



Willow Glen Neighborhood Association
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July 13, 2015

VIA E-MAIL: Jim.Ortbal@sanjoseca.gov

Mr. Jim Ortbal
Interim Director of Transportation
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Letter in Support of the Lincoln Avenue Road Diet Trial

Mr. Ortbal:

Prior to the start of the Lincoln Avenue Road Diet Trial (“Road Diet Trial”), the City of San Jose asked for the Willow Glen Business Association (“WGBA”) and the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association (“WGNA”) to each submit a position on the project following the first three months of the trial. While we understand that the WGBA Board of Directors voted last month to oppose the Road Diet Trial, we wish to complete our duty to the community process and submit to you our position at this time.

Our focus, as the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association, was to reach out to people who live and work in Willow Glen, schools, and parents, and to measure the overall pulse of the community. Earlier this week, the WGNA Board of Directors took a vote and decided 9-0-1 to communicate to you and the City of San Jose **our strong support for making the Road Diet Trial permanent.**

We believe that the Road Diet Trial is an innovative, forward-thinking concept that has instantly made our most traveled thoroughfare safer for pedestrians, bikers, and vehicles alike. Our neighborhood association has supported traffic calming efforts for over four decades, and we are pleased with the improvements to the Lincoln Avenue experience that this trial has provided. As you may also be aware, the demographics of Willow Glen are changing, with more and more young families moving into the area, and this Road Diet Trial is a clear step forward for the safety of our families, our seniors, and our children.

Over the last eight months, there has been an abundance of community feedback and data that support making the Road Diet Trial permanent – please see as follows:

*An **anti-road diet petition** via Change.org was created on or around April 1. That petition has collected **363 signatures** to date. A **pro-road diet petition** via Change.org was created on or around May 16. That petition has collected **729 signatures** to date.

*WGNA conducted its own non-scientific survey in June that aimed to gauge the overall pulse of the community on this issue. That survey netted 1,131 respondents, with **50.39% in support** of making the road diet permanent and **45.09% opposing** such, with the remaining respondents having no opinion. Those survey results can be found here:

http://www.wgna.net/road_diet_survey_results

*As of June 18, the total number of emails (for/against/concerns/questions) received by the **Road Diet Working Group** via the email address lincolnroaddiet@gmail.com resulted in the following feedback: 282 emails clearly in support, 206 emails clearly opposed, 144 undecided/had concerns, 35 suggestions, 20 questions.

*WGNA Board Members have participated in all three community meetings on the Road Diet Trial – in November 2014, February 2015, and June 2015 – each of them attended by 150-300 people. At these meetings, we were able to hear hundreds of comments and gather further feedback from our neighbors.

*Additionally, the City of San Jose's **final traffic report** on the Road Diet Trial showed no significant, widespread evidence of safety decreasing on Lincoln Avenue or on our neighborhood streets. We will note however that there are ongoing areas of concern involving vehicle traffic and/or speeds on Bird, Hicks, and Glen Eyrie, which we hope will be addressed by the City of San Jose in the near future.

* On June 23, the Board of Directors of the Willow Glen Business Association voted 10-4 against supporting the Road Diet Trial. While we do not take their position lightly, we have collectively observed a vibrant Lincoln Avenue that is bustling with people on a daily basis, and we are also aware that many businesses on and along Lincoln Avenue are in strong support of the Road Diet Trial. We believe that making Lincoln Avenue safer and more livable will have a long-term positive impact on local business in our community.

Finally, we would like to clarify our ability to take a position on divisive issues pursuant to our bylaws. To better understand the intent of our bylaws, we have reached out to many current and former board members and former Presidents of WGNA. It has become clear that the intent of this language was to prevent issues outside the scope of our neighborhood from polarizing our membership and weakening our ability to represent our neighborhood. Given that we are a neighborhood association focused solely on local issues and given that there is plenty of precedent, we believe it is appropriate, and even our duty, to collectively take a position on the Road Diet Trial.

The data that we have in front of us is clear, and the increased feeling of safety on Lincoln Avenue is clear. We urge the City of San Jose to make the Road Diet Trial permanent.

Thank you,



Chris Roth
President, Willow Glen Neighborhood Association

cc: Mayor Sam Liccardo & Members of the San Jose City Council