



City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street, 18th Floor
San Jose, CA 95113-1905
Attention: Mayor Sam Liccardo

via email
March 13th, 2017

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Winchester Neighborhood Action Coalition (WNAC), we endorse the staff memo recommending the purchase of the Payne property for the purposes of a park.¹ As background, the Winchester Neighborhood Action Coalition grew from the Strong Neighborhood Initiative and has evolved to be a community-led effort advocating for an improved quality of life through innovation in the area bounded by Hamilton, San Tomas Expressway, Pruneridge/Hedding and 880/17. As such, the WNAC transcends municipal and other political lines.

San Jose's District 1 is park deficient and there are a dearth of gathering places for people, young and old, particularly in the area surrounding the Payne property. That is one of the reasons, that three years ago, the Sharks Foundation generously donated their treasurer and talent to help the community create a world-class playground on the site.²



This playground is just one of the many ways this property has contributed to the greater San Jose community. In recent years, the community garden has allowed people who live in the nearby apartments to grow their own food. The bread distribution ministry has been of great value to those in need. The Church building has been more than a just a place for the diverse congregations to meet and worship, as multiple organizations, including Boy Scouts, recovery groups and, even Zumba classes, have used the facility as a de facto community center.

To that end, it is important that, once the city acquires the property, it proactively engages the community to understand how it should be shaped to meet the current and future needs of our citizens. As the staff memo recommends, continuing existing programming with things such as the playground, the community garden, and, as possible, serving community groups in the existing facilities will provide immediate value.

With these assets as a foundation, the possibilities for how the transformation of this property are almost endless. Understanding what is possible, will require structured placemaking and community engagement. The placemaking effort that is just beginning at the former agriculture extension site in Santa Clara, the

¹ 3/14/17 Council agenda item 5.2, per the staff memo found at this [link](#).

² The above image, from 3/7/14, shows the community building the playground on the Payne property.

BAREC site - which is also within the WNAC boundaries -, is a good example of a process that San Jose could follow with the Payne property.

We recommend that the City of San Jose engage the City of Santa Clara and the Project for Public Spaces to determine the costs and potential of their extending their placemaking efforts to, at a minimum, include the Payne property and budget accordingly. Professional placemaking with true community engagement will be key to ensuring this park serve the needs of today's as well future citizens. At the same time, it will provide an opportunity to look at ways to honor the past, particularly the many members of Zion Lutheran Church and Pueblo de Dios who collectively served the community for decades.

In closing, thank you to Councilmember Jones and his outstanding staff for their persistence in ensure that the City of San Jose had the opportunity to the purchase of this property and, similarly, thank you to the Prince of Peace Pastors, Staff and Council for pursuing the option that may not be the most lucrative financially, but provides the best value for the community.

On Behalf of the WNAC,

Kirk Vartan
WNAC, President

c.c. Santa Clara City Council