



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Mayor Matt Mahan
Councilmember Bien Doan
Councilmember George Casey
Councilmember Carl Salas

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: April 17, 2025

Approved

Date:

Bien Doan *Matt Mahan* *George Casey* *Carl Salas*

SUBJECT: A Resolution of the San José City Council to recognize the Heritage and Freedom Flag of the Republic of Vietnam (The Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes) in the Digital World.

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for discussion and consideration at an upcoming City Council Meeting the adoption of the attached resolution reaffirming the City of San José's longstanding commitment to diversity and cultural representation, particularly in support of the Vietnamese-American community, through advocacy for digital representation of the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag as an emoji.

BACKGROUND

The corresponding resolution calls for the recognition of the Heritage and Freedom Flag of the former Republic of Vietnam—commonly known as the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes—as a digital emoji. The proposal acknowledges the flag's historical and cultural significance to millions of Vietnamese refugees and their descendants, and highlights its role as a symbol of freedom, democracy, and resilience.

With the growing use of emojis as a form of global digital communication, this action urges the Unicode Consortium and major digital platforms to reflect the diverse identities and histories of displaced communities. The resolution emphasizes the disparity between the current Vietnamese flag emoji, which reflects the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the identity of many Vietnamese-Americans.

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Page 2

In alignment with [Resolution No. 72679](#) adopted in 2005 and [Resolution No. 78064](#) adopted in 2017, this effort further demonstrates the City's dedication to honoring its Vietnamese-American residents and ensuring inclusive representation in all forms of public and digital expression.

Should the Council adopt this resolution, copies will be sent to the Unicode Consortium, Vietnamese-American community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders in support of the emoji's addition and broader cultural recognition.

ATTACHMENT

A Resolution of the San José City Council to recognize the Heritage and Freedom Flag of the Republic of Vietnam (The Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes) in the digital world.

WHEREAS, the City of San José values diversity, inclusivity, and the representation of its many vibrant communities, including the Vietnamese-American population, that plays a vital role in shaping the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnamese-American community in San José and around the world deeply cherishes the heritage, culture, and history of Vietnam, particularly as it relates to the symbols of freedom, democracy, and the pursuit of human rights; and

WHEREAS, the flag used by many members of Vietnamese diaspora, including those who fled Vietnam during and after the fall of Saigon is the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes most referred to as the “Flag of the Republic of Vietnam”. This flag was officially recognized in 1956 and is a symbol of the former Republic of Vietnam and a banner of hope, freedom, and democracy for millions of Vietnamese refugees; and

WHEREAS, the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes has become an important symbol of resilience and remembrance for Vietnamese communities worldwide, particularly for those who experienced hardship and displacement due to the Vietnam War, including more recent generations that continue to honor the history of those struggles; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of Resolution No. 72679 on May 17, 2005, and the adoption of Resolution No. 78064 on January 24, 2017, the City Council officially recognized the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag as the flag of the Vietnamese-American community thereby reaffirming its commitment to the residents of San José; and

WHEREAS, the flag currently used to represent Vietnam on digital platforms, known commonly as the “Vietnamese Flag Emoji”, represents the flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which was adopted in 1976 under communist rule; and

WHEREAS, the current Vietnamese Flag emoji does not fully reflect the history or the values of the Vietnamese-American community in San José and Nationwide, who continue to seek recognition for their own cultural and historical symbols, including the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes; and

WHEREAS, as emojis have become a key form of communication in the digital age, it is important that the emoji representation of national and cultural symbols reflect the diversity of experiences and identities of communities, particularly those who have faced displacement, exile, and the pursuit of freedom; and

WHEREAS, the City of San José recognizes the importance of advancing inclusivity in all forms of public representation, and supporting the recognition and respect of cultural symbols that are significant to our diverse communities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the San José City Council calls upon the Unicode Consortium, the organization responsible for the development and maintenance of emoji standards, to consider the addition of the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes as an official

Vietnamese Flag emoji, in order to honor the entire history, experiences, and aspirations of Vietnamese-Americans and Vietnamese people worldwide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of San José calls upon social media companies, messaging platforms, and other digital communication providers to support this change by integrating the Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes as a recognized emoji option, thereby helping to promote inclusivity and respect for the cultural symbols important to the Vietnamese diaspora; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of San José, through its commitment to diversity and inclusion, will continue to advocate for the recognition and preservation of cultural symbols that reflect the rich history and experiences of our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk be and is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Unicode Consortium, the San José Vietnamese-American community leaders, and any other relevant stakeholders in support of this important cause.

ADOPTED this XXXX, by the City Council of the City of San José.