

TOWN HALL MEETING & PANEL DISCUSSION

NOTES

14 December 2017

Willow Glen Neighborhood Association (WGNA)

Date: Thursday, December 14, 2017. Time: 7- 9 pm

Location: Gardner Academy school at

502 Illinois Avenue, San Jose 95125

(Note, this is not our usual meeting location)

6:30 PM – Meet The Speakers (Informal Gathering)

7:00 - 7:35 PM – Keynote Address by

Jim Beall, Jr., California State Senator, 15th District

7:35 - 8:00 PM – Guest Speaker Address by

Dave Cortese, President of

the Board of Supervisors, Santa Clara County

8:00 - 9:00 PM – Panel Discussion, Participation from Audience

Panel Members include

➔ **Jim Beall**, *California State Senator, 15th District;*

➔ **Dave Cortese**, *Supervisor & Board President, Santa Clara County;*

➔ **Raul Peralez**, *San Jose District Councilmembers, District 3;*

➔ **Dev Heinert Davis**, *San Jose District Councilmember, District 6;*

➔ **Pam Foley**, *panel moderator, former President, Board of Trustees, San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD)*

➔ **Patricia Palomares-Mason**, *Gardner neighborhood leader*

➔ **Bill Rankin**, *North Willow Glen neighborhood leader*

➔ **Elizabeth Estensen**, *Willow Glen neighborhood leader*

➔ **Maria Marcelo**, *Washington neighborhood leader*

➔ **Spanish speaking translator: Gina America**

Discussion notes begin in the below, on the next page:

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Discussion notes from the panel discussion begin in the below and following pages:

Sound Wall/ Fence

- Location is behind the school and adjacent to the freeway
- Mentioned in San Jose's past Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI)
- Study to determine what type of wall; how high; financial cost; funding
- Need to work with Ash Kalra, State Assemblymember, District 27
- It's been 20 years since the initial asking by the neighborhood
- School Safety Zone/Safe Routes to School
- Pollution/ theft/ toxic waste/fecal matter/ fire hazards in this area
- Holes that are repeatedly cut-through on the cyclone (chain-link) fence
- Impacts of crime, drug use, homelessness, loitering
- Need to "take back" or reclaim the community, especially around the school

Neighborhood Traffic (surrounding Greater-Gardner)

- Impacts of the proposed Google San Jose project
- Number of cars into and passing through the area
- Public transit and train connections into and passing through the area
- Impact on the overall "quality of life" of the neighborhood
- Need to recognize common issues, to work together, unite, & maintain positive outlook
- Look into funding from CA State and the City of San Jose for improvements
- Work with San Jose Public Works Department and Caltrans (California Department of Transportation)
- Set on the list as a "first" priority, and submit the application for funding
- Create a petition of names of residents in the neighborhood
- Work with the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) Board, and the county

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California High Speed Rail (CAHSR)

- Grade Separation options
 - At-grade (grounded on the same level)
 - Above-grade (aerial, elevated, on an S-curve);
 - Below-grade (underground)
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and mitigation

California High Speed Rail (CAHSR)

[topic continued from above with specific question to each politician]

- Political opposition to Rail? Who favors?
 - ➔ **Raul Peralez, SJ Councilmember, District 3:**
 - Yes, favors the CAHSR
 - Reminds that postponement and delays of CAHSR progress are because of EIRs that are still in waiting
 - Reminds that progress also depends on pending grade separation studies
 - Compares the benefits of CAHSR and other rail systems to roadways
 - ➔ **Dave Cortese, Santa Clara County Supervisor:**
 - Yes, favors the CAHSR
 - Reminds that much depends on the course of the rail line, its mapping, as well as the overall scheduling of planning and development
 - This significantly impacts the next generation of Californians, and local residents
 - Notes the significant planning needs and long term investment, including state-of-the art infrastructure that's of world-class value, and of lasting value.
 - Notes the importance of inter-cultural studies and comparisons so that California, Santa Clara County County, and the SF Bay Area region arrive in a leading position on the world stage. (e.g., compare to developments in Taiwan)

