

Max Overland

Subject: Support for Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance

From: burketm@aol.com <burketm@aol.com>

Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2024 10:14 AM

To: Board of Directors <board@valleywater.org>

Cc: Ondine Burke <ondine627@gmail.com>

Subject: Support for Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance

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Dear Valley Water Board Members,

Re: Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance

My name is Tom Burke (spouse, Ondine) and I have been a resident of Santa Clara for over 35 years, including as a homeowner at 728 Flannery Street, Santa Clara, since 1998. 728 Flannery Street backs up against Homeridge Park and Saratoga Creek. By profession, I am a registered professional (P.E.) electrical engineer.

For more than a few years, extending to the late 2010s (pre-COVID), I have noticed a decline in the public safety and normal family environment of the area, due to a number of reasons, but mostly attributed the illegal encampments that have been a common fixture within Homeridge Park, in particular on Valley Water property adjacent to Saratoga Creek.

Specific concerns include,

- **Trespassing and Encampments Along the Creek:** Valley Water properties, particularly adjacent to the creek, have become frequent sites for illegal encampments, contributing to littering, vandalism, and an increase in crime. In fact, often it is embarrassing to walk inside Homeridge Park and view the Creek area due to the littering caused by the illegal encampments.
- **Illegal Drug Activity:** Exchanges of drugs are observed, and drug paraphernalia have been found, both in the park and nearby areas. Also, on numerous occasions, Santa Clara first responders (police/fire/medical staff) have been called to the park to attend to individuals from the encampments experiencing a drug overdose.
- **Vandalism and Property Damage:** Physical damage has occurred to private property and shared spaces both within and adjacent to the Park, including the local HOA.
- **Safety Threats:** There have been numerous examples of public intoxication, violent altercations, including associated with those walking to/from the encampments in various mental/physical states, plus there has been observation of illegal weapons. These behaviors are intimidating to nearby residents, making them feel unsafe.

We have high confidence that if the Valley Water Board passes the Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance and illegal encampments are no longer tolerated in the area around Homeridge Park, the public safety and related negative issues around Homeridge Park and Saratoga Creek will improve greatly. We also expect other areas around Valley Water properties/easements in the County will benefit similarly.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to pass the Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance on November 26, 2024.

Thank you for listening.

Thomas (and Ondine)
Burke

728 Flannery Street, Santa Clara, CA 95051