



RON ROBERTS

CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: April 3, 2012

07

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE PLAZA DE PANAMA COMMITTEE PROJECT
(DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

On April 3, 2012 (22), the Board of Supervisors continued this item to May 1, 2012.

Parks are for people, not automobiles. The Plaza de Panama Committee project will reclaim from the car 6.3 acres of central Balboa Park parkland. It will convert a marvelous plaza in the park's heart into a place where pedestrians can safely gather and take in the majesty of the surrounding architecture and museums while enjoying an atmosphere that helps define and identify our County. As the Park core is presently configured, up to 7,000 cars daily pass through the Plaza de California, West Prado, Plaza de Panama and Esplanade in a quest for parking. The Plaza de Panama Committee project will divert this vehicle stream away from these historic venues and across the discretely located Centennial Bridge, separating vehicles from pedestrians and guiding motorists to reservoirs of both free parking and a new conveniently-located, 785-space, park-topped underground garage with modest fees. This project will result in a net gain of 273 parking spaces, boost disabled parking in the park's core by 30 percent and fund a free, convenient tram system with high-occupancy, low-floor, easy-access cars that meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This widely-vetted \$40 million proposal from the Plaza de Panama Committee has won support from virtually every Balboa Park institution and comes at a time when San Diego is preparing to celebrate in 2015 the centennial of its first World's Fair, the 1915-16 Panama-California International Exposition. Approval of this project by the San Diego City Council will ensure that these improvements are in place in time for the celebration. This project is made in San Diego, funded by San Diegans and will benefit generations of future San Diegans.

**SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE PLAZA DE PANAMA COMMITTEE PROJECT
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

Recommendation(s)

CHAIRMAN ROBERTS

Join with the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, Downtown San Diego Partnership, San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp., San Diego Zoo, Uptown Planners, Gaslamp Quarter Association, Centre City Advisory Committee, Mayor Jerry Sanders, and nearly 1,500 individuals, businesses and organizations in supporting the Plaza de Panama Committee project.

Fiscal Impact

None

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

Parks are for people, not automobiles. The Plaza de Panama Committee project will reclaim from the car 6.3 acres of central Balboa Park parkland. It will convert a marvelous plaza in the park's heart into a place where pedestrians can safely gather and take in the majesty of the surrounding architecture and museums while enjoying an atmosphere that helps define and identify our County. As the Park core is presently configured, up to 7,000 cars daily pass through the Plaza de California, West Prado, Plaza de Panama and Esplanade in a quest for parking. The Plaza de Panama Committee project will divert this vehicle stream away from these historic venues and across the discretely located Centennial Bridge, separating vehicles from pedestrians and guiding motorists to reservoirs of both free parking and a new conveniently-located, 785-space, park-topped underground garage with modest fees. This project will result in a net gain of 273 parking spaces, boost disabled parking in the park's core by 30 percent and fund a free, convenient tram system with high-occupancy, low-floor, easy-access cars that meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Plaza de Panama Committee's proposal represents a seminal moment in the history of Balboa Park, which was created in 1868 when Alonzo Horton set aside 1,400 acres of Downtown San Diego for parkland. This is a generational effort on par with Kate Session's 1892 offer to plant 100 trees a year, the donation of the Marston House and its five acres of landscaped gardens, and the 1916 establishment of the San Diego Zoo. The project will require no taxpayer funds, but will be paid for by \$25 million in private donations and a City-issued construction bond for the parking garage that will be repaid with parking fees. Approval of this project is in keeping with the spirit of the 1905 decision to fund the critical park infrastructure improvements that created the backbone of the 1,200-acre civic treasure. Balboa Park is enjoyed today by more than 10 million people annually, with 45 percent of those visitors living outside the city of San Diego.

**SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE PLAZA DE PANAMA COMMITTEE PROJECT
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

This widely-vetted \$40 million proposal from the Plaza de Panama Committee has won support from virtually every Balboa Park institution and comes at a time when San Diego is preparing to celebrate in 2015 the centennial of its first World's Fair, the 1915-16 Panama-California International Exposition. Approval of this project by the San Diego City Council will ensure that these improvements are in place in time for the celebration. This project is made in San Diego, funded by San Diegans and will benefit generations of future San Diegans.

Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

RON ROBERTS
Chairman, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

(N/A)

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE PLAZA DE PANAMA COMMITTEE PROJECT
(DISTRICTS: ALL)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
NA

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 4, Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Tim McClain	_____	_____
Name		Name
(619) 531-5544	_____	_____
Phone		Phone
619-685-6262	_____	_____
Fax		Fax
A 500	_____	_____
Mail Station		Mail Station
Tim.mcclain@sdcountry.ca.gov	_____	_____
E-mail		E-mail