

Written Testimony for Unity Map

How was this map created (whose input does it incorporate, who supports it, etc.)?

The attached map, informally known as the “Unity Map,” was primarily developed by Liat Meitzenheimer, Mina Diaz, Brenda Crawford, Donald Osborne, Paula Bauer, Charles Palmares, and several other community members who reflect a cross-section of Vallejo’s Black, Latino, Filipino, and White population with special assistance by Nicole Wong and Julia Marks (Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus) and Tanya Pellegrini and Steven Ochoa (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund). The Unity Map is an off-shoot of the originally drafted map in January 2019, which comprised the input of Voices of Vallejo, Fresh Air Vallejo, United Democrats of Solano County, African American Alliance, and Stonewall Democratic Club. Following the second drafting meeting in March 2019, the Unity Map was developed to incorporate key elements from the map submitted by the group led by Mina Diaz, Dr. Rhonda Renfro, Julia Hahn, Latressa Wilson Alford, and Tiffanee Jones – in doing so, the Unity Map now recognizes previously unconsidered social demographics while staying within the constraints of drawing district lines. Moreover, the Unity Map takes under consideration the General Plan Update which includes the specified Opportunity Areas in all districts with the exception of District 6 (southeast Vallejo); as with the General Plan Update, the Unity Map also incorporates the input of the community with regard to housing, economic development, and health issues.

After a final review in April 2019 and multiple engagements with other civic leaders, the aforementioned authors thereby submit the attached Unity Map and strongly conclude that its district lines optimally preserve the communities of interest in Vallejo.

Which districts are your priority and why?

Our priority districts are District 1 and District 5, though not necessarily in that order. These districts are important due to their disproportionately higher percentages of racial minorities (District 1: 26% Latino, 25% Black, and 29% Asian; District 5: 21% Latino and 29% Black). Furthermore, few Vallejo Councilmembers have ever resided in Districts 1 or 5 while in office, an absence which has contributed to their historical lack of representation of the communities in these districts and which can be fairly addressed by the adoption of the Unity Map.

Why did we draw the lines the way we did and what are the community of interest reasons for those lines?

District 1: The northern district border is the delineation between Vallejo and American Canyon and the western district border naturally follows the Napa River. The southern district border is aligned with the Highway 37, while the eastern district border is aligned with Interstate 80. The community of interest in this district largely comprises a population that is 26% Latino, 25% Black, 29% Asian (predominantly, Filipino), and 16% White. The area in North Vallejo, which has a homogenous demographic block of 20-40% renters of occupied housing units, is exactly contained within these borders. The per capita income in this district only ranges from \$0 to \$30,000. Community members from this district have reported a common interest in education and schools; in the area west of Fairground Drive, only 80-85% have received a high school diploma. The Mare Island Technology Academy, a highly rated charter school, is located in this district. In the area between Highway 29 and Interstate 80, the neighborhood commonly known as “The Crest” has a renowned reputation as having produced well-known rappers in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the area west of Highway 29, the Delta Meadows neighborhood has a considerably large Filipino and Latino population; considering this neighborhood is situated next to the Napa River, community members here will have to contend with climate change and rising sea levels in

the near future. Apart from Vallejo City Councilmember and civil rights activist Lewis Brown, North Vallejo has had a historic lack of representation.

District 2: The northern and eastern district borders are aligned with the city borders. The western district border is generally aligned with Interstate 80 and the southern district border is generally aligned with Tennessee Street. The southwestern border intersects at Vervais Avenue and Tennessee Street. The southeastern district border is aligned with Columbus Parkway and Ascot Parkway since the demographics shift (in terms of renters and income) south of this border. This district generally has a population with a low percentage who are in poverty (0-16%) and a low percentage who are renters (20% or below); most of this area comprises a population whose per capita income ranges from \$50,001 to \$5,000,000, much higher than most areas in Vallejo. Moreover, this district has better infrastructure and paved streets as well as an active homeowners association. This area also contains relatively newer commercial and housing development and a higher concentration of retail services than the remainder of the city. Also, 41% of the population in this district is Asian and a high percentage of the residents in this district vote regularly. Additionally, this district is much hillier than its neighboring western and southern districts and these borders represent that natural demarcation, particularly along the western and southern borders.

