership is helping coordinate the effort as part of its larger urban placemaking initiative, which looks to transform spaces throughout Downtown into lively, engaging areas.

“In dense urban neighborhoods like Downtown San Diego, space is at a premium,” said Kris Michell, president and CEO of the Downtown Partnership. “We need to look at public and private spaces in new ways and find innovative solutions that serve the community and create excitement about the Downtown experience. Where others see asphalt, we see opportunity.”

Sumeet Parekh, principal of HP Investors and owner of the property, approached the Downtown Partnership in 2013 about working together to engage the community while revitalizing the space.

“Our firm strives not just to create value for our investors, but also for the communities we invest in,” said Parekh. “In evaluating different options to enhance this property, we recognized an opportunity to do something unique and cool that would also create a neighborhood amenity.”

To help get the conversation going, the Downtown Partnership and the East Village Association asked RAD Lab, a design and development team that works to reimagine urban spaces, to get community input. Recently RAD Lab recently put up signs

asking: “What Do You Want Here?” The answers have ranged from a pop-up park to a dog park to a children’s play area.

“This is part of an international trend to transform urban spaces quickly and cost-effectively so you can eliminate blight and improve the quality of place for a community,” said David Loewenstein, chief operating officer of RAD Lab. “We are excited to be part of this experiment and look forward to working with the Downtown Partnership on more projects like this.”

David Hazan, president of the East Village Association, said this will add to the growing roster of unique places and spaces that the neighborhood has to offer.

“The East Village community is excited about this new space and can’t wait to help make it a reality,” Hazan said.

Over the next couple of months, RAD Lab and the Downtown Partnership will work with the East Village Association to incorporate community feedback to produce a unique space. HP Investors has agreed to fund the improvements, and Downtown San Diego Partnership’s Clean and Safe program will help to supervise the site.

Michell of the Downtown Partnership said her organization will continue to look for new spaces and different ways to revitalize Downtown as part of its larger placemaking initiative.

“The goal of this project is to experiment with the process and take what we learn to other areas of Downtown and to other communities,” Michell explained.

*The Downtown San Diego Partnership is a non-profit, member-based organization that serves as the leading advocate for the revitalization and economic health of Downtown. To learn more about the Downtown Partnership, visit [www.downtownsandiego.org](http://www.downtownsandiego.org)*

*HP Investors, LLC is a San Diego-based owner and investor of commercial real estate assets. Established in 2010, the firm primarily invests in urban retail and hospitality real estate. HP Investors’ principals have more than 50 combined years of experience in real estate capital markets, investment, and asset management. For more information, visit [www.hpinvestors.com](http://www.hpinvestors.com)*

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