



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT  
FREEWAY DIRECTIONAL  
SIGNAGE

**FROM:** Councilmember Kansen Chu  
**DATE:** July 13, 2012

**APPROVED:**

**DATE:**

7/13/12

## RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution in support of freeway directional signage on US 101 and Interstate 280 directing commuters to Little Saigon Business District on Story Road.

## BACKGROUND:

In November 2007, the San José City Council adopted a resolution recognizing the area on both sides of Story Road, between Senter Road and Highway 101, as a Vietnamese retail destination area and selected a name designating the area. In March of 2008, the Council approved the installation of signage bearing the name "Little Saigon" and the permanent "Welcome to Little Saigon" sign was installed in May 2011.

## ANALYSIS:

California Streets and Highway Code section 101.12 allows Caltrans to place signage on state highways directing motorists to communities within the geographical area of a city, county, or city and county, provided certain requirements are met. Among these requirements are that the general public and media commonly recognize and support the name of the community. To date, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, Assemblymember Nora Campos, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, the Vietnamese American Community of Northern California (VAC-NORCAL), the Little Saigon Foundation, and numerous leaders within San José's Vietnamese community have expressed their support for freeway directional signage to the Little Saigon Business District.

In order for this process to move forward, the City of San José must take action to adopt a formal resolution that does each of the following: 1) designates the name of the community to be placed on the directional signs; 2) defines the geographical boundaries of the community; and 3) requests that Caltrans post signs on state highways.

San José has the largest Vietnamese American population in any city in the world. They have fought long and hard for the remembrance of their homeland in the City of San José through the name Little Saigon. The installation of the Little Saigon signs along State Highway Route 101 at the Story Road interchange would serve to draw in potential customers for the businesses located in this district and to help generate additional sales tax dollars. In addition, the signage will be a visible testament to the identity and solidarity of the Vietnamese American community in San José.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE  
IN SUPPORT OF FREEWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

**WHEREAS**, over the past 30 years the City of San José has become home to a population of over 130,000 residents of Vietnamese heritage who have made significant and historic contributions to the City; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 5, 2007, the San José City Council directed staff to conduct community outreach on the designation of Story Road, between Senter Road and State Highway 101, as a Vietnamese Business District; and

**WHEREAS**, two community meetings were held to solicit input on the proposed designation, and the vast majority of those providing comments elected to have the name of the business district include a reference to "Saigon," as well as be associated with adjectives such as "New" or "Little"; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 20, 2007, the Council adopted Resolution 74127, recognizing the area on both sides of Story Road, between Senter Road and State Highway Route 101, as a Vietnamese retail destination area and selected a culturally unique and historically significant name, the "Saigon Business District," to identify the area; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 4, 2008, after thousands of persons in the community expressed their views on the name selected for the business district, the Council adopted Resolution No. 74270, rescinding Resolution No. 74127 and finding that the Council recognized "the widespread support for the name 'Little Saigon' in the broader Vietnamese community" for the business district; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 25, 2008, the Council adopted a Resolution amending Council Policy 9-3, to streamline the process for a private group to fund Community Signs where the Council had previously made an explicit finding that a particular name had "widespread support"; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 25, 2008, based on the March 4, 2008 Council finding that the name "Little Saigon" received widespread support in the broader Vietnamese community and based on the influence of the Vietnamese community in this area of the County, the Council approved the installation of community identification trailblazing signage bearing the name "Little Saigon" along Story Road between State Highway Route 101 and Senter Road; and

**WHEREAS**, the area known as Little Saigon is located within the geographic boundary of the City of San José, the County of Santa Clara, and is within three miles of a state highway exit; and

**WHEREAS**, the general public and the media commonly recognize the area of Story Road between Senter Road and Highway 101 as Little Saigon; and

**WHEREAS**, Little Saigon is one of the largest Vietnamese retail areas in the world for the Vietnamese living overseas; and

**WHEREAS**, Little Saigon is a place where all residents of all backgrounds and ethnicities enjoy a variety of Vietnamese food, learn about Vietnamese heritage and culture, and visit the diverse Vietnamese shops; and

**WHEREAS**, Little Saigon has provided a safe and healthy environment for community gatherings such as Vietnamese New Year Festivals, candlelight vigils, and fundraising to support disaster victims; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 31, 2011, the City of San José issued to the Vietnamese American Community of Northern California a Community Identification Sign Permit File No. CIS 09-001 to construct and maintain a Little Saigon community identification sign within the median island of Story Road between McLaughlin Avenue and Via Ferrari near Highway 101; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 28, 2011, the City of San José entered into a recorded agreement with the Vietnamese American Community of Northern California (VACNORCAL) for the purpose of assigning responsibility to VACNORCAL for maintenance of Little Saigon signage erected pursuant to the VACNORCAL Community Identification Sign Permit File No. CIS 09-001; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 21, 2011; the permanent Welcome to Little Saigon monument sign near Highway 101 at Story Road was completed and unveiled at a celebration held by the Vietnamese American community along with state and local elected officials; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Section 101.12 of the Streets and Highways Code it is appropriate to request that Caltrans designate Little Saigon directional signage on the State Highway Route 101 at the Story Road interchange to inform the public of the proximity of this area rich in cultural heritage and history; and

**WHEREAS**, all public documents and actions referenced herewith have been provided by the State Department of Transportation, and are incorporated by reference as part of this resolution;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of San José that the City recognizes the Little Saigon area along Story Road, between Highway 101 and Senter Road as a place of interest for tourists and residents in the City of San José and State of California;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of San José requests that the Department of Transportation of the State of California post Little Saigon directional signage that is consistent with the signage requirements for the state highway system at the interchange of State Highway Route 101 at Story Road in the City of San José; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of San José requests the Department of Transportation for the State of California determine the cost of appropriate signs, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, showing the special designation, and, upon receiving sufficient funds to cover the cost from non-state sources, to post those signs.

June 20, 2012

Mr. Bijan Sartipi  
Caltrans District 4  
111 Grand Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Subject: "Little Saigon" Directional Signage**

Dear Mr. Sartipi,

This is to clarify the City's perspectives on the current request to Caltrans from a community group to install "Little Saigon" directional signs along State Route 101 to a neighborhood district in the vicinity of Story Road, west of Route 101.

On March 4, 2008, the San Jose City Council adopted a resolution (No. 74270) which recognized "widespread support for the name Little Saigon in the broader Vietnamese-American community" and determined that "it is up to the local members of any future business district to decide what to call their district".

At the present time, a "Welcome to Little Saigon" gateway monument and "Little Saigon" banners are in place along Story Road. These community identification signs were privately funded by community members, permitted by the City, and are authorized by City Council Policy 9-3 on Community Identification and Wayfinding.

We acknowledge the authority of Caltrans to decide on the placement of directional signage on State Highways for "culturally unique" communities (Streets and Highways Code, Section 101.12). We are not opposed to the request for placing "Little Saigon" signs along Route 101.

Sincerely



Hans F. Larsen  
Director of Transportation