



Photo Courtesy of City Tacos

City Tacos, founded in 2014, recently opened a seventh location in Downtown San Diego. The new outpost is located next to Petco Park.

## City Tacos Opens Seventh Location New Downtown Restaurant Located Next to Petco Park

■ By MARIEL CONCEPCION

City Tacos, the 2014-founded taco-focused food chain, has expanded.

Earlier this month, City Tacos, with 65 employees and headquartered in North Park, opened its downtown location, directly next to Petco Park. According to Gerald Torres, founder and CEO, the new shop strategically launched Opening Day for the San Diego Padres and will reopen during the second session of home games before permanently opening full time.

As a result of the latest City Tacos outpost — and a couple additional openings planned for later this year — the company projects it will increase its revenue from \$4.9 million in 2020 to \$8.4 million in 2021.

“We were ready to open downtown in March of last year, but then COVID-19 hit,” said Torres, originally from Mexico City. “We saw the opportunity to reopen when the stadium opened and considering the Padres are now playing with attendance, so, we made that happen quickly. It’s been a crazy year, but, luckily, we’ve been able to maintain and are looking strong financially. In fact, we are continuing to grow and are planning another location for University of Southern California in Los Angeles. We are finalizing the lease negotiations now and hope to be up and running by July of this year.”



Gerald Torres  
Founder/CEO  
City Tacos

### How it All Started

Torres has a long history in the food and beverage industry. He’s worked in restaurants and hospitality companies most of his life, he said, including positions like bus boy, bar back, bartender, manager, busser and server as well as in room service. One of his first jobs was at Tiramisu Trattoria, an Italian eatery located in La Mesa, he recalls, where he remained for about a decade before transitioning to a 9 to 5 job working logistics.

But after a year behind a desk, Torres knew he wanted to return to the culinary scene by way of his own offering.

With \$150,000 to his name, he opened the North Park location in 2014. That was followed by Imperial Beach in 2015, La Mesa in 2016, Encinitas in 2018, Sorrento Valley in 2019, Pacific Beach in 2020 and now the downtown spot. Each location has an investor partner, said Torres, including City Tacos’ chef Eduardo Baeza, Torres’ North Park landlords and Mike Hess from Mike Hess Brewing, headquartered in Miramar.

### How it All Works

City Tacos, which is still family-owned and fully owns and operates the flagship North Park location, sources directly from big name providers like US Foods, said Torres.

It has a commissary kitchen in El Cajon that produces all the tortillas, salsas, stews and other goods for all the locations, he said. It also serves as a distribution center for the seven food places, said Torres, as it stores all the produce, materials and ingredients that are mass purchased.

On slow days, City Tacos sells between 800 to 1,000 tacos and doubles those numbers on busier days selling from 1600-2000 tacos, said Torres, adding that it sells up to 10,000 tacos and feeds more than 3,500 people on weekend days. In 2020, despite the global pandemic, City Tacos opened a new brick and mortar in Pacific Beach and grew its revenue to \$4.9 million, up from \$4.3 million the previous year.

Israel Montano, operational manager at City Tacos, credits the success of City Tacos to tasty food, good customer service, a fun ambiance and a strong team.

“When running a business, you have to make sure the business glows,” he said. “If you do things right from the beginning and you repeat that process all year long, customers will talk about you and bring more people in. This reduces the margin of errors and allows you to fix the errors when they do appear. All of this can only be done if you have a great team around you.”

Torres concurs, touting the innovation and creativity behind the company’s culinary efforts. Moving forward, he hopes to stay on this growth trajectory as he continues to expand the operation.



Israel Montano  
Operational Manager  
City Tacos

### Mexican Sazon, American Flavors

“City Tacos isn’t just about Mexican food, it is about the combination between the two: Mexican sazón and American flavors,” said Torres. “We try to incorporate both of these techniques. Luckily, some doors have opened up for us in the real estate market and with the continued investments, everything is moving in the right direction.” ■

### City Tacos



FOUNDER: 2014

FOUNDER/CEO: Gerry Torres

HEADQUARTERS: North Park

BUSINESS: A creative taco-focused food chain.

REVENUE: \$4.9M in 2020, projecting \$8.4M in 2021

EMPLOYEES: 65

WEBSITE: [www.citytacosd.com](http://www.citytacosd.com)

NOTABLE: Teamed up with Mike Hess Brewing for opening of Imperial Beach location.

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San Diego Business Journal features City Tacos

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