District 3: This district generally incorporates three areas – 1) Mare Island, 2) the waterfront area north of downtown Vallejo, 3) and an area between Broadway Street, Highway 37, Interstate 80, and Monte Verde Way. Due to the minimum population requirements, these three areas are folded into one district; with that said, these areas share linkages with one another. By way of Highway 37 and the Mare Island Causeway, the first two areas are geographically tied to each other. Although they do not exactly match, the second and third areas both have swaths of areas whose population has an average \$20,001-30,000 per capita income, which is juxtaposed with the increased per capita income of \$30,001-40,000 in the area of District 4 that borders it; this district also contains a higher percentage of renters compared to District 4 – both of these demographic differences are aligned with the borders that run along Broadway Street and Monte Verde Way. Along Sonoma Boulevard, community members also report a shared concern regarding the visible rise of the homeless population. A high concentration of Filipino, Mexican, and Vietnamese restaurants are situated along Sonoma Boulevard and Redwood Street; Seafood City is a grocery store in this district which predomiantly serves the Filipino community. Sonoma Boulevard also has a number of businesses related to automotive services. Also worth noting is that the second area has a higher percentage of the population who do not have health care and higher percentage of the population living below the poverty level in comparison District 4. The southern border of the second area is aligned to Florida Street, which is a historically recognized northern border of downtown Vallejo. Mare Island has been slowly transforming into a cultural hotspot; Mare Island Brewing Company, Savage & Cooke, Mare Island Art Studio, Touro University, and the film industry at-large have created greater interest in this area.

District 4: This district is generally shaped like the letter “L.” Its northern borders are Monte Verde Way, Coach Lane, and Tennessee Street. Its western borders are the railroad track just east of Broadway Street and Interstate 80. Its southern borders are Florida Street, Solano Avenue, and Georgia Street. Its eastern border is Columbus Parkway. Although this district contains demographic variations within its borders, the marked differences between itself and Districts 2 and 3 justify its western and northern borders (see previous descriptions). This district also respects the historically recognized border between itself and downtown Vallejo along Florida Street. Additionally, this map ensure that the Springs Road business corridor and the Filipino businesses in this area stay intact in one district. Lastly,

this district uses Georgia Street as a southern border because percentages of renters and those without health care are different just south of that thoroughfare in District 6. Also worth noting is that this district has the highest White population at 42%.

District 5: The northern border is Florida Street, which is the historically recognized northern delineation of downtown Vallejo; also, this map ensures that both northern and southern sides of Georgia Street are preserved in this district so as to maintain its consistency with respect to the General Plan Update. The western border is naturally aligned with the Napa River. Its eastern border runs along Interstate 80, an unincorporated part of the city, and nearby Old Glen Cove Road. In addition to containing downtown Vallejo, this district also contains a part of south Vallejo which has had very little political representation; moreover, this particular part of the district is a “food desert” – virtually no access to healthy food and simultaneously greater access to liquor and tobacco products. More renters live in this part of town and community members report concerns regarding exposure to cement plant development, pollution, and other environmental issues. Unsurprisingly, this district has higher levels of non-communicable diseases than most parts of the city. Per capita income in this district is between \$0 to \$30,000 (although, per capita income is higher in the area in which California Maritime Academy is located), which is in contrast to the higher per capita income just east of the District 5 eastern border in District 6. This map also ensures that the area between Solano Avenue, Georgia Street, Curtola Parkway, and Interstate 80 is included in this district because it has similar levels of poverty compared to downtown Vallejo. This area otherwise would be underrepresented if it were subsumed into another neighboring district. District 5 should include Beverly Hills (the section that is on the east side of Interstate 80) because this neighborhood has similar housing needs and pollution concerns as South Vallejo. In the neighborhood between Lemon Street and Magazine Street, this district is well known for having been tremendously influential on the rap scene in the San Francisco Bay Area; popular rapper E-40 hails from this district. This district also contains Downtown Vallejo, which includes the Heritage District and the Arts District; this area also has a large LGBTQ population. Within the past five years, new businesses have arose in downtown Vallejo and the waterfront, sparking renewed interest in an area in which businesses had previously languished. Merchants in downtown Vallejo have recently been focusing on further developing the Vallejo Art Walk in order to increase tourism in the area. California Maritime Academy have become increasingly involved in supporting the development in downtown Vallejo. To date, this district has never produced a Vallejo City Councilmember.

District 6: See border descriptions of Districts 2, 4, and 5. Its eastern border is aligned with the eastern border of the city and its southern border is aligned with the Carquinez Strait. This district is generally more affluent, in terms of poverty rates, per capita income, and access to health care. This district incorporates Regents Park, which has property values that are more similar to Glen Cove than Hiddenbrooke. Although social demographics are not quite homogenous throughout the district, the minimum population constraints for drawing district lines prevent this district from being any smaller.

What are your preferences regarding sequencing? Which seats should be up first and why?

In 2020, Districts 1 and 5 should be up first because these districts have disproportionately higher percentages of racial minorities as well as a historical absence of political representation on the Vallejo City Council. Although not a priority, District 4 would also be up at the same time since the sitting Councilmember will term out the same year. In 2022, Districts 2, 3, and 6 should be up as that will be the year of the next election.