

Anthony Tordillos  
poised for runoff  
in San Jose special  
election  
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Feds cut millions  
in potential funding  
for City of San Jose  
community projects  
**SEE PAGE 10**



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MAY 16 - MAY 29, 2025 ■ VOL. 42, NO. 11

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## Two important questions answered by students at Evergreen School District's Spring Speech Contest

By William Bellou  
Publisher

Who is someone that you admire? How can individual actions inspire change?

These two questions were answered by more than 150 students from the Evergreen School District (EESD) at their 2025 Spring Speech Contest on May 3rd.

EESD staff, teachers, and special guests gathered for this inspiring event at JFS Elementary School. Among the attendees were Councilmember Domingo Candelas and many honored guests, including Bernadette Marcias. We also enjoyed a fantastic performance by the JFS Musical Jaguars under the direction of Dr. Sidharth

See **SPEECH**, page 4

## US Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum killed in action in 1944 laid to rest with full military honors

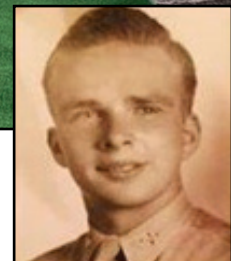
Community turns out for funeral at  
Oak Hill Memorial Park

By William Bellou  
Publisher

The community, many carrying flags, paid their respects during the funeral for United States Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum on Saturday, May 3 at Oak Hill Memorial Park.



Robert T. McCollum was honored among family, friends and officials, including the divers who found McCollum's remains in the Baltic Sea near Denmark at Chapel of the Roses at Oak Hill Memorial Park followed by a public burial to be near his parents and sister.



The fallen soldier's remains were laid to rest at Oak Hill Memorial Park to be near his parents and sister with full military honors. The event included a Rifle Volley by the American Legion Post #419, bagpipes were played, including the song Amazing Grace by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Pipe Band and a heartwarming and amazing dove release was provided by GoDoves.com.

The procession from the Chapel of Roses to the burial site was escorted by the Patriot Guard Riders and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA).

U.S. Army Chaplain Jay Sapaen Watan officiated at McCollum's funeral, leading hundreds of people in the reading of the Lord's Prayer.

### History

McCollum was killed in action on June 20, See **McCOLLUM**, page 7

## City proposes \$5.57 billion budget following shortfall

By William Bellou  
Publisher

While the City of San Jose faces some future fiscal challenges, San Jose is proposing a \$5.57 billion budget for 2026 amid impacted city services and a short-staffed workforce.

The City's shortfall for next year is due to lagging sales tax revenue and increased costs.

The most recent projection improved slightly to \$35.6 million and the city filled the gap by again redirecting Measure E dollars from affordable housing projects to interim homelessness solutions.

"We are proud to deliver the 2025-



26 proposed operating budget, which I believe is a very fiscally responsible and balanced budget

and meets the important objectives of the City Council while also structurally aligning the general fund

with minimal community or employee impacts," said City Manager Jennifer Maguire.

At that time, they could not guarantee avoiding layoffs while prioritizing investments in reducing unsheltered homelessness, improving safety and cleanliness, growing the economy and building more housing.

Deferred projects include the full activation of Fire Station 32 and the South San Jose police substation, but community services such as library hours, park maintenance, community centers and recreational programming or senior nutrition are not expected to be cut.

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Symphony San Jose presents **ESPAÑA** June 7-8 Performance to feature Spanish conductor Jose Luis Gomez and Spanish guitarist Rafael Aguirre

**By William Bellou**  
*Publisher*

Pre-concert events will be held one hour before the performance: Spanish tapas and flamenco dance show on Saturday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, June 8 at 1:30 p.m.

The season closes with España — a musical trip through Spain led by Spanish conductor Jose Luis Gomez and featuring Gabriela Lena Frank's Escaramuza, and Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez performed by Spanish guitarist Rafael Aguirre.

España is Rodrigo's best-known work, and it has cemented his reputation as one of Spain's most significant composers. We'll also view the Iberian Peninsula through the lens of two "visiting" composers, Ravel (France) and Rimsky-Korsakov (Russia) and hear how each portrayed Spanish music through their distinct writing styles.

Pre-concert festivities occur one hour prior to the concert.

Join Symphony San Jose for an unforgettable pre-concert experience. Indulge in delicious Spanish tapas while enjoying a mesmerizing flamenco dance show. Sip on refreshing sangria and immerse yourself in the vibrant and passionate atmosphere of Spain.

