

May 23, 2011

the San José Redistricting Commission
via email: 2011redistricting@sanjoseca.gov

re: the redrawing of the D6 boundaries

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing as an individual to comment upon the boundaries of Council District 6 and am expressing my personal opinions.

I support leaving the current D6/D9 boundary basically as it currently is, and as shown in "Plan-B". I think it is appropriate to move the Hamann Park area from D6 to D1: it is a distinct neighborhood, isolated from the rest of D6 by Freeway 17, and its transfer seems the least disruptive means of adjusting the D1 population.

I recommend transferring the "Rubino Circle" area, as well as the region covering the adjacent underdeveloped hillside, from D6 to D9, while keeping Canoas Garden region in D6. This area, "transfer area 6-9(d)", was referred to as "a peninsula" at the hearing I attended in Willow Glen, and I believe it would be best to "cut it in half". There is a very distinct division line: the older "Birdcage" area, as it is nicknamed, is accessible from the north at Old Almaden at Curtner; the newer Rubino Circle "Summer Creek" complex is accessible only from the south at Foxworthy/Hillsdale; and the two are separated by a nearly solid wall. From what I recall hearing at the meeting, shifting the southern part of 6-9(d) from D6 would provide an adequate population transfer to D9.

I would also ask about the small pocket of D3 in the southwest quadrant of I-280/87, around Biebrach Park: this area seems quite isolated from the rest of D3 by the freeways, and while it is also isolated from the rest of Willow Glen by the CalTrain tracks, it might be a better fit in D6 than in D3.

I know that considerable interest has been expressed in keeping Willow Glen together in a "Willow Glen District", as D6 has been called. My experience includes having served on the Willow Glen Neighborhood Assoc. (WGNA) Board for twenty years. I would point out that Willow Glen was a small town back in the 1920s, and that all of the historic city is already in D6 (not counting the CalTrain parking lot in D7): the Willow Glen boundaries only extended south to Malone, as the area south of there was just sparsely-populated farmland. (The map is available on-line at <http://www.wgbackfence.net/map1927.tif>.) I would also point out that we at WGNA considered Willow Glen to be the entire area from I-280 down to Foxworthy (see the map at <http://www.wgbackfence.net/D6groups.jpg>), and that that distinction does not depend on Council boundary lines: the area between Curtner and Foxworthy is Willow Glen regardless of whether it is in D6 or D9. Also, D6 is not just Willow Glen, as it serves the Rose Garden and numerous other neighborhoods as well.

The Council Districts are supposed to represent areas of common interest. While it would have been nice to have had all of Willow Glen in one district, it does not appear practical, and it would also be a change for the large number of residents in D9. But I submit that the Plan-B boundaries, with the adjustments I've described here, do make for a cohesive area of common interest: the northern two-thirds of Willow Glen, along with the Rose Garden, Shasta Hancett, Burbank, and others, are all well-established communities, built in the first half of the last century: they share the concerns about in-fill, infrastructure maintenance, and historic preservation. The southern third of Willow Glen, along with Rubino Circle, are newer, like much of D9, and their residents have different expectations of their Council representative.

Thank you for your consideration and for your attention.

~Lawrence Ames

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