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California High Speed Rail (CAHSR) *[topic continued from previous page]*

- Political opposition to Rail? Who favors?
 - ➔ **Dave Cortese, Santa Clara County Supervisor** *[continued from previous page]*
 - Compares to other modes of transportation and their performance:
 - Buses/ initial cost/ return on investment
 - Volume and use by mode
 - The need to relieve stress in key areas
 - Caltrain and ACE train lines
 - EIRs and general landscape/ecology issues
 - Suggests extending an invitation Ben Tripousis, CAHSRA, to speak to the neighborhood
 - ➔ **Dev Davis, SJ Councilmember, District 6:**
 - No, does not favor the CAHSR
 - Suggested a community meeting with her own Council District 6 and Councilmember Raul Peralez in District 3 to discuss developments and needs
 - Prefers to work on electrifying Caltrain versus CAHSR
 - Prefers to focus on the San Jose to San Francisco connections, and adding more to the route
 - Focus on and mitigate the impact on neighborhoods
 - Notes the estimate on the 2017 EIR and possible delay to 2018
 - ➔ **Jim Beall, CA State Senator**
 - Yes, favors the CAHSR
 - Notes scheduling of CAHSR funding, budget plans, updates, and EIRs
 - Notes the significance of the CAHSR corridor between Fresno and San Jose, or what's called the "Valley to Valley" route (i.e., Central Valley to Silicon Valley), both for service connections, as well as for the economic boost.
 - Notes the work of EIR boards at the CAHSRA, budget/costing, separate funding
 - Notes the EIRs significance to the various neighborhoods along the rail lines

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California High Speed Rail (CAHSR) *[topic continued from previous page]*

- Political opposition to Rail? Who favors?
 - ➔ **Jim Beall, CA State Senator** *[continued from previous page]*
 - Notes engineering studies
 - States the economic impact to Santa Clara County, including \$6 Billion, jobs and employment
 - Notes that the building of the rail benefits all Californians, and namely inter-county to our own region, boosts the economy, etc.
 - CAHSR is a major contributor to the economic development of our county and region, as well as the state.
 - Major jobs creator (construction, maintenance, service, related partnerships, and its general economic impact)
 - CAHSR is a significant economic contributor other than airplanes/airports

State Bill (SB) 1/ Caltrain Electrification

- ➔ **Jim Beall, CA State Senator**
 - Notes “cap & trade” funds (also known as “emissions trading”)
 - Notes the initial cost of converting trains from diesel to electric relative to long term cost benefits
 - Notes the benefits of mitigating carbon emissions
- ➔ **Dev Davis, SJ Councilmember, District 6:**
 - Notes scope of Caltrain and relevance to the region’s counties
 - Notes bonds and funding related to electrification
 - Invites residents to write-in to the Caltrain board to demand electrification
 - Prefers to focus on and improve the commuter route from Gilroy to San Francisco via Caltrain
- ➔ **Peralez and Cortese had no comment on the topic**

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Street Issues/Improvements

- West Virginia Avenue is the top priority
 - ➡ **Peralez**
 - It's behind schedule, no timeline
 - Points out how repaving and quality streets will most likely see more people speeding since potholes and dips in the road currently slow traffic speeds
 - When streets are finally paved, patrolling and other infrastructure will need to be added to ensure traffic safety and enforcement
 - ➡ **Beall, Davis and Cortese had no other comments on the topic**

Playground area improvements (inside the park)

- ➡ **Peralez**
 - Sidewalk, curbs, and ramp access needs repair and improvement
 - Funding and monetary cost to be determined
 - There is over a decade of neglect
 - Needs to be improved to American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
 - Per separate ADA funding programs
- ➡ **Beall, Davis and Cortese had no other comments on the topic**

Park Improvements (other)

