Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose

June 25, 2020

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
33 Las Colinas Lane
San Jose, CA 95119

Re: Empire Seven Studios

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to advocate for the application for funding submitted by Empire Seven Studios to collaborate with the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy to create a public art corridor along the Guadalupe River Trail. With our museum's location in the Guadalupe River Park and the trail visible to our audience from Bill's Backyard, the outdoor exploration space funded in part by Measure Q resources, we are very excited about the possibilities that this project offers.

You see, we know Empire Seven Studios and Juan Carlos Araujo very well and have been the beneficiary of his vision for integrating stunning public art into the fabric of San Jose's downtown and into the daily experience of those who live, work and play in the city. The covered walkway adjacent to our facility is home to two murals created by Empire Seven Studios, one commissioned by the Museum of Art and the other by us. These artworks have transformed what was a massive, austere architectural structure into canvases for creative expression that thousands of museum visitors, light rail riders, park goers and neighboring families are enjoying. The scale and quality are astounding, and they serve as a welcoming statement for all.

Having worked with Juan Carlos on these murals and also the annual POW WOW week-long event, we were thrilled to learn about his idea to create an artist-in-residence program that would serve youth and the community year round that would use the natural beauty of the Guadalupe River Park trail as the place for community-developed public art to be implemented. Juan Carlos envisions a process of working with young people to conceptualize ideas, identify themes that are important to them, work alongside of artists and other young people to paint the murals, and then learn the ins and outs of how to maintain them. At Children's Discovery Museum, we believe these in-depth processes with young people, that allow them to share and implement their own ideas, helps them develop critical problem-solving skills and confidence to seize opportunities as they arise.

Empire Seven Studios has an excellent track record of being a strong, dedicated partner and delivering on all expectations. We are confident that Empire Seven's process and end products will make the Guadalupe River Park trail more welcoming to the community at large while investing in the lives of young people.

I am hopeful you will give this application your highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Marilee Jennings

Marilee Jennings
Executive Director

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