California Theatre, 345 South First Street, downtown San Jose.

Convenient, inexpensive parking is available at a city-owned garage one-and-a-half blocks from the theater at San Carlos Street with entrances on Second and Third streets.

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Website: [www.symphonysan-jose.org](http://www.symphonysan-jose.org)  
Email: [jmeyers@symphonysan-jose.org](mailto:jmeyers@symphonysan-jose.org)

Walk-Up Box Office: 325 South First Street, San Jose, 95113. Located between San Carlos and San Salvador Street next to the California Theatre. Ticket Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 10am to 5pm.



Conductor: **Jose Luis Gomez**



**ARTISTS**  
Conductor: Jose Luis Gomez  
Rafael Aguirre, guitar

**THE PROGRAM:**  
Gabriela Lena Frank: Escaramuza  
Joaquín Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez

Maurice Ravel: Rapsodie Espagnole  
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnole  
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[www.symphonysanjose.org](http://www.symphonysanjose.org).

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**Speech**

*Continued from page 1*

Dalmia Ph. D and Mrs. Bobbi Ouellette.

The event was designed to be a fun-filled experience for the entire family. In addition to watching amazing speeches, families also enjoyed arts and crafts tables, interactive games, snacks, and photo op stations. Additionally, Silver Creek Academy provided awards, free books, commemorative T-shirts, and goodie bags to all who participated.

"We enjoyed the incredible speeches all the students delivered at the event! It was truly impressive to witness such growth in the students' skills and overall confidence. We are excited to continue our public speaking and debate program in partnership with the Evergreen School District," said Reem Coniglio, general manager of Silver Creek Academy.



- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Grade 1 Division</b> | <b>2nd Place</b>                 |
| <b>1st Place</b>        | Eliza George                     |
| Zakariya Ali            | <b>3rd Place</b>                 |
| <b>2nd Place</b>        | Rayyan Ameen                     |
| Sophia Ng               |                                  |
| <b>3rd Place</b>        |                                  |
| Anmay Garg              |                                  |
|                         | <b>Grade 5 Division</b>          |
|                         | <b>1st Place</b>                 |
|                         | Miraya Madhav                    |
|                         | <b>2nd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Anvita Ramprasad                 |
|                         | <b>3rd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Tanya Madan                      |
|                         | <b>Grade 6 Division</b>          |
|                         | <b>1st Place</b>                 |
|                         | John Boshra                      |
|                         | <b>2nd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Thien T. Dinh                    |
|                         | <b>3rd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Kian Jhaveri                     |
|                         | <b>Grades 7 &amp; 8 Division</b> |
|                         | <b>1st Place</b>                 |
|                         | Simran Gupta                     |
|                         | <b>2nd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Navya K.                         |
|                         | <b>3rd Place</b>                 |
|                         | Jaylyn Nguyen                    |



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To request exemption, please submit the Online Exemption Form and upload the required documents through our District website at [www.eesd.org](http://www.eesd.org). Submissions must be received no later than June 30, 2025

If you are unable to access the online link to submit the form online or for additional information, please contact Casey Wink – [cwink@eesd.org](mailto:cwink@eesd.org)  
Patty Maciel [mmaciel@eesd.org](mailto:mmaciel@eesd.org)

*Those who have previously been granted an exemption from the Measure EE Parcel Tax, their exemption will continue to be automatically renewed each year as long as you remain eligible for the exemption.*

**Anthony Tordillos poised for runoff in San Jose special election**

By Brandon Pho  
*San José Spotlight*

San Jose Planning Commission Chair Anthony Tordillos says he’s won second place in the District 3 City Council special election and will head to the June 24 runoff.

A one-day recount Thursday appears to have affirmed Tordillos’ six-vote lead for second place over Matthew Quevedo, deputy chief of staff for Mayor Matt Mahan. Official election results will be certified Monday, and they could send Tordillos to face off against Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley Executive Director Gabby Chavez-Lopez, who placed first in the special election. A total of 9,105 ballots were cast.

“While this has been a long process, with many twists and turns, I am very excited that our campaign will advance to the June 24th run-off election. I want to thank my team, donors, and the volunteers who all made this possible,” Tordillos said in a statement claiming victory. “As we prepare for the next chapter of this campaign, I’d also like to thank Matthew Quevedo, Irene Smith, Adam Duran, Tyrone Wade, and Phillip Dolan for all stepping up and volunteering to serve our community in this turbulent time.”

