

# Memo A - mhsu

## Little Portugal, and Local History

Being Portuguese and Catholic, the name of the neighborhood refers to the five wounds that Christ is said to have received during crucifixion. The name comes from the church there, founded in 1915 and built with wood that was imported from Portugal for the Portuguese Pavilion at the Panama Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco earlier the same year.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009, the project to extend BART into Silicon Valley and Santa Clara County began with work on the Warm Springs / South Fremont station. In 2012, work began on the next station in Berryessa, which is close to the north end of the FWBT neighborhood. Although that station is still not open in 2020, the whole of Little Portugal was identified in 2017 by UC Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project<sup>2</sup> as being one of the highest-risk areas in San Jose for displacement of low-income households.<sup>3</sup> It is also home to Adega, San Jose's only Michelin-starred restaurant.<sup>4</sup>

## Location and Geography

Only a mile and a half east of downtown San Jose, this neighborhood is situated in a prime location for historic, current, and future development. The western corner is the 280 / 101 / 680 interchange, a major contributor to the amount of car traffic moving through the neighborhood. However, many of these cars are just passing through on their way between downtown and freeways, and are disconnected from the FWBT neighborhood fabric.

Though there have been several bus lines serving the area, including VTA's most heavily-used route 22, there is only one light-rail option cutting east-west through the middle. The addition of BART nearby would greatly increase the mobility and transit options for the area, and would better connect its residents to the offerings of the wider Bay Area. A freight line ran north-south, but service along that line was suspended by Union Pacific around the time of the Existing Conditions report in 2002; the tracks were pulled up in 2008<sup>5</sup>. The space is being reclaimed for a Rail-to-Trail project called the Five Wounds Trail,<sup>6</sup> ideal for both biking and walking because the neighborhood is totally flat.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_Wounds\\_Portuguese\\_National\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Wounds_Portuguese_National_Church)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/map/sf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sanjoseinside.com/2017/04/24/following-historic-vote-on-rent-protections-san-jose-considers-ban-on-voucher-discrimination/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mercurynews.com/2016/10/25/michelin-adeaga-earns-star-for-portuguese-cuisine-san-jose/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://fivewoundstrail.org/western-pacific-railroad/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://fivewoundstrail.org/>

The whole area is primarily residential, though different types are fairly clearly grouped. In the two small neighborhoods east of 101, it's primarily single family homes. The bulk of the FWBT neighborhoods are on the west side of 101, with a wide mix of housing styles from single family homes to small apartment buildings. Many of the new single-family homes are large McMansion style (particularly near the parks) though some of the older, smaller homes still exist in more suburban neighborhood type areas. There are even a few areas with new, high-density housing. The east-west corridor of Santa Clara / Alum Rock is the heart of FWBT, and most building is oriented in that direction; there used to be a tram that ran down that street.

## Land Uses

The historic tram led to ground-floor businesses along that Santa Clara / Alum Rock corridor, many of which have residential or office spaces above. Now, however, many of the businesses along the corridor are "auto-oriented uses" - auto body shops, small retail lots, and the like. These tend to present less pedestrian-friendly spaces. Most of the rest are restaurants, all of which have their own parking lots. Everything is oriented around parking, with only a few bus lines running on the major east-west and north-south corridors.

There is some light industrial intermingled with residential but other than the former freight rail line there doesn't appear to be any heavy industrial. However, numerous trucks are constantly going back-and-forth along the roads, leading I'm sure to noise and smell and general nuisance. Trucks also create more wear and tear on the physical infrastructure, leading to more frequent road repairs. This in turn will be more costly, as well as tie up traffic while repairs are made. Many residents' opinions of an area are based around the speed at which minor issues like potholes and major issues like traffic lights at dangerous crossings get addressed. They feel that they are not being heard and issues are not being fixed, residents will generally have a poorer opinion of both their neighborhood and the wider city management.