- ➡ **Beall**
 - Notes that State Bill 4 (SB-4) relates to Parks funding, and benefits local parks
 - The bill especially benefits lower income neighborhoods
 - Also encourages to work with the city's Parks and Recreation Department for grant programs
- ➡ **Peralez, Davis and Cortese had no other comments on the topic**

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Willow Glen Way/Almaden Road/ senior apartment needs

- Note: this is outside the Gardner specific area, but in greater Willow Glen
- Resident notes the speeding across the bridge from Willow Glen Way to Almaden Road (over the Guadalupe River) near Summercrest Senior Apartments, The Village at Willow Glen and Sienna Apartments (all senior communities).
- Residents note the traffic signal and yield sign. They want a study of the traffic flow and curve of the street so as to improve the area's pedestrian safety and overall control of traffic and speeding
- Residents noted slow progress on the timeline and want improvements to be made soon

Freeway/Caltrain Cleanup/ Homeless Issues

- This is adjacent to the Interstate 280 and Hwy-87
 - ➔ **Beall**
 - Notes the importance of homeless outreach programs; the homeless task force, and then number of homeless camps in the neighborhood, as well as the city
 - Wants to work with the San Jose Conservation Corps
 - Wants to create contracts for work that benefit the poor and homeless
 - Wants to work with housing agencies, including Bay Area agencies, local housing initiatives, services, programs
 - Noted SBI, Caltrains, and monetary funding to help aid the concern
 - ➔ **Peralez, Davis and Cortese had no other comments on the topic**

Gregory Street Area Needs

- Fire and safety risks are of great concern here, also concerning SJFD
- Residents would like to see a sound wall here, too (not just behind the school)
- Street safety, potholes, and curb repair are major issues here

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Homelessness

- The homeless are a diverse population with diverse needs
- The homeless have an ever increasing population (not easy to manage)
- The increasing population also has significant environmental impact (pollution)
- Homelessness has become a “systemic issue” in our community
- Solving homelessness takes intergovernmental cooperation and critical understanding of the issues, the population, the needs, and its overall impact.

Valley Transit Authority (VTA)

- Focus on BART to buses. and keeping up with the growing population and community needs
 - ➔ **Peralez**
 - Wants to look at network realignment
 - BART and buses are of equal priority
 - ➔ **Davis**
 - BART and buses have a “symbiotic relationship”
 - ➔ **Beall**
 - Notes increases to funding
 - Emphasizes need for system cleanup, and keeping public transportation clean, free of blight, attractive, and desirable to use.

Google San Jose Development Plans/Neighborhood Impact

- Residents want to know how Google will impact the cost of affordable housing in the area, and if they are willing to working with local residents to help conserve existing affordable housing, as well as to expand affordable housing
 - ➔ **Perralez**
 - States that “yes” he would like to work with Google on affordable housing
 - Acknowledges the need for affordable teacher housing
 - Wants to work with Google and other partners to create development agreements for affordable housing
 - Wants to look at ares in both the private and public sectors of development
 - Encourages “Participatory Budgeting” programs in the city for interests like
 - Tot lot/ park improvements
 - Review of other community needs, improvements, ideas, and what’s within the budget/funding
 - Residents begin participation by submitting requests online at the city’s website

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[topic continued from previous page]

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➔ Davis

- Points out that “Affordable Housing” is “subsidized housing” and it is “income restricted”
- Notes that Google is “not for certain” and is still only in planning
- Wants to look closer at the Montgomery Park Area
- Wants to advocate for more housing units
- Considers the dollar limits, budget, and fundraising concerns, plus the budget schedules

****End of Town Hall Discussion (approximately 9:00 PM)****

Program sponsors (alphabetically):

*Gardner Neighborhood Association;
North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association;
Stakeholders for a Safe Green Village;
Willow Glen Neighborhood Association*

Notes are compiled and edited by David Zappelli (16 Dec. 2017) and **approved** by the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association Board for the record (18 Dec. 2017)