

# Memo

To: Mayor and City Council  
Marianna Marysheva, Interim City Manager

From: Larry Agran, Councilmember LA

Date: January 19, 2021

Re: **A Resolution regarding the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery**

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As you'll recall, in accordance with the prevailing rule that now requires two Councilmembers (not just one) to place an item on the City Council agenda, it was at the January 12 meeting of the Irvine City Council that I invited my colleagues to join me in requesting placement of the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery issue on the agenda for Council consideration at the January 26 City Council meeting.

Unfortunately, none of my Council colleagues offered to join in my request at that time. Accordingly, the purpose of this Memo is to once again request support for placement of a resolution regarding the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery on the City Council meeting agenda. The Resolution is entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVINE, CALIFORNIA, TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK & CEMETERY AT THE CITY-OWNED "ARDA" SITE.

The Resolution, if adopted, would implement the will of the People of Irvine – as expressed in the Build the Great Park Veterans Cemetery Initiative, signed by 19,790 Irvine residents. The initiative was adopted as an Ordinance on May 12, 2020 and is therefore the law of the City of Irvine. The vote at that time was 4 to 1 (and included three members of the currently seated City Council voting YES; only then-Mayor Christina Shea voted NO).

The Resolution which I've drafted would reaffirm that the 125-acre ARDA site at the northeastern edge of the Great Park is the one and only location selected by the people of Irvine for the state-funded Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; moreover, the Resolution provides direction to City staff to take steps to commence preliminary construction by April 1, 2021 – beginning with demolition, cleanup, and clearance of the ARDA site.

The proposed Resolution is attached to this Memorandum. Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment

RESOLUTION NO. 21-\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVINE,  
CALIFORNIA, TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VETERANS  
MEMORIAL PARK & CEMETERY AT THE CITY-OWNED “ARDA” SITE  
AT THE GREAT PARK

WHEREAS, beginning in 2014, the people of the City of Irvine have repeatedly and consistently expressed their overwhelming approval and their determination to expedite construction of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery at the City-owned 125-acre ARDA site at the northeastern edge of the Great Park, formerly the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro; and,

WHEREAS, the will of the people of Irvine was manifest most recently with adoption of the Build the Great Park Veterans Cemetery Initiative — an official citizens’ initiative petition signed by 19,790 Irvine residents — which establishes the City-owned ARDA site at the Great Park as the *exclusive* location zoned for the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; and,

WHEREAS, the people of the City of Irvine — through the exercise of their direct power of initiative and through the May 12, 2020 adoption of their Initiative by a 4-1 majority of City Council representatives — have made it clear to the Governor, to CalVet officials, and to members of the State Legislature, that the 125-acre ARDA site at the Great Park referenced in AB 368, a bill signed by the Governor on September 12, 2019, is the exclusive site that is available for creating the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; and that the “Golf Course” site, also referenced in AB 368, is not available for acquisition by the State and cannot be used for cemetery purposes; and,

WHEREAS, the Initiative further provides that certain features be included as part of the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery — preservation of historic structures, such as the iconic aircraft control tower and airplane hangars, and creation of a 2.5-mile perimeter system of trees, trails and memorial gardens that will surround the entire ARDA site and memorialize the history of service and sacrifice in the Asian-Pacific theaters of war (World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and throughout the 45-year Cold War); and,

WHEREAS, preservation and creation of certain features described in the Initiative can be expedited by the City, beginning with City-ordered demolition, cleanup and clearance of the ARDA site; preservation of designated historic features; and creation of the perimeter system of trees, trails and memorial gardens — with costs to be reimbursed by the State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED by the City Council of the City of Irvine, California as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Irvine (i) selects the ARDA site as the exclusive location in the City of Irvine for the development of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; (ii) will actively and aggressively pursue

development of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery at the ARDA site; (iii) will not pursue the development of the Southern California Memorial Park & Cemetery at any other location within the City of Irvine; and (iv) will not sell, lease, or otherwise convey any property within the City of Irvine, other than the ARDA site, for use or development of the Southern California Memorial Park & Cemetery.

SECTION 2. As a first step in expediting the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery, the City Council of the City of Irvine does hereby direct the City Manager to return to the City Council within 30 days with a demolition, cleanup and site clearance plan for the ARDA site, including a start-date for on-site demolition to commence on or before April 1, 2021.

SECTION 3. The City-incurred costs to implement the demolition, cleanup and site clearance plan for the ARDA site, estimated at \$5 million, shall be paid from the City's Great Park Development Funds — to be reimbursed by the State as part of the negotiated ARDA site acquisition and transfer agreements that will establish the state-owned, state-funded Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery, scheduled to become fully operational by Veterans Day, November 11, 2023.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Irvine at a regular meeting held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
INTERIM CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF ORANGE ) SS  
CITY OF IRVINE )

I, CARL PETERSEN, Interim City Clerk of the City of Irvine, HEREBY DO CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Irvine held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS:  
NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS:  
ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS:  
ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS:

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INTERIM CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF IRVINE