



## Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

February 21, 2006

Frederick J. Ferrer, Chairman  
First Five Commission of Santa Clara County  
4000 Moorpark Avenue, Suite 200  
San Jose, CA 95117

Dear Commission Chairman Ferrer:

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association (SONA) is the southern part of the Burbank Strong Neighborhoods Initiative area identified by the City of San Jose as being blighted and in need of services. The purpose of our association is to empower ourselves to take responsibility for our neighborhood, as well as to advocate for our neighbors who are unfamiliar with either English or participatory democracy.

As such, the SONA Board wishes to express support for Supervisor Beall's budget request submitted to Santa Clara County First Five on November 18, 2005 to allocate \$2 million annually for five years to areas identified as Component B. This will allow more children in need to be served in county pockets of poverty. Sherman Oaks/Burbank is part of the Western Region area identified by First Five for Component B due to the number of children with multiple risk factors living here. We believe Supervisor Beall's budget request to allocate additional dollars to Component B will make the Preschool For All Initiative more equitable and serve more children in need. Currently, Santa Clara County First Five's Preschool For All Initiative allocates the majority of the preschool slots, 1088, in Component C. The 1,088 slots in Component C are primarily distributed in neighborhoods located along the Guadalupe Corridor. Furthermore, neighborhoods located in Component C will receive the majority of the \$42 million, a significant portion of First Five income.

In our own neighborhood there are apartment complexes that house children with multiple risk factors who should be eligible for Component C. We are very much aware that over the years, the needs of families in the Sherman Oaks area and in adjacent Burbank and Buena Vista areas have been overlooked perhaps because we are sandwiched between two areas of wealth, Willow Glen and Rose Garden. However, if one looks at a map of the County districts mapped against a map of poverty by census tract, one will see that we are located at the eastern edge of County District 4 and border County District 2, the poorest county district. We are part of a corridor of poverty running through downtown San Jose to the east side. Sherman Oaks Community Charter School has 70% of students receiving free/reduced lunch; 80% do not speak English at home (they became a charter school so that they could admit more English-speakers from outside of their attendance area in order to integrate the school.)

We understand and appreciate the time commitment of Commission members in deciding how to equitably allocate income from Proposition 10 taxes. In closing we strongly urge you to vote in support of Supervisor Beall's proposal. We thank you in advance for considering our request and look forward to working with you on this worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely,

Michael LaRocca, Treasurer  
Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Cc: James T. Beall Jr., Santa Clara County Supervisor - District 4