



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli
Nanci Klein

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 22, 2023

Approved

Date: 5/23/2023

**SUBJECT: ASSISTING THE VIETNAMESE HERITAGE COMMUNITY GARDEN,
THE ALUM ROCK ARTS DISTRICT, AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY CENTER**

BACKGROUND

This Manager's Budget Addendum responds to an information request directed by a memorandum from Councilmember Ortiz that was included in the City Council's approval of the Mayor's March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 to work with stakeholders to determine a financial strategy and/or technical assistance contributing to three important cultural projects: the Vietnamese Heritage Community Garden, the Alum Rock Arts District, and the African American Cultural Center.

The Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs and the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services have collaborated on this Council direction to determine the best next steps and resources required to engage community stakeholders and determine a financing strategy for future investments at the Vietnamese Heritage Community Garden, the Alum Rock Arts District, and the African American Cultural Center.

ANALYSIS

As a large U.S. city with one of the most demographically diverse populations, the City seeks to improve public amenities to support and celebrate cultural inclusion and belonging for its residents. Three unique cultural-specific projects offer opportunities for the City to build on its values of supporting a robust public and cultural life in San José.

1. The Viet Heritage Garden is within Kelley Regional Park in Council District 7. A master plan was approved in September 2000. Program elements of the master plan include a heritage garden, cultural museum, water garden, exhibition hall, picnic areas, children's playground, natural science exhibit, and other improvements. The master plan report and other City documents include a private fundraising strategy for implementation which

was not realized. The Vietnamese Cultural Heritage Garden Association was to donate the garden and all capital improvements to the City of San José. Prior to any improvements, it is recommended that this master plan be updated to include new community outreach to better reflect the current neighborhood demographics and programmatic needs. The estimated cost to update the master plan is \$300,000. A new construction cost estimate would be generated through this effort as the existing estimate from the original master plan is severely outdated and does not reflect current construction climates. It is estimated that \$150,000 would be needed to conduct a fund-raising feasibility study for the Vietnamese Cultural Heritage Garden to develop a financial strategy to pursue implementation. The total estimated cost for this project is \$450,000.

2. The African American Community Service Agency (AACSA), founded in 1978, is one of the only African American cultural centers in Silicon Valley. The Agency resides in a City-owned building at 304 N 1st Street in San José. The building needs repair work to prevent water intrusion, including replacing the windows and repairing the roof. Public Works Department procured quotes to replace the 52 windows for \$160,000 and repair the roof for \$6,000, including a 10% contingency and 25% for Public Works Department's contract management cost. The total cost of this work is \$166,000.
3. East San José has a density of cultural assets and a cultural scene comprised of artists, nonprofits, and arts-based businesses. Its cultural history is robust, with the Eastside being the catalytic site of low rider culture, the location of Cesar Chavez's family home, and the first grape strike. The Mexican Heritage Plaza (MHP) is an essential cultural anchor located on the Eastside of San José. With support from the City, the School of Arts and Culture at MHP is expanding its offerings and campus through the real estate acquisition of a property across the street on Alum Rock Avenue. An Alum Rock Cultural District can further develop assets that build power and financial strength within Mayfair – a key East San José neighborhood, which could contribute to racial, social, cultural, and economic justice. To build upon this investment with the development of an Alum Rock/Eastside San José Cultural District Plan, the scope of work would include the selection of a cultural planning consultant, community engagement and input, development of a cultural plan with recommendations about cultural amenities, cost estimates, phases, and public policies and funding recommendations that can support its implementation and sustained success. Critical to its success is the participation of local residents and the multi-faceted arts sector. A cultural district plan, including consultants and outreach, is estimated to cost approximately \$100,000.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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Subject: Assisting the Vietnamese Heritage Community Garden, the Alum Rock Arts District, and the African American Community Center

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COORDINATION

This Manager's Budget Addendum was coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/

NANCI KLEIN

Director, Office of Economic
Development and Cultural Affairs
and Cultural Affairs

/s/

JON CICIRELLI

Director, Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services