When reached for comment, Tordillos referred this news organization to his statement.

Quevedo said while the margin is small, the result is “clear.”



San Jose Planning Commission Chair **Anthony Tordillos** is claiming a second-place victory in the District 3 City Council race. Photo courtesy of candidate.

“We are never going to stop fighting for the common-sense policies that will help end the era of street homelessness, create affordable housing where it makes the most sense, bring safe and clean streets to every neighborhood and make San Jose more small-business friendly so more families have a path to economic security,” Quevedo told San José Spotlight.

The results are a discouraging sign for Mahan, who put the full force of his political machine behind Quevedo — who raised the most campaign cash. Tordillos and Chavez-Lopez are both backed by Mahan’s critics in the Santa Clara County Democratic Party.

It’s the fourth San Jose race to trigger a recount in eight years — highlighting the unique political environment around the nation’s tech capital, which has become a microcosm for American politics in the digital age and heated issues such as homelessness and affordable housing.



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Times **Local News**

The burial site at Oak Hill Memorial Park for 2nd Lieutenant Robert T. McCollum who died when his B-24J Liberator plane crashed into the Baltic Sea on June 20, 1944, due to a mid-air collision, was laid to rest May 3.

## McCollum

*Continued from page 1*

1944, where he was serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces with the 565th Bombardment Squadron, 389th Bombardment Group.

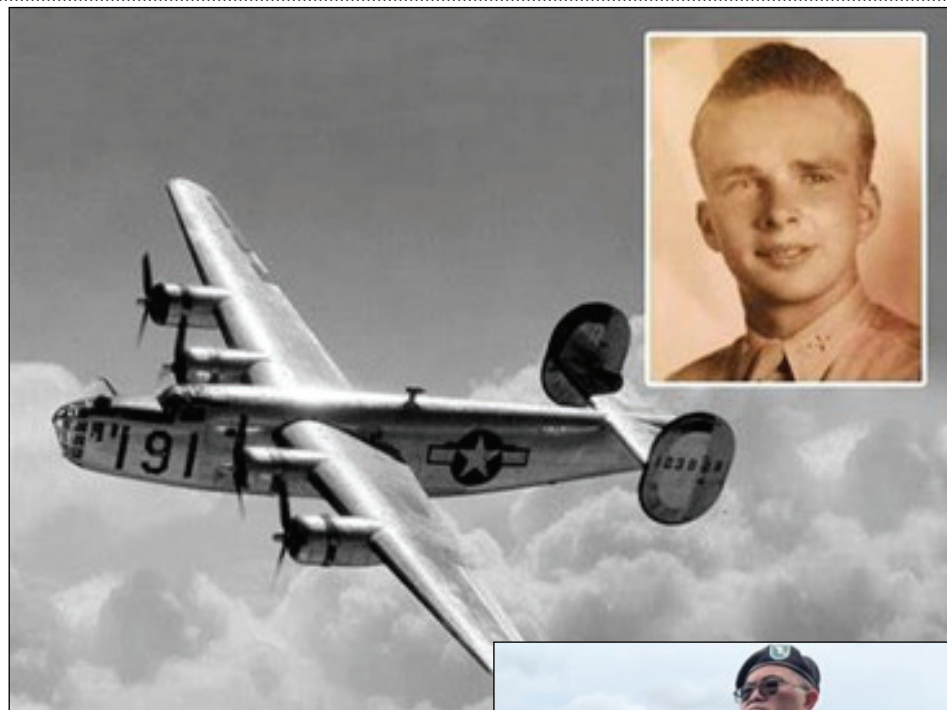
On June 20, 1944, he was the bombardier aboard a B-24J Liberator (serial number 42-100351) during a bombing mission targeting enemy facilities in Politz, Germany.

While flying over the Baltic Sea near Langeland Island, Denmark, McCollum's aircraft collided with another B-24 in the formation and spiraled into the sea. Of the ten crew members on board, two survived, were captured, and later returned to U.S. custody. The remaining eight, including Lt.

McCollum, were declared missing in action.

After several unsuccessful searches, in May of 1950, McCollum's family was notified that Robert was deemed non-recoverable.

