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March 17, 2022

TO: 2020 Census: Redistricting Task Force

RE: Why does Russian Hill belong in the Northeast Quadrant of San Francisco (D3)?

In April 1906, the entire northeast quadrant of San Francisco, including Downtown, Chinatown, Telegraph Hill, Nob Hill, North Beach and Russian Hill were flattened by the earthquake and subsequent fires. The fire was stopped at Van Ness Avenue with only a few structures surviving intact. Many of these survivors are now official landmarks recognized by the City or the National Register of Historic Places thanks to the efforts of local residents and organizations.

Throughout the 20th century, these neighborhoods east of Van Ness Avenue rebuilt into the iconic and densely populated urbanscape that continues to characterize them today, beloved by residents, small businesses and tourists alike.

The neighborhoods east of Van Ness have been historically characterized by a diverse group of immigrants whose marks are still be seen and celebrated:

- Italian language mass is celebrated weekly at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Italian cuisine predominates and the Italian Athletic Club still sponsors its 100 year old foot race. Families with roots in Little Italy established homes on the slopes of Russian Hill where they have lived for multiple generations.
- The Mexican-American community flourished until it was displaced by the building of the Broadway tunnel. Its shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe remains as a City landmark.
- Mid-20th century, the Chinese community began to settle in Russian Hill. These multi-generational Russian Hill property owners and residents have strong connections to Chinatown and are part of a greater Chinatown community, as are many parts of Nob Hill.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the northeastern residents east of Van Ness pushed back on high-rise development by advocating for height limits both in the neighborhoods and the northern waterfront. Although the individual neighborhoods have different names and boundaries, they share common experiences and frequent

collaborations which blur the lines separating us on official maps. For example, Columbus Avenue is not a boundary between neighborhoods but a common and vital corridor shared by the residents of the slopes that lead to it from both east and west.

In the 1980s, *Russian Hill Neighbors* led a successful effort to nominate three historic districts in its boundaries to the National Register of Historic Places, giving special protection to these treasured areas. Similarly, *RHN* and its peer organizations and residents have been devoted to preserving public open spaces such as Ina Coolbrith and Sterling Parks, Helen Wills Playground and most recently the soon-to-open Francisco Park which provide unique spaces for all of the dense northeastern residents to enjoy.

Also in the 1980s, Russian Hill joined with its northeastern neighbors to establish the first preferential parking zone in the City identified by the red "A" sticker. The boundaries today for the "A" sticker are still set at Van Ness Avenue and extend east to the Bay. These collective experiences of rebuilding, protection, preservation and resilience are part of the DNA of the D3 neighborhood groups, businesses and residents who support the United D3 Map submitted to the Redistricting Task Force.

With this common heritage, the northeastern neighborhoods of D3 remain an essential force to meet the challenges of the next ten years together demonstrated by much recent and ongoing collaboration:

- maintaining healthy and vibrant commercial corridors of small and neighborhood serving businesses;
- addressing the high cost of both ownership and rental properties that threatens residents from being able to continue to afford to live in San Francisco;
- finding solutions to quality of life issues such as clean streets, safety and security;
- advocating for the services that allow families to continue to reside in our neighborhoods, including good schools, open space, child care and support for seniors such as those provided by Next Village, Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center and other nonprofits supported by us with both funds and volunteers;
- co-sponsoring the North Beach Neighbors Farmers Market;
- organizing volunteer street, sidewalk and green space clean-up days;
- working with the Central Station Police Station by serving on the Captain's Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB);
- offering NERT training and disaster preparedness education to residents.

The diverse mix of neighborhoods that comprise the northeast quadrant do not always agree on strategies and solutions, but we have built a sense of trust and cooperation that serve us well and encourage positive and productive approaches.

In 1906, Van Ness Avenue was the boundary that created the common experience we share as northeastern neighbors in D3. Through the decades since, Van Ness has been recognized as the logical and natural boundary between the densely populated eastern neighborhoods and the western part of the City by residents, city agencies and local tradition. It remains the appropriate and practical boundary that defines our shared relationships today.

In our original submission to the RTF, *Russian Hill Neighbors* asked that Russian Hill be unified by moving its 6,000 residents who were divided from D3 during the last redistricting back into D3. Many other neighborhood organizations support this request, including *D3 United Neighborhoods* and the *Van Ness Corridor Neighborhood Council*. Russian Hill should be unified and, by history, geography, and logic, it belongs in the northeast quadrant with its D3 neighbors and Van Ness as its western boundary.

Thank you for listening to the many voices participating in this important endeavor, for your service and for your consideration of our request.

Very truly yours,
Carol Ann Rogers, President
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Note: The boundaries of Russian Hill Neighbors as stated in our COI statement filed with the RTF on 2.11.22 are:

- The south side of North Point from the east side of Van Ness Avenue to the east side of Columbus Avenue
- Southeast on Columbus Avenue to the west side of Mason Street
- South on Mason Street to the south side of Pacific Avenue
- West on Pacific Avenue to the east side of Van Ness Avenue
- North on Van Ness Avenue to the south side of North Point Street