



To the 2021 City of San Jose Redistricting Commission:

On behalf of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association (WGNA), we submit this letter regarding potential changes to the District 6 (D6) boundaries.

First, we would like to thank the commissioners for their candor at the October 7 meeting. WGNA agrees with the commissioner comments and believes Redistricting Partners draft maps were confusing, lacked compactness, and created unnecessary angst for every council district. Also concerning was the potential loss of Latino representation on the city council based on the draft maps

Willow Glen is one of San Jose's oldest neighborhoods which until 1936 was its own incorporated town. Willow Glen residents have a long history of civic and cultural engagement, always striving to create a community built on friendship and kindness with their neighbors. Willow Glen is a welcoming and diverse community representing an inspiring number of ethnic and religious groups with origins from across the globe. Willow Glen is also home to a substantial LGBT population choosing Willow Glen for its sense of community and proximity to the LGBT community center in District 6.

Willow Glen is centered around city-resource facilities including the Willow Glen Library and Willow Glen Community Center. Notably, Willow Glen has the oldest population – 70 plus – living alone in San Jose and prior to the pandemic, utilized city facilities extensively for lunches and social enrichment. Willow Glen parks provide opportunities to stroll, walk canine companions, and participate in activities such as lawn bowling. It is important these facilities remain within the domain of the District 6 Councilmember to keep these facilities available and well maintained.

Willow Glen is not only a geographic area but an established, genuine community of interest with shared values, and experiences including that of commerce, family, history, institutional, religious, schools (private and public), social, youth sports leagues, volunteerism, and civic pride. These are all attributes every District in San Jose would hope to develop within its neighborhood business districts and neighborhoods.

Ten years ago, the 2011 Redistricting Commission held meetings in every council district with nominal attendance, except for D6. The D6 meeting was held on May 9, 2011 at the Willow Glen Community Center to a standing room only crowd of over 300 attendees.

The immense turnout was created by the 2011 Redistricting Commission's proposed changes to the district boundary for Willow Glen, even though options existed to balance San Jose's population without dividing the neighborhood. Approximately 75% of the 300 attendees were D6 residents who passionately expressed they did not want to be moved into the adjacent council district with a redrawn boundary. A smaller group of attendees living just outside the southern boundary of D6 were asking to

rejoin D6 because their homes were removed from D6 when the boundary was changed in 1991 with little notice.

Former Willow Glen Councilmember Nancy Ianni spoke at this same meeting in 2011, explaining how the border used to go to Foxworthy Ave and that the commission should consider reuniting the neighborhood. Nancy Ianni said at minimum, the commission should do no further harm and not make more changes to the D6/D9 boundary as it would further disenfranchise Willow Glen residents.

The 2011 Redistricting Commission heard the overwhelming feedback and chose to implement boundary adjustments west of Highway 880 (Winchester-Hamilton-Moorpark-Hwy 880) and Capitol Expressway (Capitol-Pearl-Hillsdale-Hwy 87). Notably this included the entire Hamann Park neighborhood, home to former D6 Councilmember Frank Fiscalini, which was moved to D1. Areas west of Highway 880, and the Rubino Circle development should continue to be the primary areas for consideration as these are logical and practical census tract scenarios discussed in 2011 and would result in both compactness and contiguity.

As much as the WGNA would prefer the entire Willow Glen neighborhood be within one council district – as it was previously and as it exists today within other government districts – we also realize that this may be a challenge with the simultaneous goal of approximating population in each district. Therefore, perhaps reunification can be done incrementally such as reuniting the census tract between Booksin-Briarwood-Curtner-Husted with D6. Should there be further flexibility then simply extend the current boundary along Husted Dr west to Meridian. There is precedent for reunification as was done for the Berryessa neighborhood at the state level in 2011.

At a minimum, we recommend no changes to the present boundary in Willow Glen between D6 and D9. We recommend that planning staff present to the commission all the letters received from Willow Glen residents in 2011 regarding the proposed changes at that time. These letters will provide historical context and background that will enable commissioners to focus their efforts right up front to other prospective boundary changes.

We leave one final question. Are boundary changes needed at all based on the actual 2020 census data?

Sincerely,



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President

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