



Winchester Boulevard Designated a Targeted Business Area *New Designation to Help Local Businesses*

On December 15, 2009, the City Council approved my proposal to designate a portion of Winchester Boulevard a Targeted Business Area (TBA). Designed to help local businesses, the TBA designation is the first of its kind in San José and takes effect December 31, 2009. This will support new and existing businesses within the area while the City prepares to make the area a Neighborhood Business District (NBD) which takes place only twice yearly during General Plan hearings. The purpose for these designations is to allow for more flexibility of development standards such as parking regulations and signage for area businesses. It will also clearly delineate where businesses are allowed and not allowed, preventing businesses from creeping into the residential neighborhoods.

The boundary of the TBA runs along Winchester Boulevard between Forest and Hamilton Avenues within the City of San José. Winchester Boulevard is characterized by a variety of commercial businesses and is planned for commercial uses on the San José 2020 General Plan. The proposed designation reinforces the economic development importance of this key corridor in San José.

Established in 1984, the Neighborhood Business District program is administered by the San José Redevelopment Agency (SJRA) and enhanced by community involvement. The goal of the NBD is to revitalize and encourage private investment in San José's older commercial neighborhoods. The NBD program physically improves commercial districts by upgrading building façades and signage, constructing street and sidewalk improvements, installing new pedestrian lighting, streetlights, banners and trees, constructing medians and parking lots, and undergrounding utilities.

Early in 2009 through the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI), the Winchester Neighborhood Action Coalition (NAC) identified its list of top 10 priorities for neighborhood improvements that included "Strengthen Economic Development" as one of the neighborhood's key goals. Working with the Redevelopment Agency, we determined that establishing a Neighborhood Business District would be an important next step in fulfilling this goal. We discussed the strategy with the Winchester NAC and developed support for the NBD through numerous conversations with residents and business owners. The NBD overlay is an important tool for encouraging neighborhood serving businesses and has been used successfully to develop vibrant retail destinations in other areas of San José.

Given the difficult current state of the economy and the City's structural budget deficit it seems prudent that the City do everything possible to provide an environment that will allow land owners to fill vacant spaces which will increase sales tax revenues and provide a greater number of neighborhood serving businesses. The Winchester Boulevard area is now scheduled to be designated an NBD as part of the General Plan Update in Spring 2010 which I know will directly benefit area businesses and residents.