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May 16, 2019

TO: Council Member Luis Chavez, District 5  
Fresno City Council

**RE: Request of City's Partnership in the Development and Filing of a \$4.9 million Proposition 68 Park Grant Application and a \$400,000 Cal-Fire Grant Application.**

The Southeast Fresno Community Economic Development Association, Inc (SEFCEDA) along with more than 25 organizations that include community groups, soccer leagues and clubs, small businesses, medical professionals, educational institutions, and thousands of Fresno region residents, students and senior citizens would like to remind you that the shortage of parks, green space and recreational facilities in the Southern neighborhoods of our City continues to be an acute problem that adversely impacts quality of life, health, air quality conditions, respiratory illnesses, and higher mortality rates of Fresno region residents.

Proposition 68 provides a unique opportunity to address the shortage of parks and recreation facilities we have in South Fresno and the need to improve quality of life in our City and promote a cleaner and more healthy environment. In other California cities park programs combined with law enforcement activities have a positive impact in the reduction of crime. Business attraction programs can also be improved for cities that have a reputation of making the funding of parks a high priority. Soccer tournaments and events proposed by SEFCEDA can pay for the cost and maintenance of this new park project and have a positive impact on the local economy as this project will attract visitors from all parts of the State.

As you know, the application process for the allocation of California Proposition 68 funds in the amount of \$650 million statewide is now open for the first of two possible rounds. The maximum amount per project is \$8.5 million. SEFCEDA would like to partner with the City of Fresno in the filing of a \$4.9 million Proposition 68 application to fund improvements of phase I of the new regional park and soccer complex at 2155 S. Peach Avenue for the use of about 75% of this 49-acre City-owned park site. Additional funding for the planting of trees in the amount of \$400,000 will also be requested from Cal-Fire.

Project Scope. The proposed new Southeast Fresno Regional Park and Soccer Complex includes two main components:

Northern 18.5-acre Parcel. Phase I improvements of this project will include the completion of a new park on this entire parcel with the emphasis on outdoor recreation. Components of this park will include a veterans memorial garden, an open space playground area, picnic areas, children playground areas, a dog park, lots of new trees, a woodland component, all-purpose trails, outdoor courts for futsal, basketball, volleyball/Katar, a concession stand, restrooms, and parking. Only essential office space, storage and maintenance space will be provided during this phase. An existing community garden (4-5 acres) already in operation will continue. Funding for a community center and multipurpose hall, locker rooms and showers and a new softball field will be sought from additional future funding sources.

Southern 30.5-Acre Parcel. Approximately one half of the western part of this parcel will be used for the construction of four regulation size soccer fields with synthetic grass floodlit convertible to several smaller size fields for youth soccer activities. A concession stand, along with parking and restroom facilities and landscaped areas will be included during this Phase I. About one half of the eastern part will remain vacant for future soccer sport facilities additions and development. An Indoor futsal facility with locker rooms and showers and a social area will be added at a future phase.

Construction Cost. We believe the \$5.3 Million to be generated by these two state grant funding opportunities in combination with other resources will adequately fund the essential components of Phase I of this project. However, prior to the submittal of these grant applications to State agencies the project scope and design will be more refined by the Applicant and construction cost estimates will be more detailed for each component and the scope of the project will be revised as required to meet funding resources available to fund all construction related expenses. Better information as to the funding resources available for the construction of Phase I will also be more refined based on the following factors:

SEFCEDA as an IRS 501c3 nonprofit corporation, with the help of other community partners, will continue to help raise funds to help fund this and other construction costs of a new park. Other funding sources can come from various public and private grant sources, generate volunteer labor, pro-bono professional services and the donation of materials and supplies from local businesses. This model has been successfully implemented in other communities like Marysville and Lemoore, California.

