

A Neighbor-to-Neighbor Letter

September 24, 2007

Dear Neighbor,

A “YES” for annexation to the Fig Garden Police Protection District means: at a reasonable contracted cost we can have our own dedicated Sheriff Deputy patrolling our neighborhood. An elected Police Protection District Board made up of residents of the District, thereby being responsive to any citizen complaints or input, would administer this contract. This contract cannot be weakened by cuts to County budget.

We need to feel safe in our homes and in our neighborhoods. Sadly, we know that increasing crime is a fact of life. Statistics provided by the Sheriff’s Department show a **higher crime rate in our “non-District” areas adjacent to the Police Protection District than in the District itself.** These figures prove Sheriff McKinney’s endorsement statement: “protected property results in diminished targets and crime”.

Because we are adjacent to this existing Police Protection District, our neighborhood has a **rare opportunity to join this District**—in response to decades-long requests by neighbors in the “perimeter” areas. **This is the only chance we’ve had**—this proposal has never been placed before voters and is cost-prohibitive to do again. That is why we say **it’s a one-time opportunity!**

We have the highest regard for our current Sheriff patrols, but the Sheriff’s budget is stretched to the limit and is subject to shifting law enforcement priorities. This contract is not subject to Fresno County budget cuts because it is a private contract addressing our priorities.

We can have a sworn law-enforcement professional patrolling our streets with an **average response time to all calls for service of two (2) minutes or less.** The current average response to just a Priority One call (crimes involving a person such as a burglary in progress) is said to be 10 minutes. In a crisis, think how long those 8 minutes could be.

If you believe crime is going up and budget dollars down, you can do something positive about that situation. **For less than \$1.00/day, we can have the presence of a Sheriff deputy on our streets.** It would be wonderful to know that during the night there are officers close-by outside our homes dedicated to our safety and to preventing crime. Additionally, a safe area means our property values can be sustained by keeping our lovely neighborhoods desirable places to live.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and to consider voting YES on this very important security issue.



LETTER TO RESIDENTS, LANDOWNERS, AND VOTERS

**Please vote "YES" on the mail-in ballot
to join the Fig Garden Police Protection District.**

Dear Neighbors,

**Topic-by-Topic Rebuttal to the 9/19/2007 "No-Annex" Letter
signed by the "Coalition of Neighbor, Voting Area Residents"**

NO RENEWAL DATE: Of course there is no renewal date! This proposal is to join an EXISTING police protection DISTRICT. The district is governed by an elected board of directors. You would take your concerns and issues, if any, to your board of directors of the district.

FUTURE CHANCE TO JOIN DISTRICT: State law has been changed to prevent the creation of any NEW special districts like the police protection district. Only because OUR area just happens to be contiguously adjacent to the EXISTING Fig Garden Police Protection District do we even have the opportunity to annex our area to the existing district. Joining is a time-consuming, complicated and expensive process to do; therefore, if our area votes not to join now, it is unlikely that the time, money, and effort would ever be spent to attempt it in the future.

WHY PAY TWICE: We are not paying "twice." We are paying for ADDITIONAL enhancement to the "normal" service provided to the HUGE Lincoln 21 service area, of which OUR Fig Garden area is only a small part. The AVERAGE response time for the highest priority calls in Lincoln 21 is currently ten minutes. (That is, if someone is in the process of breaking into your home, it would take 10 minutes on average for the sheriff to arrive — it could take longer, or shorter, depending where the deputy happens to be in the huge area.) The AVERAGE response time from the deputy in the Fig Garden District is 2 minutes.

NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE: So what? Deductibility isn't the issue. One is paying for safety protection — like paying for insurance. Check with your tax accountant or lawyer on deductibility issues.

OUTSTANDING DEBT: The Fig Garden Police Protection District currently has a substantial reserve as of September, 2007. LAFCO or the FGPPD board should be contacted for the details on this matter. In any event it has little to do with whether our area takes this opportunity to get enhanced sheriff coverage.

SHERIFF NOT ASKING FOR MONEY: Money is always going to be an ongoing government budget issue. General tax revenues are not under our personal control. The money from a special district is under our personal control through our elected board of directors of the police district. The \$299 is guaranteed to be spent on our area and not to be put to some other use.