Commercial is limited to strip malls at major intersections, with almost no local/small business representation. While there are some services represented (dentist, optometrist) the smaller spaces are almost entirely occupied by restaurants, anchored by a major retail chain in the large space. These are usually Walgreens or other stores that carry a little bit of everything. They don't seem to be many grocery stores, though, meaning that anyone looking for fresh produce has to venture further afield. Along Julian/McKee and Santa Clara, there are a few smaller grocery stores, but the whole area has fewer than 10 and they are only along those short stretches through the FWBT area. This creates traffic problems, with everyone driving to the same place to do their shopping, as well as discouraging pedestrianism for short trips.

## Physical Conditions

*NB : Google Maps has different borders for the neighborhoods than what is shown on the map on page II-3 of the Existing Conditions document. I am relying on the latter for the definitions below, though that map does not have street names so some of the boundaries are guessed.*

Anne Darling and Little Portugal North (the two that are east of 101) are characterized by low-density light industrial. Low single-story buildings, both offices and factories, are surrounded by large parking lots fenced off from each other. Most of the houses here are the original small single-story buildings on small lots, with garages and driveways for off-street parking. Although this makes the space feel very open, it's a ridiculous waste of space and resources - these are car-dependent houses, because there is nothing but more residential within walking distance. While several of the buildings seem to be multi-family units, all are one level surrounded by concrete. Yards are postage stamps of green grass, another waste of one of California's most precious and limited resources.

The top half of Wooster / East West Courts is taken up with the Kellogg factory. Other than a small shopping center in the southwestern corner, the neighborhood is multi-story multi-family housing mostly in small apartment complexes. An occasional single-level single-family home can be found, though. The southern boundary, McKee Road, is a large two-lane boulevard with very few pedestrian crossings. This very effectively isolates the neighborhoods from each other.

The former San Jose Steel site is still in flux. While Google Maps designates it as "Future Bart Station," it is still mostly an under-used lot. It's currently being mostly used as stockyards for two stone companies, as well as a trucking operation. In late 2019, VTA released a "playbook" containing possible development options for the space.<sup>7</sup> The bart station has yet to be developed; in theory construction will begin in 2022.<sup>8</sup>

Roosevelt Park North is primarily light industrial interspersed with small residences. While there is some newer multi-story construction, most (both new and old) is on one level. This is essentially a 1950s cookie-cutter neighborhood, with shopping only available along the main streets at the north and south borders. Again, this is a "drive everywhere" area, because no spaces have been made for walking-distance service or retail centers. The two-lane boulevards as the north and south borders also provide an isolating barrier. The southern Roosevelt Park neighborhood is much the same, though it does benefit from the 72 bus line along San Antonio. However, this bus does not connect with downtown San Jose. The dividing line between the neighborhoods, Santa Clara, carries two bus lines that do connect with Downtown San Jose as

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/THE28T~1\\_0.PDF](https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/THE28T~1_0.PDF)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vta.org/projects/bart-sv/phase-ii/28th-st-station>

well as other points up the Peninsula. This is the only bus in the whole FWBT area that does, though.

The Five Wounds neighborhood contains the eponymous Catholic church. It is the only neighborhood to cross a major street - Santa Clara. The church is at the northern end, in the area planned for the future BART station. The smallest of the neighborhoods, with a handful of remaining Victorian homes, it's still essentially indistinguishable from the others. Mostly single-story single-family homes built around 1950 or 1960, with the occasional multi-story multi-family structure. Everything has off-street parking and driveways, and yards are still fenced green grass. Although there is some light industry scattered throughout, there is no shopping; everyone here must rely on their cars to get anywhere useful.

Olinder has some new high-density housing along the park. This whole area seems much fancier - there are trees along the streets, more green grass in yards, and the houses are more different from each other. There are also fewer fences around the yards. Immediately overlooking the park are McMansions barely twelve feet apart.

The line between Olinder and McKinley is the former railroad; I can imagine that this was not a fun place to live before the line was discontinued. However, the whole right of way has been turned into fancy multi-story single-family homes now. Not quite McMansions, but still very large and close together. McKinley also holds two of FWBT's five trailer / mobile home parks. Both of them are near the only shopping center in the neighborhood, hopefully encouraging some walking. However, the fancy homes by the park are likely still driving the 0.8 miles.

