



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Toni Taber, CMC

**SUBJECT:** See below

**DATE:** March 22, 2024

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Approved

Date

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT: CITYWIDE**

**SUBJECT: Agreement with the State of California, Office of Planning and Research,  
California Volunteers for Phase Two Grant Funding for TogetherSJ**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager or her designee to execute an Agreement between the City of San José and the State of California, Office of Planning and Research, California Volunteers to accept the Phase Two Grant Funding for TogetherSJ in the amount of \$1,000,000 and to negotiate and execute additional amendments and related documents without further City Council action.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

The recommended action accepts grant funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 that the City of San Jose ("City") will receive from California Volunteers to continue the TogetherSJ Program through FY2025-2026.

## **BACKGROUND**

In July 2023, the Mayor's Office was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant under the Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors program (Phase One) from the State of California, Office of Planning and Research, California Volunteers for fiscal year 2023-2024. The funding helped launch Phase One of the TogetherSJ programs, which focused on building neighbor-to-neighbor engagement through emergency preparedness trainings, beautification initiatives, neighborhood association activities, and other volunteer programming – with the goal of increasing social capital and civic pride. In the first year of TogetherSJ, in utilizing the grant funds from Phase One, San José experienced a 220% increase in volunteerism over the last fiscal year, a milestone supported by 20 TogetherSJ neighborhoods. In addition, programming removed 138,000 lbs. of trash, and early data shows a 95% increase in neighborhood association attendance. All funds for TogetherSJ Phase One must be expended by the end of June 2024, though the City is requesting an extension to September 2024.

California Volunteers opened the grant opportunity for a second year (Phase Two). The solicitation was available through a competitive process and local city governments with existing programming that strengthens social connections were eligible to apply.

On February 9, 2024, Mayor's Office, with the support of the City Manager's Office, submitted a proposal for \$1,000,000 in grant funding to amplify the impact of TogetherSJ by expanding to Phase Two of its program and continue enabling neighborhoods to take ownership in creating a safer and more resilient city. Phase Two will expand on the total number of neighborhoods supported by TogetherSJ from 20 to 40 total neighborhoods. In addition, Phase Two will incorporate a Third Places strategy which will be pivotal in delivering a long-lasting positive impact at the neighborhood level. A "Third Places" strategy leverages community organizations and centers that connect neighborhoods and other communal locations to deliver impact at the neighborhood level. (Please see the Analysis section for more detailed information on Third Places). TogetherSJ Phase Two will focus on supporting neighborhoods and communities by offering three main resources:

1. A portfolio of initiatives that address community needs, which will be supported through surveys and direct input from communities;
2. A calendar of events giving neighbors ample opportunity to strengthen their bonds; and
3. Partnering with a diverse range of local collaborators, including Third Places such as nonprofits and community centers, to strengthen the community's utilization of local resources and feeling of camaraderie.

On March 1, 2024, California Volunteers notified the Mayor's Office of its intent to award a grant to the City. If approved by Council, the grant agreement term will be from the Council approval date to January 31, 2026, and the Mayor's Office will implement Phase Two of the program.

## **ANALYSIS**

Without the continuation of the TogetherSJ program, and the award of the \$1,000,000, the Mayor's Office would not be able to expand TogetherSJ to more San Jose neighborhoods or support each neighborhood with the time and resources they need to drive long-lasting positive impact in their communities. Further, continuation and expansion of the TogetherSJ grant introduces new strategies and resources that will uniquely position the Mayor's Office to build the existing TogetherSJ program to more neighborhoods, and in addition, to offer a more high-touch approach with each neighborhood it serves. The new strategies that the Mayor's Office plans to employ are to 1) incorporate prior learnings directly from the TogetherSJ program, 2) solicit and integrate feedback directly from the neighborhood stakeholders, and 3) to leverage local partners and "Third Places."

As mentioned above, a "Third Places" strategy leverages community organizations and centers that connect neighborhoods and other communal locations to deliver impact at the neighborhood level. These community spaces, distinct from home (first place) and work (second place), serve as hubs for social interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences. In other words, a "Third

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Places" strategy allows TogetherSJ to broaden its reach and impact through partnerships at the local level. A "Third Places" strategy also ensures that volunteers not only contribute to initiatives led by the local government but also have the opportunity to spearhead projects that align with the unique needs and aspirations of their neighborhoods.

TogetherSJ Phase Two encourages the adoption of "Third Places" within neighborhoods, such as community centers, parks, and local businesses, as focal points for community-building activities. By revitalizing these spaces, the aim is to bring neighbors together and create a resilient community where residents feel empowered and supported. Overall, TogetherSJ Phase Two underscores the commitment of the Mayor's Office to foster meaningful connections and strengthen the fabric of San José's neighborhoods.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

As described below, \$100,000 of Phase Two funding is expected to be recognized and appropriated in the FY2023-2024 Year-End budget process, and the remaining \$900,000 will be recognized and appropriated as part of future budget processes. No additional follow-up actions with the City Council are expected at this time. The Mayor's Office will continue to communicate informational updates about the program.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

The 2023-2024 Modified Budget currently includes \$1,000,000 for the Phase One of the City's TogetherSJ Program from the State of California. Acceptance of the Phase Two grant would provide the City an additional \$1,000,000 on a reimbursement basis that must be expended by January 2026. Actions to recognize \$100,000 of Phase 2 funds are anticipated to be brought forward during the 2023-2024 Year-End budget process, and the remainder amount of \$900,000 will be recognized and appropriated as part of future budget processes.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Department of Transportation; Office of Cultural Affairs; Public Works; Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services; the City Manager's Office; and the Office of Mayor Matt Mahan.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the April 9, 2024 City Council meeting.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

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**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-004, Government Funding Mechanism or Fiscal Activity with no commitment to a specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

**PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toni Taber', with a stylized, circular flourish at the end.

TONI TABER, CMC  
City Clerk

For questions, please contact Amanda Wong, Senior Analyst, at [amanda.wong@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:amanda.wong@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-1260.