In 2019, Danish divers discovered a WWII-era aircraft wreck in the area where Lt. McCollum's plane was lost. After the site was cleared of unexploded ordnance, teams from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the University of Delaware, and the Royal Danish Navy conducted an underwater survey. Human remains and other significant evidence were recovered, ultimately leading to the identification of Lt. McCollum. There was an overwhelming and undeniable abundance of evidence.



A rosette has been placed by Robert's name at "The Walls of the Missing" Memorial in Cambridge, England to show that he has been accounted for.

Recovery operations continue for the remaining crew of airmen lost at sea on McCollum's plane.

Media may request video footage of the funeral and planeside honors by calling Laura Herzog at 714-904-0253 or e-mailing – [laura@honoringourfallen.org](mailto:laura@honoringourfallen.org).

At right: U.S. Army Chaplain **Jay Sapaen Watan** officiated at McCollum's funeral, leading hundreds of people in the reading of the Lord's Prayer.



### Helpful Tips:

- Know how to download your camera footage
- When mounting cameras, please be aware of places where people may have a reasonable expectation of privacy (examples: their backyard or interior of their home)
- Focus and mount your video on key points of entry or concern
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- Keep batteries charged in your cameras.
- Consider lighting around your cameras.

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Times **Local News**

## Foreign exchange student program is seeking host families for the upcoming school year

By Sean Eastwood  
*Times staff writer*

Families across the U.S. have a unique opportunity to experience a new culture right in their own homes.

World Heritage International Student Exchange Programs, a non-profit public benefit organization, is currently seeking warm and welcoming host families to open their homes to international exchange students for the upcoming school year.

Hosting an exchange student is a life-changing experience for families that fosters cultural understanding, builds lifelong friendships, while enriching local communities. Students, aged 15-18 years, come from over 60 countries around the world, including France, Japan, Italy, Denmark, Australia, Spain and many more.

The students are carefully selected based on their academic performance, English proficiency, and personal character, and they are eager to become part of an American family, attend a local high school, and share their own traditions.

During their stay, World Heritage exchange students immerse themselves in American culture by living with and becoming part of a volunteer host family while attending a local high school. This experience allows



them to improve their English skills, form lifelong friendships, and gain a deeper understanding of American life and values. In return, host families and communities benefit from the unique perspectives and cultural exchange that these students bring.

"Being a host family isn't just about providing a place to stay; it's about making a student from another country part of the family," says Debra Garbon, World Heritage National Director. "Many host families find that the experience is just as rewarding for them as it is for the student. The bonds formed often last a lifetime." "Exchange students bring energy, curiosity, and fresh perspectives to their host families and communities. They attend local schools, participate in activities, and become a real family member."

Host families provide a safe and supportive home, meals, and encouragement, while students come with their own spending money and health insurance, ensuring that hosting is a rewarding and enriching experience without financial burden.

Anyone with a warm and welcoming home can host an exchange student! Host families come in many forms, including married couples (with or without children), single parents, young professionals, empty-nesters, same-sex couples, and retirees.

ASSE also offers qualified American students the opportunity to learn another language and culture by

spending a school year, semester or a summer with a host family in another country.

Families interested in hosting an exchange student or exploring study abroad opportunities are encouraged to learn more and apply by visiting [www.host.world-heritage.org](http://www.host.world-heritage.org) or contacting Debra Garbon at (800) 888-9040 or [info@worldheritage.org](mailto:info@worldheritage.org).

## VTA offers grants to support transit-oriented communities

For the second year, more than \$750,000 in funding is available to community organizations working to help create vibrant, equitable, and walkable neighborhoods near public transit, known as Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC).

Throughout May, VTA is offering special workshops to help applicants pursue the

funding.

VTA's 2025 Transit-Oriented Communities Grant Program is seeking proposals from public agencies, charities, universities, cultural institutions, neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, and others to create more connected communities across Santa Clara County.

Groups eligible to receive grants are doing work that includes advancing policies to encourage transit ridership; support to expand new affordable housing; creating public awareness campaigns and transit-focused educational activities; and introducing art and culture projects that enhance transit connectivity and community culture and identity.

Amie Aston is the Executive Director of Palo Alto Forward, a 2024 TOC grant recipient.

"Well-resourced communities like ours need to do our part to alleviate the housing shortage, create more equitable neighborhoods, and support transit. This grant was essential in fostering an awareness of all ways we can improve the situation locally," said Aston. See how Palo Alto Forward is putting their 2024 grant to use.

