



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Chuck Reed
Councilmember Madison Nguyen

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE RETAIL
AREA DESIGNATION

DATE: February 21, 2008

Approved

Chuck Reed

Date:

2/22/08

Madison Nguyen

RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the feasibility, costs, and impact on the community of holding a citywide election, we recommend that the City Council take the following actions:

1. Rescind Resolution 74127 and all other actions taken by the Council on November 20, 2007 under agenda item 9.1 "Approval of the designation of a Vietnamese Retail Area."
2. Adopt a resolution recognizing the Story Road retail area between Senter Road and US 101 as a Vietnamese retail destination area.
3. Direct staff to draft a Council policy that outlines a process to officially name areas/districts of the city.
4. Take no further action on naming the area until such time as the community has joined together and reached consensus on a name that has the support of a majority of the businesses and property owners in the area, and then completes the process developed under the direction outlined in Item 3.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several months, the designation and naming of the Story Road retail area has been divisive and difficult and the argument over the name has been harmful, disruptive and counterproductive for our City and its residents. It is time now for the Council to step back from the issue and allow time for the rifts and divisions in the community to be repaired. The lack of a clear process for designating such areas resulted in much of the confusion and problems surrounding this issue. Moving forward, we hope that having a clear process in place will prevent a repeat of this controversy in this or other communities in San José.

In our memo dated February 11, 2008, we proposed putting the naming of the area on the November ballot. After reviewing cost options with the City Clerk and considering the impact that a prolonged political campaign could have on all San José residents, we recommend that the City Council not place the naming on the ballot. While we still believe that a citywide election offers the best opportunity for direct democracy, the

City of San José has many needs more critical than spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to place this issue on the ballot. A prolonged campaign may do irreparable harm to San Jose's diverse communities and be destructive to the tolerance and harmony in which our local residents live.

Unfortunately, this issue cannot be resolved in the short-term through compromise or consensus-building. We need time to restore the common peace and promote a fair dialogue and understanding of the facts. For this reason, we recommend that the Council rescind the prior action and direct the staff to develop policies and guidelines to deal with the naming of city districts in the future. We also recommend that no further action on the naming be taken until the various sides in this issue come together and reach consensus on this issue, and then use the process that will be developed for naming city districts.

In the near term, it is time to begin to work on reconciliation.