WHO IS ASKING FOR THE MONEY: Residents between Maroa and Blackstone have proposed for our area to join the police protection district since at least from 1974, when the movement commenced, which resulted in the Fig Garden Neighborhood Plan of the Bullard Community Plan. With the Neighborhood Plan enacted circa 1981 the next big project was the recommended flood control improvements. After that was accomplished, residents moved on to see if we could join the police district. As it is all volunteer time to accomplish this, efforts have not moved with great speed. However, the impetus for this proposal has always come from requests the residents between Maroa and Blackstone, NOT from the residents in the existing Fig Garden Police Protection District.

FINANCIAL BURDEN: Yes, an addition \$299 is a burden to people on fixed incomes as would be any increase in any sort of expense. However, this is less than \$1 per day, less than \$30 per month. By any measure this is a bargain for the additional security of knowing you are safe in your home. If you got a big dog to protect you, it would cost more than that in a year!

PROPONENTS: Yes, it is true that the existing district area stands to acquire some incidental benefit from enlarging the district. However, the PROPONENTS are we residents from between Maroa and Blackstone. ALL of us from Fruit to Blackstone live in the Fig Garden Area, and the maintenance of this being the desirable area in Fresno in which to live FOR YEARS TO COME depends on it remaining a pretty, semi-rural, and SAFE place to live. Your property values depend on its being a safe place to live. We all know the American pattern of land development of "build new, use, wear out, move on, and leave a slum." This is particularly wasteful now in our current era of high real estate prices, high energy costs, high crime. This \$299 goes long-term to keeping our area safe and keeping our property values high.

LARGER HOMES ON THE EXTENSION: Van Ness Extension is 2.5 miles from the Old Fig Garden. With what those residents, presumably, are or are not happy about is COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT to us here in our area!

REDUCED COVERAGE HOURS: The CONCEPT of "enhanced coverage" has not changed. OBVIOUSLY, the economics of the world, including Fig Garden, is constantly changing, so the exact additional hours of patrol which can be afforded would be expected to fluctuate. However, this misses the point. Law enforcement officials (the Sheriff) have changing statistics showing what times of day or days of the week would most benefit from additional patrols. THESE ARE THE TIMES WHEN WE COULD HAVE ADDITIONAL HOURS — having 24/7 enhanced coverage may not even be the best use of the available funds. Even if one were on a fixed income, \$299 would be well spent for safety in your home. As Fresno moves north, Blackstone by Fig Garden is becoming less desirable commercially, as the City's Blackstone policies have not adequately addressed deterioration issues. Thus, it is essential for us in the county "eastern area" between Maroa and Blackstone, as well as Circle Drive and the south end of Van Ness, to take our own measures to protect our homes and our personal safety and our property values and our future.

Please vote YES to join the Fig Garden Police Protection District.

Your neighbor,



Crime Statistics

compiled and reported by the

Fresno Sheriff's Department L21 Beat

From January 1, 2007 thru September 12, 2007

Comparison Chart of comparable neighborhood areas

Zone 1754 – Current Protected Area	Zone 1755 – area to be annexed	
Shaw to Gettysburg / Palm to Maroa	Shaw to Gettysburg / Maroa to Blackstone	
Residential Burglaries (3)	Residential Burglaries (10)	3.33 times greater
Vehicle Burglaries (4)	Vehicle Burglaries (11)	2.75 times greater
Other Misdemeanor/ Felonies (9)	Other Misdemeanor/ Felonies (36)	4.00 times greater

The **Fig Garden Police Protection District** has a **CONTRACT** with the Fresno Sheriff's Department to provide police protection services. The contract insulates the Police Protection District from the County's and Sheriff's Department Budget problems, cuts and priority reassignment of services.

Those **NOT** within the Police Protection District are subject to expected budget cuts.

Some quotes from recent **FRESNO BEE** headlines and articles are shown below:

Headline THE FRESNO BEE
Wednesday September 19, 2007

Public services cuts seen...
Tight Fresno Co. budget will have vast impact...

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
Freezing 10 vacant deputy positions may mean longer response times to low-priority calls.

Article THE FRESNO BEE
Wednesday September 19, 2007
By cfontana@fresnobee.com

...the sheriff is giving highest priority to areas such as jail and gang, agriculture and methamphetamines related crime.

...Several times during the discussion, board members warned against any thoughts of a financial turnaround. Said Supervisor Judy Case: "I don't believe next year's budget is going to be any better."

Vote Yes

On your mail-in ballot to get more Police Protection from the Sheriff's Department