



City of Arts & Innovation

# City Council Memorandum

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2020**

**FROM: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF NEW RIVERSIDE CITY FLAG DESIGNS AND  
RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT NEW RIVERSIDE  
CITY FLAG**

**ISSUE:**

The flag for the City of Riverside has not been updated since 1967 to reflect the growth, values and changes in Riverside throughout the years.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receive flag designs from the Economic Development, Placemaking, and Branding/ Marketing Committee and choose one design to adopt as the new Riverside City Flag.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

The Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee met on November 19, 2020, with Chair Fierro, Vice Chair Hemenway and Member Edwards present, to review flag designs to forward to the City Council for consideration of as new Riverside City Flag. Following discussion, the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee voted unanimously to recommend one design unanimously, with two alternatives by consensus, to be considered by the City Council for adoption.

**BACKGROUND:**

Our current Riverside flag was designed by Charles L. Bridges, chairman of the Mayor's Conference on Civic Beauty, and was adopted by City Council on January 17, 1967 by recommendation from the Riverside Chamber of Commerce. Riverside's flag is divided horizontally, gold over blue, with the center containing the City's logo, a bell and rain cross. In 2004, the North American Vexillological Association, NAVA, conducted by The American City Flag Survey, where Riverside's flag ranked 61st out of 150 flags.

A TED talk "*Why City Flags May Be the Worst-designed Thing You've Never Noticed*" by Roman Mars reveals the 5 basic principles of flag design for cities, most of which were the criteria of a competition held by Riverside Unified School District for all Riverside students including Alvord Unified, earlier this year. RUSD's artistic contest centered around redesigning Riverside's flag and was open to all students in the City of Riverside from TK-12<sup>th</sup> grade, with 3 categories for

submissions: Elementary (TK-6th), Middle (7-8), High (9-12). The contest yielded many great redesigns for Riverside’s flag, but more importantly it offered insight from our students into the elements our city flag should incorporate as a representation of Riverside. The summarized student design input breaks down what each age group incorporated, such as the rain cross, specific colorings, simple designs with minimal design elements, and text. (Attachment 2)

On September 17, 2020, the Economic Development, Placemaking, and Branding/Marketing Committee heard a presentation from Mayor Bailey and reviewed flag redesigns from Riverside students and local graphic designer David Lauruhn. The Committee voted to continue the discussion with further designs to be developed by Mr. Lauruhn with input from the committee members and students of Riverside.

On November 19, 2020, the Economic Development, Placemaking, and Branding/Marketing Committee considered 12 designs from graphic designer David Lauruhn. The Committee recommended one design unanimously, with two alternatives by consensus, to be considered by the City Council for adoption.

**DISCUSSION:**

A flag is a unifying symbol which instills pride into its residents while representing a city’s past, present, and future. Riverside’s history is rich with many symbols, much like the bell and rain cross, which are taken from “the world-famous collection of the Mission Inn.” The bell recalls the many missions of the Spanish missionaries along El Camino Real in early California, and the rain cross recalls the Native Americans who were the first to live in what is today Riverside. The students of Riverside have highlighted these symbols in their reimagining of Riverside’s flag and reignited the interest in our community to redesign our flag to reflect our city of arts, innovation, and inclusivity.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is unknown at this time.

Prepared by: Edward Coronado, Policy and Programs Coordinator, Office of the Mayor  
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Concurs with:

  
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William R. Bailey, III  
Mayor

  
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STEVE HEMENWAY, Vice Chair  
Economic Development, Placemaking  
and Branding/Marketing Committee

- Attachments: 1. Presentation  
2. Student Design Collective Input Data