



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Vice Mayor Judy Chirco

SUBJECT: ANNEXATION OF
CAMBRIAN NO. 36

DATE: October 22, 2010

Approved *Judy Chirco*

Date *10/22/10*

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Council approve the staff recommendation.

BACKGROUND

All of us have strong feelings about the place we think of as home; whether it's a neighborhood, a house or a family, the things that mean home to us are part of who we are. As I have listened to the residents of this neighborhood over the past four years, I have come to understand that for them this annexation is not just about the facts and figures we read in the staff report, but about where they feel at home. It's important to acknowledge that issues like this one—issues of identity—are among the most difficult and strongly felt that come before the Council, and that whichever side we come down on, the decision won't be an easy one for any of us.

Difficult issues always require time—time spent listening, conducting outreach, discussing and researching. Over the years, many people have spent time on this annexation. The residents have given their personal time to advocate and organize their neighborhood. Staff in the Planning Department, Fire Department and other offices across the City has spent countless hours studying the issue. It hasn't been a fast or easy journey to understanding, but I believe at this point we've peeled back the layers of complexity that surround this policy choice.

ANALYSIS

The staff report goes into great detail, but I'd like to briefly mention three layers of analysis that have been important to me. The first is the need for a logical boundary—a boundary that is clear and easily understood. Annexation of this pocket to San Jose would make the boundary simpler and clearer, but annexation to Campbell would not. If we annexed it to Campbell, we would need to de-annex additional territory—territory that is currently part of San Jose and home to San Jose residents—to achieve an acceptable boundary line.

The second layer is equal treatment of residents. Over the past few years, San Jose has annexed many pockets, often over the strong objections of the people who live there. The pocket before

us now is different from many of those previous pockets in that it has two retail frontages. Fiscal analyses prepared both by the City (attached to the staff report dated October 5th) and by Keyser Marston (attached to the supplemental memo dated October 19th) suggest that the General Fund would benefit from its annexation. In my time on the Council, equal treatment of all residents has been an important value for me. After asking so many residents to come into San Jose with pockets that did not hold fiscal benefit, I am reluctant to change our practice for one that does.

My third layer of analysis is listening to community feedback. During the annexation outreach meetings, residents surfaced a substantial concern about changes to fire service that the City had not addressed. City staff began working to resolve the concern, and their recommendation to the Council now includes a strategy to maintain a high level of fire service for this neighborhood.

CONCLUSION

These policy considerations are compelling for me, and lead me to support the staff recommendation for annexation to San Jose; however, I understand that policy analysis doesn't speak to the desire to make Campbell home. I don't believe I can convince someone else where their home should be, but I would like to end with a story from my own life. I was once a Campbell resident: the first house that my husband and I owned was in Campbell on Cherry Lane. Years later, I live just a few miles away, but am now a San Jose resident on the other side of the Campbell border. San Jose is my home and the city that I am proud to serve, but I go to church in Campbell and still enjoy its downtown. Over the years, it's been my experience that the fabric of our community—our relationships with other people—can reach across boundaries of all kinds.

I would like to thank the residents for their tireless commitment to their neighborhood, and thank staff for all of their work. As always in my eight years on the Council, I recognize that I am one voice among eleven, and that this is a difficult issue. I look forward to hearing the thoughts of my colleagues.