



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Mahan
Councilmember Campos
Councilmember Salas
Councilmember Mulcahy
Councilmember Candelas

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 04/18/2024

Approved:

Date: 04/18/2025

SUBJECT: Agreement with Christmas in the Park, Inc. for Christmas in the Park at Plaza de Cesar Chavez Annual Event

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve staff's recommendation and direct staff to explore the following opportunities in partnership with Christmas in the Park:

1. Explore and potentially implement opportunities to provide elevated City staff support to reduce the time and burden that Christmas in the Park experiences during setup and takedown of the festival and its operations.
2. Ensure this agreement with Christmas in the Park includes the flexibility to move the event to an alternative City Park, should the organization and City determine that relocation to a site that better suits its operational or programmatic needs is warranted.
3. Evaluate alternative downtown park locations such as, but not limited to, Arena Green / Guadalupe River Trail, St. James Park, or Discovery Meadow, which may offer improved logistical efficiency and an enhanced visitor experience for San José residents and tourists.

BACKGROUND

Christmas in the Park remains San José's most beloved holiday tradition, drawing at least 700,000 thousand visitors each year and creating a strong sense of community. For decades, the event has been located at Plaza de César Chávez in the heart of Downtown San José. As the event grew, so too have the operational complexities. From traffic congestion and logistical constraints to concerns related to unmanaged and unpermitted vendors to the time-consuming setup and breakdown process, there is a growing need to re-examine how the city can better support this cherished event and ensure its continued success.

To that end, we recommend exploring enhanced operational support for Christmas in the Park to achieve more efficient setup and takedown processes, increased staff coordination, and logistical planning. Christmas in the Park deserves our city and our community's support.

Additionally, given ongoing discussions about the future of Plaza de César Chávez and the evolving landscape of Downtown parks, we should build flexibility into any long-term agreements. This provides Christmas in the Park the flexibility to relocate to another City-owned Park such as Discovery Meadow, Arena Green, or St. James Park if a different location offers a better fit in terms of size, accessibility, or overall visitor experience. While we strongly prefer an alternative park location within Downtown, we should remain open to working with Christmas in the Park to identify a San José site that best meets their needs.

Finally, given the significant economic activity the event generates for Downtown San José there is good reason to support Christmas in the Park. The multi-week event generates \$18.7 million in spending and approximately \$935,000 directly to the city. These recommendations aim to sustain and elevate Christmas in the Park as a hallmark of San José's civic life while ensuring its long-term viability and growth.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.