



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Vice Mayor
Magdalena Carrasco

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: January 30, 2018

APPROVE: 

DATE: 1/30/18

SUBJECT: RELOCATION OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE

RECOMMENDATION

Support Option 3 in the staff memorandum to relocate the statue to History Park at Kelly Park at the Bank of Italy building.

BACKGROUND

The removal of the Christopher Columbus statue from the entrance of City Hall is appropriate. City Hall is a physical nexus of our urban centers that creates large gathering places for everything from celebrations to protests. There has been a national drive to remove controversial statues and monuments. Other cities have started the discussion of removing Christopher Columbus statues including Mammoth, New Jersey, Lancaster, Pennsylvania and cities around the world in Trinidad and the Philippines. This statute has served as a symbol of hatred, racial injustice, and the mistreatment of our indigenous population. I believe we can continue to honor the gift by locating the statue in History San José for those who want to view it.

The Airport serves a similar function in that it is a welcoming center for those who travel to San José. Our airport should celebrate the arrival of a person into our City. The Airport is our gateway and we have thousands of people that are pouring through the doors every day. I do not believe we should welcome our family, friends, and strangers with a statute of a man who lost his way and never stepped foot on our soil.

Last year at this time, our Vietnamese community fought hard against the display of the communist flags or symbols on public property. On January 24, 2017, this council supported the ban of the display of the flag of the communist Socialist Republic of Vietnam on city flagpoles. Many believe that the communist flag symbolizes one of the most tragic moments in the history of Vietnam, which resulted in the genocide of millions. It spurs similar emotions as the Swaztika.

COUNCIL AGENDA 1.30.18

Item 3.11

We were the first city to condemn the communist regime in Vietnam and honor the Republic of South Vietnam Freedom Flag. Just like our African-American community have fought to remove 32 confederate statues across our country.

Italian Americans have contributed greatly to San José. We have honored many of the accomplishments of our local Italian leaders in downtown San José, Little Italy and throughout the entire region. Their efforts to grow our beautiful city will continue to be celebrated.

Our indigenous community has come to us and have worked to remove a symbol that insults their history and culture. We must stand with our community against hateful symbols. San José is not the first City nor the last to debate the merits of contentious statues, symbols, and holidays. As San José has always lead the way in honoring and celebrating diversity in our great City and the beautiful mosaic that is the rich landscape of San José.