Projects must be located within a half mile of an existing or planned VTA light rail station, transit center, or regional commuter rail station (Caltrain, ACE, or Capitol Corridor).

More information is available on VTA's virtual and in-person workshops throughout May to walk applicants through the program guidelines and application process.





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Times **Local News**

# Goodwill of Silicon Valley opens first outlet store

*New Tully Road location offers bulk shopping at deep discounts*

By William Bellou  
Publisher

Goodwill of Silicon Valley celebrated the grand opening of its first Goodwill Outlet store located on Tully Rd. in San Jose.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony included remarks from Goodwill of Silicon Valley CEO Christopher Baker, District 7 Councilmember Bien Doan, and the Tully Road-Eastridge Business Association (TREBA) Board Chair Christina Bui.

The launch welcomed hundreds of eager shoppers to the new Tully Road location, which offers bulk shopping at deeply discounted prices.

"Outlet stores are proving to be a wise investment for Goodwill organizations across the country, and, in turn, a wise investment for communities," said Baker. "By donating and shopping, customers help fund vital programs like job training, reentry support, and

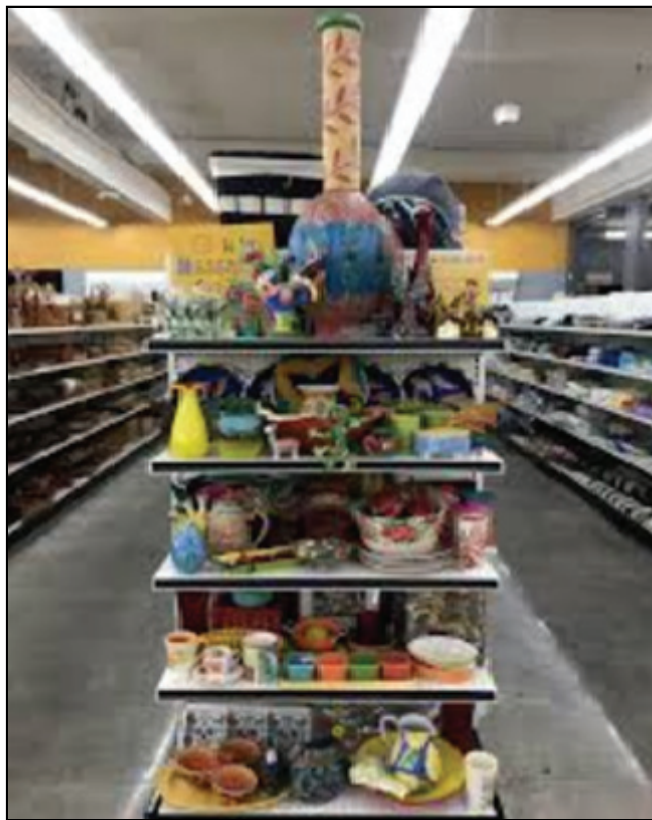
housing assistance, empowering individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and easing the burden on public resources. Patronizing the outlet store is an easy way to give back, reduce landfill waste, and save taxpayer dollars."

The 25,000-square-foot store at 1685 Tully Road is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Goodwill Outlet stores offer deeply discounted secondhand items, with most merchandise sold by the pound or at low per-item prices. Bargain hunters can browse large bins organized by category that are refreshed hourly, uncovering a rotating selection of clothing and textiles, housewares, books, electronics, glassware, toys and furniture.

Goodwill of Silicon Valley's network of donation centers and retail stores fund essential job training, inmate-reentry programs, and employment opportunities for those in need while also reducing waste in the region. Every donation and purchase directly supports workforce development for individuals facing employment barriers – including veterans, those experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, and the formerly incarcerated – helping them build skills, secure meaningful jobs, and achieve economic independence.

"The store will help train many people, will help many community programs and that's what makes a difference in our community," said Councilmember Doan at the ribbon-



cutting ceremony. "Thank you so much to Goodwill, thank you to their staff and thank you to our community members for supporting."

Added TREBA Board Chair Bui: "Goodwill of Silicon Valley's mission for providing job training, workplace development and economic opportunity aligns with our vision for our Tully Road East-Ridge Business Association. It's also a hub for hope, empowerment

and community building."