Additionally, other funding opportunities can be generated from City of Fresno sources proposed by SEFCEDA for your Council's consideration. In addition to joining SEFCEDA in the

filing of a Proposition 68 and Cal-Fire grant opportunities, your Council may also consider to allocate additional funding for the construction of this project from the following sources: 1) Revenues received from park development fees that have been collected by the City from home builders in Southeast Fresno for many years, 2) Allocate a portion of \$1.3 million received by the City from insurance proceeds when a building burned on this park site. (Those funds were not used to fund improvements on that site as required by an agreement with the National Park Service and should be returned to that project ), 3) Waive or reduce the cost of City plan check or inspection fees for this project, 4) Assume City responsibility for all off-site improvements in the upcoming widening of Peach Avenue, including the railroad pedestrian crossing, cost of landscaping on the City's right of way, and City water and drainage connections to this site. 5) Ask City staff to review these grant applications once completed by SEFCEDA, 6) Ask City staff to provide financial services in the implementation of this project as part of the park related to grant administration and project cash-flow requirements and seek reimbursement of all costs as permitted by the grant sources.

Maintenance and Operations Cost. In order to generate the new funding necessary to pay for the maintenance and operations costs of this new regional park and soccer complex, SEFCEDA is proposing a strong soccer component on this

project with the inclusion of four outdoor Futsal soccer courts on the Northern parcel and four soccer regulation fields on the Southern parcel. (Flood light will be included) Even with the regional park and soccer components providing free access to the public at specified locations and times when they open, it has been preliminarily estimated that the soccer component with tournaments, leagues and other activities like a soccer academy can generate an annual revenue of \$420,000 once it has been established and be fully operational. It is estimated that this new park revenue would be adequate to pay for the annual maintenance and operations costs also estimated to be \$420,000.

The availability of other funding mechanisms to pay for the cost of parks are also documented on the Fresno Parks Master Plan adopted by your Council on Dec. 14, 2017, (pages 278-284). Other options include: Catering permits and services, community and parks foundation, corporate and personal lead giving, dedicated millage, developer contributions to parks and trails, donations, friends association, park impact fee, park open space and trail bond issue, recreation services fees, sales tax, and user fees and more. The proposed partnership for the development and maintenance of City parks by community nonprofit organizations is also included in your Parks Master Plan.

Since February, 2018 under the City of Fresno Adopt-A-Park Program, SEFCEDA in partnership with many community-based organizations, churches, soccer leagues and educational institutions has committed to clean up this site and plant 120 trees and 60,000 sq. ft. of turf. Clean up work has been completed by more than 500 volunteers and design work review of plans detailing the layout of this work is being finalized by City staff. A maintenance agreement with SEFCEDA to maintain this project's work for the next three years is also being finalized. This work is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2019.

We believe the revenue generated by the Soccer Component can ultimately help pay for all the ongoing maintenance and operations cost of this project, however, some City participation in the funding of these project's initial costs may be necessary initially until the soccer complex becomes fully operational .

#### SEFCEDA'S REQUEST:

In order to meet the Proposition 68 filing deadline of August 5, 2019, we ask the Fresno City Council direct City staff to add this project to the list of parks projects prepared by City staff to be included in the Proposition 68 application and Cal-Fire grant process and that City staff be directed to start working with

SEFCEDA in the preparation of this application and all the required documents for this process.

Your Council may also direct staff to negotiate a Maintenance and Operations Agreement with SEFCEDA for a 10-year period with the option to expand to 20 years. Your Council may authorize your City Manager to sign the final applications and other required documents prior to their submittal to State agencies.

California State University, Fresno professor Keith Woodcock is ready to assist in the start of the environmental reviews and public input. Proposition 68 regulations require that at least five public information meetings be held at various locations near the project site. These meetings will be coordinated with City staff.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with the City of Fresno to improve quality of life in our City. Proposition 68 and Cal-Fire are two park funding opportunities we do not want to miss because they will help expand the availability of green space and recreational facilities to improve quality of life and environmental conditions in our City.



Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jose Leon Barraza". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and slightly larger than the rest of the letters.

Jose Leon Barraza, CEO  
SEFCEDA, Inc.

cc: Mayor Lee Brand  
Wilma Quan-Schechter, City Manager