

CITY COUNCIL ACTION REQUEST			
DEPARTMENT(S) City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs	CEQA Not a Project, File No. PP17-011, Temporary Special Events resulting in no changes to the physical environment.	COORDINATION City Attorney's Office; Public Works Department	Director Approval /s/ Jen Baker
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S) Citywide			CMO Approval  1/8/26
SUBJECT: Approval of “Free Use” of City Hall Plaza and Janet Gray Hayes Rotunda for the Invisible Skies San José Art Project and Approval of the Tower and Rotunda Lighting Proclamation as an Official Public Art Display			
RECOMMENDATION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Approve the <i>Invisible Skies</i> Tower and Rotunda Lighting on January 30, 2026, and January 31, 2026, as an Official Public Art Display. (b) Approve the proclamation of <i>Invisible Skies</i> San José scheduled on January 30, 2026, and January 31, 2026. (c) Adopt a resolution authorizing “Free Use” of the City Hall Plaza and Rotunda on Saturday, January 31, 2026, for the <i>Invisible Skies</i> event, co-hosted by the City Manager’s Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs and ET Projects Foundation. 			
BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION			
<p><i>Tower and Rotunda Lighting</i></p> <p>On January 31, 2026, in partnership with renowned artists, Elizabeth Turk and Erik Thienes, the City Manager’s Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs will implement the <i>Invisible Skies</i> San José public art performance event. This event marks a significant cultural activation for the downtown core in advance of the major sporting events taking place in February 2026. <i>Invisible Skies</i> San José is a flash art event, created by San José locals carrying umbrella props. During this event, approximately 2,000 attendees are expected to gather in San José’s City Hall Plaza to engage in participatory public art performance. The participants will transform City Hall into an Observatory and turn San José residents into stars. Together with San José residents, the artists will create beautiful, inspiring, and energetic images for shared public spaces. On January 30, 2026, event partners will conduct a rehearsal in the City Hall Plaza to prepare for the event the following day.</p> <p>This effort to light City Hall’s Tower and Rotunda serves as an important component of the event, critical to achieving the artists’ vision. Lighting the Tower and Rotunda in teal highlights the City’s commitment to vibrant cultural programming in downtown, and its growing reputation as Silicon Valley’s top destination for world-class entertainment and public art. The illumination of City Hall Tower and Rotunda underscores San José’s dedication to fostering a dynamic and inclusive nightlife scene, promoting economic vitality, and ensuring that major events contribute positively to the community.</p> <p>City Council Policy 7-14, City Hall Event Lighting Policy, Sections B.1, B.4 and C.1 allow Tower and Rotunda lighting for Official Public Art Displays in conjunction with a proclamation from City Council.</p>			

Approval by the City Council of the event will ensure compliance with the City Council's prior direction regarding Public Art Displays in Council Policy 7-14: "Rotunda light displays of public art, such as in the participation of the Illuminating Downtown Program, are to be coordinated through the City Manager's Office of Cultural Affairs in recognition of artistic and cultural endeavors on behalf of the City of San José and in conjunction with a proclamation from City Council. Any proposed public art must be approved through the City's standard public art process." The artists submitted a project proposal to the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, which was approved in accordance with the requirements outlined in the City's Public Art Masterplan.

"Free Use" Reservation

"Free Use" of the City Hall Plaza(s) and City Hall Rotunda is being requested because Saturdays are excluded from the requirements outlined in the Schedule of Fees Resolution. As a community-focused temporary public art display, this event, produced in partnership with the ET Projects Foundation, will be a great benefit to the City of San José. The event will bring together residents, local artists, creative entrepreneurs, and internationally known artists to celebrate San José and create a truly unique experience. The event will be captured using traditional and drone photography to document the event and create images that can be used as promotional and marketing material by the City of San José and Team San Jose. Together with San José residents, ET Projects Foundation will create beautiful, inspiring, and energetic images for shared public spaces. This partnership will help drive economic development to make San José a more vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

In June 2019, the City adopted the Schedule of Fees Resolution No. 79138, Section 13.080 for free use of City Hall facilities and the plaza. Presently, the resolution allows City Council and City departments to have free use of the facilities for events that: 1) qualify as official City business; 2) are free and open to the public; 3) occur on a Sunday through Friday; and 4) are booked 30 days in advance. Resolution No. 79138 does not apply to free use requests for events on Saturdays; as such City Council approval is required to authorize free use for the *Invisible Skies* event, to be held in the City Hall Plaza(s) and Rotunda on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

Approval of this memorandum will enable the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs and partner organizations to proceed with the reservation of City Hall Plaza and the lighting of the Tower and Rotunda for the *Invisible Skies* event.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

COST AND FUNDING SOURCE

Pursuant to the Schedule of Fees Resolution No. 79138, City departments may exercise a free City-use option for qualifying events up to five times each year. Approval of the recommendation will count as one of the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs' free use options. The estimated total cost for the reservation is \$13,622. Approval of the free use request would waive \$8,714 in venue fees. The remaining \$4,903 reflects City-related expenses, including application, staffing, and security costs associated with use of the plaza(s) and rotunda, and will be paid by the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs.

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT: Zacharias Mendez, Senior Events Coordinator, Public Life and Events Manager, City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, at (408) 893-8237 or zacharias.mendez@sanjoseca.gov