



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR LICCARDO

FROM: Councilmember Esparza

SUBJECT: BUDGET DOCUMENT

DATE: 5/25/2022

Approved

Maya Esparza

Date 5/25/2022

RECOMMENDATION

That the following recommendation be enacted.

Proposal

Program/Project Title: Thank You America Monument

Amount of City Funding Required: \$296,000

This change is:

One-time Ongoing

Cost Estimate Number (if applicable): 50

Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):

For two decades now, our Vietnamese Community has voiced their desire to erect a “Thank You America” monument to the American service members who fought along side the soldiers of the Republic of South Vietnam, recognizing the connection and shared sacrifice for freedom between our two countries. In 2019, the City and County approved a grant agreement to finally bring this project to fruition within the Viet Heritage Garden. Unfortunately, delays due to Covid as our PRNS department mobilized to provide critical services to our community, combined with rising costs, have resulted in a substantially higher budget than originally anticipated. The San Jose Vietnamese community remains highly committed to seeing this project through, and a group of citizens has committed to raising \$100,000 toward the funding shortfall. This proposal seeks to address the remaining funding gap of between \$296,000 to complete the Thank You America Monument.

Completion of this project within our Viet Heritage Garden will provide a valuable regional asset for the city that will serve to attract members of the Vietnamese Community from not only the greater Bay Area, but also from Southern California. This influx of visitors will undoubtedly drive up patronage of nearby Little Saigon and the surrounding small businesses, many of which have been

hit hard by the pandemic and are still on the long road to recovery. As this project will truly be a regional asset that will draw visitors from well beyond our city and even county borders, I recommend considering the use of our Public Art allocation as well as Citywide C&C funds to cover the funding gap.

With each passing year, our Vietnam War veterans-both American and Vietnamese-are growing older, and their numbers fewer. Many of our community members have been advocating for this monument for decades, and now with a design chosen, a final city investment to supplement the County and community funds will allow them to see the fruits of their labor. In addition to the significant and tangible economic and placemaking benefits it will bring, the monument will be a strong and lasting symbol of the friendship, and special relationship between the United States and the members of the Vietnamese Diaspora, including all those who fought and sacrificed for the freedom and independence of the Republic of South Vietnam.

Funding Source

Essential Services Reserve:

Other (Please specify program/project/fund): Parks City-Wide Construction and Conveyance Tax Fund (391)

Department or Organization Contact

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

Name and Title: Jeff Ruster, Assistant Director

Department or Organization: Office of Economic Development

Phone Number: 408-535-8183

Email: Jeff.Ruster@sanjoseca.gov