Goodwill Outlet stores have gained popularity nationally among resellers on platforms like Amazon, eBay, Poshmark, Etsy, and Bonanza. The new store is one of 142 Goodwill Outlet stores nationally and 18 in California. Unlike traditional Goodwill thrift shops, outlets feature large bins filled with donated items that either didn't make it to store shelves or did not sell. At the Goodwill of Silicon Valley Outlet, furniture, bicycles, and oversized items will be priced individually at steep discounts, with a dedicated furniture section offering even more great finds.

Outlet stores typically have a lively, competitive atmosphere, with shoppers sorting through bins to uncover hidden gems. The store will have shopping carts, but there is a limited supply.

"As bargain hunters, resellers, and thrifting enthusiasts know, outlet shopping is a unique experience – fast-paced, ever-changing, and full of surprises," said Jessica Castello, Vice President of Retail at Goodwill of Silicon Valley. "Goodwill aims to make it a true shopping adventure where every minute counts. With patience and a keen eye, shoppers can uncover high-value treasures for just pennies."

For more information, please visit [www.goodwillsv.org](http://www.goodwillsv.org).

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**Evergreen Times**

# Feds cut millions for San Jose community projects

By Vicente Vera  
*San José Spotlight*

The federal government has eliminated millions in potential funding meant for community projects in San Jose involving the Alum Rock business corridor, Happy Hollow Zoo and more. Sarah Zárate, director of inter-governmental relations for the city, told councilmembers Tuesday that even though Congressmembers Ro Khanna, Jimmy Panetta and Zoe Lofgren requested \$5.5 million in federal funds — the government’s continuing resolution, signed March 15, to extend spending through the rest of the year failed to include community project money.

There are five projects being deprived of funding: the Alum Rock business corridor improvement projects were counting on \$2 million; Cahalan Park upgrades were getting \$2 million; Yerba Buena Bridge reconstruction had \$1 million in potential funding; Happy Hollow’s power grid was waiting on \$250,000 and Evergreen and East San Jose were on tap for \$250,000 for sideshow and street racing deterrence.

“Without these federal funds, efforts to address these projects and issues like sideshows and street racing may be delayed as we explore alternative funding opportunities,” city spokesperson Demetria Machado told San José Spotlight.

Congressmembers will have the opportunity to request the funding for the following fiscal year, but



**Helen Masamori**, co-chair of the Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association, celebrated a \$100,000 city grant to help beautify East San Jose’s Little Portugal neighborhood. Photo by Vicente Vera.

requests can change based on updated city priorities. Representatives may seek federal funding for up to 15 community projects, which are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

“We’ve already issued over 30 legislative and funding advocacy letters advancing the city’s (2025) priorities, and will continue to do so through the sessions,” Zárate said at the meeting.

Mary Valderrama, chair of the Alum Rock Village Action Committee, said much of the country has been negatively impacted by federal funding cuts, and San Jose needs to stay resilient.

“What’s so disappointing is that East San Jose never gets the love or respect that other parts of the city do,” she told San José Spotlight. “It’s so difficult to get city leaders, not our councilmember, but to get the city departments to pay attention to us — so getting funding would be fantastic.”

City officials said the \$2 million in funding would’ve improved restaurants, streetscapes and revitalized a large commercial building in the historic Mayfair neighborhood. The funds would’ve increased capacity for local small businesses so new jobs and companies can sprout.

According to a May 7, 2024 letter from Lofgren, funding would’ve also helped retain four small businesses, 50 jobs and establish a “sorely needed” community cafe

and food pantry in the area to offer affordable and healthy food options for Mayfair residents.

“Lofgren and Khanna have fought for this community for years, but with only one vote on the City Council (for East San Jose), sometimes there’s nothing to show,” longtime community advocate Danny Garza told San José Spotlight. “A lot of the businesses here don’t own their building. We live paycheck-to-paycheck.”

As the Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association celebrated a \$100,000 grant from the city toward supporting the same business corridor late last year, leaders say the loss of more potential funding is deeply unfortunate.

“Still, the Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association remains committed to working with our partners to support the growth and resilience of the communities we serve,” Helen Masamori, co-chair of the association, told San José Spotlight.

Of the \$2 million in potential funding for Cahalan Park in South San Jose, the now-eliminated money would have gone toward building four to eight new pickleball courts.

The \$1 million in potential funding for the Yerba Buena Bridge reconstruction would have repaired a crossing over Yerba Buena Creek and connect neighborhoods to high-use areas in Evergreen.

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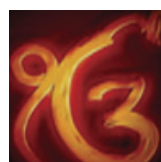


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