

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 15

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION OF A SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL (250TH ANNIVERSARY) CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AT WATERFRONT PARK (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

San Diego County, the second largest county in California, is home to one of the most diverse and civically engaged populations in the country and holds a unique place in the nation's history. The county also has the largest concentration of military personnel in the world who share with the rest of our constituents a deep and enduring connection to the principles of democracy, service, and equality that underpin the United States Declaration of Independence. As the nation approaches the Semiquincentennial or 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the County of San Diego (County) is uniquely positioned to serve as a regional leader in commemorating this historic milestone.

Today's action requests Board authorization to hold a public Semiquincentennial Celebration on July 4, 2026 at Waterfront Park to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence. The proposed event would include the use of projection mapping displays on the County Administrative Center and authorize vendor participation to support event programming, public engagement, and community activation. Waterfront Park's central location and accessibility make it an ideal venue to host a large-scale, inclusive celebration that reflects the County's historical significance, military presence, and commitment to civic participation.

The proposed celebration also presents a significant opportunity to collaborate with community partners and Downtown San Diego stakeholders to enhance the event's reach, impact, and economic benefit. Potential sponsorships and partnerships may include, but are not limited to, ACE Parking, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, San Diego Padres and Ballpark Events, Petco Park concessions and vendors, USS Midway Museum, Downtown San Diego Partnership, Gaslamp Quarter Association, Little Italy Association of San Diego, Petco Park concert and event entertainment companies, and the San Diego Tourism Authority. These collaborations would support strengthening ties between the County and the broader downtown business and cultural community.

Approval of this request will allow the County to commemorate a defining moment in the nation's history through an event that honors San Diego County's role as a center of military service, civic pride, and community partnership, while creating opportunities for public engagement, local business participation, and regional collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON AND SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to take the necessary actions to facilitate and support the planning and implementation of a Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration of the United States Declaration of Independence at Waterfront Park, including coordination of site use, approval of projection mapping displays, and authorization of vendor participation in support of the event.

2. Direct the CAO to foster partnerships and actively pursue sponsorships and collaborative opportunities with, and accept donations from, public, private, and community stakeholders, including downtown San Diego organizations, to support the planning, programming, and execution of the Semi Quincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration at Waterfront Park and to enhance public awareness, engagement, and participation in the event.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Semiquincentennial Celebration at Waterfront Park is designed to be inclusive and accessible for all San Diego County residents by ensuring free public admission, multilingual materials, and ADA-compliant facilities. The event will actively engage small businesses and vendors to promote economic equity, while programming will reflect the diverse cultural contributions that shape our nation's history.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for the actions requested to collaborate and plan for a Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration of the United States Declaration of Independence at Waterfront Park are partially included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Operational Plan based on existing staff time in the Department of Parks and Recreation and Department of General Services funded by existing General Purpose Revenue and Charges for Services to support planning for the event. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

Funds to support direct costs of the event, including vendors, equipment, and supplies, are not included in the FY 2025-26 Operational Plan and will depend upon availability of sponsorships and collaborative opportunities. At this time, there is no funding source budgeted to support direct event costs and the event would not proceed without financial support from sponsorships or reallocation of existing funding. Staff would return to the Board for any necessary actions to accept sponsorships and/or appropriate identified funding as needed. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego (County) has a longstanding commitment to encouraging the participation of large and small businesses in County contracting opportunities and recognizes the vital role the local business community plays in supporting County initiatives. Approval of this request provides an opportunity to further advance these efforts by facilitating vendor participation at Waterfront Park, thereby expanding outreach and engagement while enhancing access to economic opportunities for local businesses.

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Aguirre, seconded by Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, the Board of Supervisors took the following actions:

1. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to take the necessary actions to facilitate and support the planning and implementation of a Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration of the United States Declaration of Independence at Waterfront Park, including coordination of site use, approval of projection mapping displays, and authorization of vendor participation in support of the event.

2. Directed the CAO to foster partnerships, actively pursue sponsorships and collaborative opportunities, and accept donations from the public, private, and community stakeholders to support the planning, programming, and execution of the Semiquincentennial Celebration of the United States Declaration of Independence at Waterfront Park, and to enhance public awareness, engagement, and participation in the event, subject to the following eligibility requirements.
 - a. The County shall accept sponsorships, donations, other financial contributions, or partnerships only from organizations that demonstrate alignment with the County’s Strategic Plan and the County’s values of inclusion, equal opportunity, and support for immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ communities, tribal nations and indigenous groups, and other historically underserved populations.
 - b. An organization may demonstrate alignment with the values with subsection (a) through one or more of the following, as determined by the CAO:
 - i. Publicly stated policies, programs, or commitments supporting immigrants, refugees, or mixed-status families, tribal nations and indigenous groups, and/or LGBTQ+ communities
 - ii. Workforce, community, or philanthropic initiatives that advance inclusion, equity, or access to opportunity for historically underserved populations;
 - iii. Partnerships, grants, or investments supporting organizations or communities aligned with the County’s equity and inclusion goals; or
 - iv. Other comparable actions or commitments consistent with the purpose and values highlighted in the County’s strategic plan.
 - c. All organizations shall self-certify, in a form approved by the CAO, that they meet the eligibility criteria set forth in this section
 - d. Notwithstanding an organization’s self-certification or demonstrated alignment, the CAO retains discretion to decline any sponsorship, donation, financial contribution, or partnership that is inconsistent with the purpose, intent, or values of the Celebration.
3. a. Directed the CAO to coordinate with the Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) and the County’s Tribal Liaison to ensure that the planning and implementation of the Semiquincentennial Celebration of the United States Declaration of Independence at Waterfront Park:
 - i. Incorporates meaningful community engagement, with particular emphasis on tribal nations and indigenous groups, immigrant communities and immigrant-serving organizations, LGBTQ+ communities, and other historically underserved populations
 - ii. Promotes broad and inclusive participation reflecting the diversity of San Diego County; and
 - iii. Is consistent with the County’s equity, inclusion, and racial justice goals.
- b. Such coordination shall inform outreach strategies, program development, and partnership activities associated with the Celebration.

AYES: Aguirre, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe
NOES: Anderson, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter