



COUNCIL AGENDA: 06/12/18
FILE: 18-803
ITEM: 2.9

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Angel Rios, Jr.
Margaret McCahan

**SUBJECT: PLAZA DE CÉSAR CHÁVEZ
INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS**

DATE: May 30, 2018

Approved

Date

5-31-18

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the following 2017-2018 Appropriation Ordinance amendments in the Subdivision Park Trust Fund:

- (1) Establish the Plaza de César Chávez Interim Improvements appropriation to the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department in the amount of \$500,000; and
- (2) Decrease the Future PDO/PIO Projects Reserve appropriation by \$500,000.

OUTCOME

Approval of these recommendations will allow for fountain repairs and park improvements at Plaza de César Chávez. The funding will support fountain repairs related to the flooding of the fountain electrical and pump vaults, as well as park improvements such as tree planting and maintenance, pavement improvements, and hardware replacement.

BACKGROUND

Plaza de César Chávez is a 2.3-acre plaza located in downtown San José. In proximity to museums, the Convention Center, and other attractions, the park is the City of San José's de facto town square. Plaza de César Chávez not only provides a refreshing open space in an urban environment, but it is also the historical "go-to" destination in San José for large events and outdoor concerts. It is also traditionally the site of *Christmas in the Park*.

Other notable events at the park include the popular *Music in the Park* concert series, the *2019 College Football Playoff National Championship Week* events, and a variety of ongoing park activation events. Plaza de César Chávez is a source of pride for the City and is significant to San José's identity on the national and world stage. Heavy usage of the park has put it at risk of accelerated deterioration. Consequently, infrastructure improvements are needed for the park to continue to be a venue for diverse cultural programming and quality community events.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), with support from the Knight Foundation, is working with SWA Group, an urban design and planning firm, and Reed Gilliland Landscape Architects to develop an enhanced vision for Plaza de César Chávez. The study is exploring ways to enable the park to better handle the high intensity usage by improving and updating the space. This memorandum requests interim funding for infrastructure improvements needed to enhance current park operations.

ANALYSIS

PRNS may embark on a major renovation of Plaza de César Chávez in future years if funding is available. In the meantime, the park's existing infrastructure requires repairs and updates including fountain and electrical repairs; access repairs and safety improvements; and, park cosmetic and public enjoyment enhancements and repairs. These smaller maintenance projects will ensure that the park can withstand the heavy day-to-day usage expected from upcoming large-scale events.

Fountain & Water Filtration System Repairs

The interactive water fountain in the heart of Plaza de César Chávez is a huge draw for children of all ages who seek to "beat the heat" during the hot summer months. Of the 25 interactive water features citywide, the fountain at Plaza de César Chávez is one of only two that can remain open during mandated drought restrictions because it uses recirculated water and pump filtration systems. To continue operating this feature, PRNS must repair damage incurred in December 2017 when a faulty valve in the underground pump and filtration system failed, leading to the need for extensive repairs to pump motors and other electrical equipment. At the same time these repairs are made, staff plans to improve the fountain walking surface as well, by replacing the glass tiles that make up the floor of the fountain.

Park Infrastructure Maintenance & Upgrades

In addition, as PRNS prepares for its successful activation events at Plaza de César Chávez this summer, improvements to address the safety and enjoyment of the park are needed, including: a temporary shade structure to improve visitor experiences at the stage area; expanding pathways to facilitate easier mobility and avoid turf and irrigation maintenance issues; and, updating signage throughout the park to facilitate access and code compliance.

Tree Safety and Hardware Replacement

Finally, staff plans to address key safety and hardware repair/replacement needs in anticipation of high usage. In particular, tree maintenance and the replacement of damaged trees will ensure public safety and the overall clean and green appearance of the park. In addition, minor updates, and replacements of hardware such as benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles will make the park cleaner and safer for use and improve the general appearance of the park.

In summary, interim improvements to Plaza de César Chávez include:

- Installation of picnic tables in the southwest quadrant;
- Removal and replacement of trash cans;
- Removal and replacement of all 51 park benches;
- Expansion of the center pathway at the south end of the park;
- Repair of electrical system;
- Update of irrigation to accommodate pathway expansion;
- Increased tree maintenance and possible removal and replacement of trees near the stage;
- Installation of park signage;
- Installation of temporary stage cover;
- Repair of the fountain pump and filtration system; and
- Replacement of glass fountain tiles.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

No other follow up action is expected on the interim improvements.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, with support from the Knight Foundation, is working SWA Group and Reed Gilliland Landscape Architects to complete a vision study for Plaza de Cesar Chavez. The study includes a combination of community outreach conducted by the consulting firms and the City, which will secure feedback from the community regarding current park conditions and future uses for the park. Public outreach has not been coordinated for the interim improvements.

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council agenda website for the June 12, 2018 Council Meeting.

COORDINATION

This project and memorandum have been coordinated with the Department of Public Works, the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, and the City Attorney's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This item has not been brought before any City commission.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

AMOUNT OF RECOMMENDATION: \$500,000

ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECT

Fountain repairs and replacement of fountain glass tiles	\$150,000
Electrical repairs	\$100,000
Tree replacement and maintenance	\$65,000
Pathway expansion and irrigation modification	\$60,000
Trash cans, picnic tables, and benches	\$110,000
Temporary stage cover	\$13,000
Park signage	\$2,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$500,000

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Budget appropriation actions are recommended to allocate \$500,000 from the Subdivision Park Trust Fund Future PDO/PIO Project Reserve to fund the project items listed above.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff does not anticipate additional ongoing operations and maintenance resource needs exclusively associated with the interim park maintenance and enhancement projects listed in this memorandum.

BUDGET REFERENCE

The table below identifies the fund and appropriations proposed to fund the Plaza de César Chávez interim improvements.

Fund #	Appn. #	Appn. Name	Total appn.	Rec. Budget Action	2017-2018 Adopted Capital Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
375	New	Plaza de César Chávez Interim Improvements	N/A	\$500,000	N/A	N/A
375	8845	Future PDO/PIO Projects Reserve	\$ 9,454,030	(\$500,000)	678	02/13/2018, 30070

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CEQA

Exempt, File No. PP18-051.

/s/
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Director of Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services



Margaret McCahan
Budget Director

For questions, please contact Mike Will, Division Manager, at (408) 535-3582.