

CINDY CHAVEZ

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May 4, 2020

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street, 18th Floor
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Members of the City Council:

I write in support of the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services staff recommendation to name the new public park plaza within the San Jose Japantown neighborhood as Heinlenville Park.

The naming of the park is an opportunity to appreciate the history of this neighborhood in addition to honoring John Heinlen, a German immigrant farmer and local businessman. After the destruction of the Chinese settlement in the downtown area by a suspicious fire in 1887, John set aside a portion of his land to permanently house Chinese American immigrants who were seeking refuge from persecution in the area. This was a group of people discriminated against based solely on their ethnicity. John Heinlen set the example to treat every person with respect and dignity that we aspire to today.

San Jose Japantown is also proud to be a diverse community with a rich history of people of Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and African American descent in addition to many other ethnicities. San Jose Japantown is one of three remaining Japantowns left in the United States. This welcoming area was created by John Heinlen. As an acknowledgement of the generosity of John Heinlen as well as the historic and current demographics of this community, I support the naming of this park in San Jose Japantown as Heinlenville Park.

Sincerely,



Cindy Chavez
President, Board of Supervisors