Bonita holds the other three trailer / mobile home parks in FWBT. It also holds the only two apartment complex spaces, both of which seem to be very new and fancy. Another mix of light industrial and low-density residential, Bonita seems to have a few more buildings that are multi-story. Yards are green and mostly unfenced.

## Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics

As described in the 2006 Improvement Plan, nearly two-thirds of the over-65s in FWBT were disabled, a much higher rate than the whole of Santa Clara County. However, very few provisions for serving this population had been made in terms of mobility options and accessibility of neighborhood improvement projects. The document lumps this under "walkability," a strongly ableist term. If the discussion is to include access for disabled folks, don't frame it in terms of an activity they can't do. "Street-level individual mobility," "sidewalk improvements," or even just "access" would be more inclusive ways to discuss the proposed changes.

Creating a "college-going culture" is also heavily discussed as being a community priority in the 2006 report. This would indicate that higher education was not a priority for folks in the area before. At that time, before the recession of 2008/2009, going to college was considered a sure path to a better job. Current economic realities have greatly reduced that vision, though it still exists in the American psyche as the thing that upwardly-mobile individuals and families aspire to. It remains to be seen if crushing student debt changes the upcoming generation's outlook.

Another discussion point was activities for youth and teens - indicating a large population of that age group resides in the FWBT area. Recommendations were made to partner with organizations in downtown San Jose, like the tech and art museums, to create after-school programs for enrichment and advancement opportunities. These would also be connection points for the "college-going culture" trend.

As mentioned at the beginning, this area is a prime spot for gentrification. Generally, that means that the people moving in are younger and have higher incomes than the existing population. With several schools within the FWBT area, it will be interesting to see how those respond to changing needs as new residents start families and work their way through the local school system. Hopefully options will be found to allow the current residents to also benefit.

## Five Specific Research Questions

1. Do respondents who were born outside the US (question 7, nominal data) feel that an individual can make a difference in their neighborhood (question 16, ordinal data)?  
Further exploration could include a look at specific country responses to question 7 to see if that surfaces any trends in feelings of individual influence.
2. If the respondent rated the neighborhood as good or excellent (question 9, ordinal data into nominal) and they feel it's gotten better in the past year (question 12, ordinal data into nominal), do they know the name of the mayor (question 17, nominal data)?
3. For respondents who thought "Chuck Reed" sounded familiar (question 19, nominal data), do they at least somewhat approve of him (question 20, ordinal data into nominal)?
4. For respondents who thought "Chuck Reed" sounded familiar (question 19, nominal data) and at least somewhat approve of him (question 20, ordinal data into nominal), do they rent or own their current residence (question 23, nominal data)?
5. Does attendance at neighborhood association meetings (question 15, ordinal into nominal) and at least one city council meeting (question 21, nominal data) depend on whether the respondent rents or owns their residence (question 23, nominal data)?

## Data Types of Survey Questions

*NB : All survey questions except 24 and 25 also include option 7 - Cannot choose / Refused.*

	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Data Type</b>
1	lived in neighborhood	1 - 6	ordinal
2	age	1 - 6	ordinal
3	education level	1 - 6	ordinal
4	adults in household	1 - 6	ratio?
5	under-18s in household	1 - 6	ratio?
6	race/ethnicity	(many)	ordinal
7	country of birth	1, 2	nominal
8	duration of US residence	1 - 4	ordinal
9	neighborhood rating	1 - 5	ordinal
10	improvements	--	(text)
11	night lighting	1 - 5	ordinal
12	better or worse	1 - 5	ordinal
13	community events	1, 2	nominal
14	type of events	--	(text)
15	neighborhood group meetings	1 - 3	ordinal
16	impact you can have	1 - 4	ordinal
17	mayor's name	1, 2	nominal
18	name	--	(text)
19	familiar name	1, 2	nominal
20	approve/disapprove	1 - 4	ordinal
21	city council	1, 2	nominal
22	SJSU around	1, 2	nominal
23	rent/own	1, 2	nominal
24	housing type	1 - 7	ordinal
25	gender	1, 2	nominal