

Unitarian Universalist Association  
66<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly  
June 23-27, 2027



Date May 7th, 2024

RE: 66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly

Dear LaTonya Richardson

Thank you for your interest in San Jose! We appreciate being considered and are delighted at the prospect of partnering to become the home of

66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly

San Jose is the capital of Silicon Valley and the gateway to Northern California. We are an ideal meeting destination offering an international airport, a wide range of hotel brands within a walkable campus, updated event spaces, abundant cultural arts and entertainment, superb dining, nightlife, wineries, shopping and so much more...all in the nicest climate in the U.S.

## HISTORY

Founded on November 29, 1777, San Jose was the first town in the Spanish colony Nueva California. At the end of the Mexican American War in 1848, it took California two more years (and a gold rush to prove its worth) to become a state, in 1850. San Jose was the first incorporated city in the new state and served as the first state capital.

Throughout the late 1800s and into the first half of the 20th century, San Jose was nationally nicknamed "The Valley of Heart's Delight." Before Silicon Valley, the region was revered for its agricultural abundance, producing orchard fruits, berries, tree nuts and vegetables.

San Jose has always attracted a special type of entrepreneurial spirit. Today, as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San Jose continues to draw interest and people of the world. From technology of the future such as software, services and artificial intelligence to perfecting proven methods of invention such as traditional wine production, San Jose sets the bar for global influence, design and communication.

August 5, 2024

UUA Board of Trustees,

For the past six months, I have been in conversation and early negotiations with Team San Jose about the potential for hosting GA 2027. They have demonstrated flexibility and a commitment to win our business. As you will see below, the funding offered is impressive. Their contract terms are close in alignment with UU values and the expectations of our community. Accordingly, I recommend San Jose as the destination for GA 2027. I respectfully request the Board's approval/permission to advance negotiations and contract San Jose, subject to the terms outlined herein and barring any significant concerns about contract terms.

San Jose presents several appealing factors for hosting the General Assembly 2027:

- The city's vibrant, diverse culture and its ongoing efforts in technological innovation and social justice align with UU values.
- The local UU congregation is actively engaged in addressing pressing social issues such as racial justice and equality, which could provide meaningful engagement opportunities for GA attendees. Their relatively new minister has been enthusiastic and responsive to requests and made it possible for me to speak with members of the congregation in June to assess their willingness to support GA by volunteering.
- The San Jose McEnery Convention Center has a documented sustainability policy that covers waste, energy, water, purchasing, community involvement, and human resources. The center has energy efficiency and emissions reduction programs in place that include measuring and reducing energy use. [San Jose is committed to carbon neutrality by 2030!](#)
- The San Jose McEnery Convention Center is well-equipped to meet accessibility standards and provide a comfortable experience for all attendees, including those with disabilities. The facility offers ample open spaces, elevators, escalators, and other means for easy navigation. There are two connecting hotels, offering level, automated entry from two floors. The overall layout is designed to facilitate easy movement throughout the venue.
- For the visually impaired, there are services like accessible signage and auditory signals. The SJCC also hosts events like the Bay Area Accessibility Expo, highlighting its capabilities in catering to diverse accessibility needs.
- The convention center corridor is commuter-friendly with public transportation links, including the VTA Light Rail and bus services. The area is designed to be safe for walking, with sidewalk cutouts and audible street crossing alerts to aid navigation for those with visual impairments.
- Team San Jose, which manages the San Jose McEnery Convention Center among other facilities, has articulated a clear commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They emphasize investing in opportunities and practices that advance these principles, recognizing them as both a moral and strategic imperative to succeed in their mission ([Visit San Jose](#)).

This foundation provides a meaningful context for General Assembly, combining a desirable location and opportunities for engaging with a community that is actively working on values-based issues.



# MEET SAN JOSE

Our unique attributes, stellar convention package and Team San Jose's industry leading service model make San Jose the best choice for your next meeting or event.

## Walkable Downtown

with an accessible meetings campus in the heart of it all.

## Variety of Major Hotel Brands

are within 2 blocks of the meetings campus.

## Fly Simple with SJC

San Jose Mineta International Airport is only 3.9 miles from Downtown. Plus, we have easy access to two other international airports in the Bay.

## Heart of Silicon Valley

Be inspired by the region's entrepreneurial spirit and impact of technological innovation.

## Soak Up the Sun

with great weather year-round. Dine al fresco or have your event outside!

## The #1 Safest Large City

in Northern California and Top 10 in the United States.\*

## Gateway to a Northern California Day Trip

Just 45 minutes to San Francisco, 1 hour to Monterey and 30 minutes to the beaches of Santa Cruz. Plus, explore California wine country with vineyards and tasting rooms, near and far!

## Green Meetings

The destination leader in sustainable meetings practices and stewardship and voted one of the greenest cities in America.

