

RESOLUTION NO. 21-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVINE, CALIFORNIA, TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK & CEMETERY AT THE CITY-OWNED “ARDA” SITE AT THE GREAT PARK

WHEREAS, beginning in 2014, the people of the City of Irvine have repeatedly and consistently expressed their overwhelming approval and their determination to expedite construction of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery at the City-owned 125-acre ARDA site at the northeastern edge of the Great Park, formerly the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro; and,

WHEREAS, the will of the people of Irvine was manifest most recently with adoption of the Build the Great Park Veterans Cemetery Initiative — an official citizens’ initiative petition signed by 19,790 Irvine residents — which establishes the City-owned ARDA site at the Great Park as the *exclusive* location zoned for the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; and,

WHEREAS, the people of the City of Irvine — through the exercise of their direct power of initiative and through the May 12, 2020 adoption of their Initiative by a 4-1 majority of City Council representatives — have made it clear to the Governor, to CalVet officials, and to members of the State Legislature, that the 125-acre ARDA site at the Great Park referenced in AB 368, a bill signed by the Governor on September 12, 2019, is the exclusive site that is available for creating the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; and that the “Golf Course” site, also referenced in AB 368, is not available for acquisition by the State and cannot be used for cemetery purposes; and,

WHEREAS, the Initiative further provides that certain features be included as part of the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery — preservation of historic structures, such as the iconic aircraft control tower and airplane hangars, and creation of a 2.5-mile perimeter system of trees, trails and memorial gardens that will surround the entire ARDA site and memorialize the history of service and sacrifice in the Asian-Pacific theaters of war (World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and throughout the 45-year Cold War); and,

WHEREAS, preservation and creation of certain features described in the Initiative can be expedited by the City, beginning with City-ordered demolition, cleanup and clearance of the ARDA site; preservation of designated historic features; and creation of the perimeter system of trees, trails and memorial gardens — with costs to be reimbursed by the State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED by the City Council of the City of Irvine, California as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Irvine (i) selects the ARDA site as the exclusive location in the City of Irvine for the development of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery; (ii) will actively and aggressively pursue development of the Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery at the ARDA site; (iii) will not pursue the development of the Southern California Memorial Park & Cemetery at any other location within the City of Irvine; and (iv) will not sell, lease, or otherwise convey any property within the City of Irvine, other than the ARDA site, for use or development of the Southern California Memorial Park & Cemetery.

SECTION 2. As a first step in expediting the Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery, the City Council of the City of Irvine does hereby direct the City Manager to return to the City Council within 30 days with a demolition, cleanup and site clearance plan for the ARDA site, including a start-date for on-site demolition to commence no later than April 1, 2021.

SECTION 3. The City-incurred costs to implement the demolition, cleanup and site clearance plan for the ARDA site, estimated at \$5 million, shall be paid from the City’s Great Park Development Fund (Fund 180) — to be reimbursed by the State as part of the negotiated ARDA site acquisition and transfer agreements that will establish the state-owned, state-funded Southern California Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery, scheduled to become fully operational by Veterans Day, November 11, 2023.