

January 23, 2020

TO: General Plan Task Force
FROM: Jesus Flores

RE: Neighborhood Business Districts

Dear Fellow General Plan Task Force Members and Staff,

I write today in regard to the proposals surrounding Neighborhood Business Districts (NBDs). As we review staff's work on business corridors such as Story Road, Japantown, North 13th Street, and Willow Street, I would like to emphasize the need to ensure the livelihood of locally owned small businesses will not be affected through proposed policies. Having firsthand experience with development along the Alum Rock corridor, I have seen a significant amount of businesses close down for a multitude of reasons including adverse impacts from transportation projects as well as being displaced in favor of residential development.

This is not to undermine or discredit the desperate need for housing solutions. Communities throughout the region are struggling with serious housing issues and there is a real need to address our housing shortage for residents of all income levels, but sustainable communities should include strong local businesses to boost a community driven, local economy. **For that reason, I recommend that staff explore solutions to preserve locally owned small businesses that have been long standing and see which proposed policies would be best suited to help protect locally owned small businesses throughout San Jose. I would like to thank the Office of Economic Development for their response to previous recommendations, through partnership and dialogue we now have an anti-displacement pilot program where solutions towards addressing small displacement are being explored. I ask that we continue to stay the course and continue to look at solutions, in particular that further analysis based on the need for small business protections throughout proposed neighborhood business districts which we are looking as part of the scope of the General Plan Review take place. I recognize and welcome growth and increased opportunities for residential development, and I look forward to affording locally owned small businesses the opportunity to be part of this growth as we update the General Plan.**

Through staff analysis and stakeholder outreach, I hope that we can find procedures to craft good policy that will ensure the livelihood of locally owned small businesses. Agencies such as VTA are already looking at solutions to support locally owned small businesses as BART makes its way to San Jose. Having staff look at implementing protections for locally owned small businesses within these proposed NBDs would mean that these establishments would have the opportunity to be part of the growth that will be taking place in San Jose for next several years.

I look forward to continued partnership with staff, stakeholder, and all interested parties as this process continues. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jesus Flores
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