## 100+ Things to Do

Dining, nightlife, museums, attractions and more!

## Own the City

Extend your brand from the airport throughout the city!

\*MoneyGeek, December 2023

## AIRLIFT

Easy access to 3 international airports

**SJC**



**SAN JOSE MINETA  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**12 million**

people served annually  
at Silicon Valley's airport

**3.9 miles**

from downtown San Jose, it makes  
getting to your event a breeze!

**SFO & OAK**

Providing the ultimate flexibility, both San Francisco International  
Airport and Oakland International Airport are within a  
30-45 minute drive from San Jose

Easy access to 3 international airports PLUS Amtrak, ACE, Caltrain, Greyhound!

# WALKABLE CAMPUS



Discover San Jose Facilities Overview [here!](#)



Site of the newest SJSU Dorms

The SJCC is in the downtown core near public parks, cultural venues, and a diverse food scene. It boasts 372,754 square feet of space and the UUA GA would have enjoy exclusive use. The rack rental cost for the SJCC is \$800,000 for groups (like GA) with a concessions-heavy food and beverage spend. However, Team San Jose's initial offering was rental of \$417,500.00 with a F&B minimum spend of \$90,000. For reference, the F&B commitment was \$100,000 for GA 2023 in Pittsburgh. The F&B spend for GA is less as attendance has shifted from in-person to online. This concern was shared and Team San Jose further reduced the F&B commitment to \$50,000. [Great news!](#)





Team San Jose advocated on our behalf to their Hotel Business Improvement District (HBID), which is a council representing all hotels in the area with 80 or more guest rooms. The HBID offered to contribute \$150,000 in funding to further offset SJCC rental. In exchange, we must commit to a minimum number of hotel room nights.

Following successful negotiations with area hotels, we have a commitment of approximately \$50,130 in hotel rebate funding that brings the rental balance due to the SJCC down to \$8,750!

There's a pending commitment of \$25,000 in grant funding to offset our spend on electrical and internet use at the SJCC. I am awaiting written confirmation of this commitment.

While there are lots of hotels from which to choose in San Jose, the challenge is negotiating lower rates. San Jose benefits from being in the heart of Silicon Valley and the corporate spending that results therefrom. Although June is off-peak for the destination (per STR reports), the rates we've negotiated are consistent with the market albeit higher than in other GA destinations. My strategy is committing to smaller blocks at the convention center hotels and supplementing with airport hotels and dorms from San Jose State University, both of which offer much lower rates (see below).

The SJSU dorms are adjacent to the convention center (see map above) in the former Fairmont Hotel building. These are hotel-style accommodations albeit with twin beds. SJSU has a dining hall on-site making for affordable lodging and food too! The VTA light rail stops just outside of several airport hotels, making for a direct route and easy commute to the SJCC!

Next steps include reviewing the latest contract revisions from the SJCC and primary hotels; negotiating concessions for meeting space and suite upgrades at the Marriott and Hilton; conducting a site visit (September 12-14) to assess airport hotel conditions and inventory, and a site inspection of the newly opened dorms at SJSU.

Team San Jose has been responsive and diligent in our negotiations and it's an ideal time to move forward with contracting (subject to the conditions mentioned).

# THINGS TO DO

Experience San Jose like a local while still visiting the most popular tourist attractions. These travel itineraries will help you make the most of your visit, no matter how long you're here.

## Sports

The South Bay is home to the most professional sports teams in the Bay Area. Cheer alongside thousands of screaming fans at a baseball, soccer, football or hockey game.



## Museums

San Jose's most popular museums are the perfect destination for family outings, date nights and solo adventurers. Explore space at Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton, get hands-on with technology at The Tech Interactive or take in the vibrant San Jose Museum of Art.

## Get Outside

San Jose is an outdoor adventurer's dream with hiking trails and open spaces to stay active!

# RESTAURANTS

San Jose is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the U.S. – **and it's reflected in our cuisine.** A visit to San Jose makes it easy to indulge in authentic flavors and cooking styles from around the globe. Browse the best places to eat in the Bay Area and create your own food crawl through our cultural neighborhoods to sample Vietnamese, Portuguese, Indian, and Greek food.

**Discover San Jose Restaurants Here!**



Little Portugal



Little Saigon



Little Italy



San Pedro Square



Santana Row/  
Valley Fair Mall



SoFA District





Dear Unitarian Universalist Association,

On behalf of Team San Jose and our partners, it is my pleasure to extend our support to the City of San Jose's proposal to host the 66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly.

Team San Jose, the nonprofit parent company of Visit San Jose, is the city's official convention and visitor's bureau, its sole destination marketing organization, and the venue management company overseeing all lines of business for the San Jose McEnery Convention Center and entertainment venues including the California Theatre, the Center for Performing Arts, Montgomery Theater and San Jose Civic.

Our mission, to promote San Jose to stimulate economic development that benefits our community, does so by unifying our team, hotels, arts, labor and venues to deliver an exceptional experience for the meetings, groups and conventions we host in our city. Our team and partners are especially committed to hosting diverse groups of association conventions.

The First Unitarian Church of San Jose is one of the oldest Unitarian Universalist congregations in California. This Unitarian Universalist congregation contributes greatly to the region's rich tapestry of faith diversity and progressive activism, and we know that the 66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly would benefit from this important and committed community.

To help offset costs, we can provide a subsidy of \$150,000. While this is subject to final board approval, we anticipate no issues due to the much-appreciated economic benefit of the 66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly's stay.

We thank you for considering San Jose and look forward to continued conversations about hosting the 66th Annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John LaFortune".

John LaFortune  
President and CEO  
Visit San Jose

### Summary of Costs:

#### San Jose McEnery Convention Center Rental/License Agreement

\$417,500	rack rate discount rental
\$ 83,500	special association discount
\$ 83,500	10% room night discount (min. 5,580 room nights). Discount applied at the time of contract. Untraceable rooms billed to master upon completion of program.
\$ 41,750	weekend booking discount
\$ 50,130	anticipated room rebate discount (avg. \$17)
<u>\$150,000</u>	HBID subsidy for confirming 4,001+ room <u>nights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 4,000 or fewer room nights, the subsidy reduces to \$100,000/night</li><li>- Current block is 5,399 total room nights (eligible for subsidy)</li></ul>
<b>\$ 8,620</b>	<b>Total Rental Cost</b>
\$ 34,482	Estimate for Electrical (2025 – Baltimore estimate is \$27,552)
\$ 41,300	Estimate for Internet (2025 – Baltimore estimate is \$63,500)
<u>\$ -25,000</u>	Team San Jose grant funding to offset internet and electric costs. <u>Impressive!</u>
\$ 50,782	Balance - Electrical and Internet
\$112,000	Estimate for IATSE labor/rigging, EMTs, Fire Marshall, Ramp/Staging, Misc.
<b>\$120,750</b>	<b>Total facility Investment @ SJCC</b>

For reference, license fees (NOT including ancillary costs) in previous years have been:

**2025-Baltimore:** Original License fee signed in 2023 ~ \$189,700. Discounted to \$164,250. Rebates at \$15/room offsets \$83,700. Visit Baltimore rebate of \$10/room offsets \$55,800. Savings of \$7/room using Baltimore housing bureau offsets \$7,000. Final rental cost to the UUA: \$17,750. (Rental cost was originally \$0 but we added private event place and a ballroom after the fact which increased the rental cost by \$30,735. We increased the room block to offset some of that cost, resulting in \$17,750 final rental fee.

**2023-Pittsburgh:** Original license fee signed in 2018 ~ \$191,029. Renegotiated and reduced in August 2022 to \$82,500. Renegotiated terms further reduce the license fee by another \$20,000 to \$62,500 **IF** the event generates \$100,000 in F&B sales. A significant portion, if not all, of the remaining \$62,500, will be funded by revenue from hotel courtesy block agreements added this fiscal year. With these new contracts with Embassy, Courtyard, Drury, and Doubletree, each agreed to pay a \$15 hotel rebate to offset the license fee. By comparison, the rebates in the original hotel contracts from 2018 allow for a \$4/room rebate at the Westin and Omni.

**2022-Portland:** \$192,650 before discount. \$134,855 after discounts

**2020-Providence:** \$189,461.76 Dunkin Arena + \$124.455 RICC (per Ag)

**2019-Spokane:** \$180,915 before rebates. \$119,715 after rebates.

**2018-Kansas City:** \$194,548 before discount. \$129,548 after discount.

### Lodging/Hotel Summary:

Hotel	Rms	Rate	Flat Rate	Courtesy/Contract
Marriott (attached SJCC)	360	\$ 239.00	yes	Contract: Host Hotel
Hilton (attached SJCC)	100	\$ 239.00	yes	Contract
Signia Convention Center	10	\$ 240.00	yes	Courtesy
AC Convention Center	30	\$ 209.00	yes	Courtesy
Hyatt Place Convention Center	125	\$ 199.00	no	Contract
Hyatt Place Airport	50	\$ 179.00	yes	Contract
Hyatt House Airport	50	\$ 189.00	yes	Courtesy
TBD - Hilton Garden Inn Airport	25	\$ 179.00	yes	Courtesy
TBD - Wyndham Airport	100	\$ 189.00	yes	Courtesy
TBD - Holiday Inn	100	\$ 129.00	no	Courtesy
SJSU	100	\$ 80.00		
TOTAL	1,050			