

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

JUNE 6, 2026

Rubén F. Salazar Park Civic Art Revision and Sole Source Agreement with Artist

Paul Botello

On September 17, 1970, East Los Angeles’s Laguna Park was renamed in honor of Los Angeles Times journalist Rubén F. Salazar, one of three individuals killed during the National Chicano Moratorium march held on August 29, 1970. That day, more than 30,000 people marched peacefully from the East Los Angeles Civic Center to Laguna Park to protest the disproportionate number of Latinos and Chicanos being drafted, or volunteering, to fight on the front lines of the Vietnam War.

What began as a peaceful demonstration ended in a violent confrontation with law enforcement. Deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department used force against demonstrators, including the deployment of tear gas canisters dropped from helicopters, and declared the gathering an “illegal assembly.” In the aftermath, businesses were damaged, hundreds were arrested and injured, and tragically, three people were killed, including Rubén Salazar. Laguna Park became a natural site of remembrance, as it marked the endpoint of the Moratorium march and the place where the unrest first erupted.

The County of Los Angeles originally acquired the land for the park in 1938 from

MOTION

Mitchell _____

Horvath _____

Hahn _____

Barger _____

Solis _____

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Cedars of Lebanon Hospital. It was renamed Laguna Park in 1940 and has since evolved into a major community hub in East Los Angeles, featuring basketball courts, a baseball diamond, tennis courts, a community center with a computer lab, and multipurpose rooms. Today, Rubén F. Salazar Park continues to serve residents through recreation, programming, and essential community services.

The park is also widely recognized for the 2001 mural *The Wall That Speaks, Sings, and Shouts*, created by artist Paul Botello. Located on the recreation center wall, the mural was commissioned by the Mexican norteño band Los Tigres del Norte and reflects themes of resistance, immigration, scientific advancement, family life, and key figures in Latino and Chicano history. It also includes a tribute to Rubén F. Salazar.

Paul Botello, born and raised in East Los Angeles, began his artistic journey at the age of eight assisting his brother, East Los Streetscraper co-founder David Botello, with mural work. He earned both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1994, he traveled to Berlin to collaborate on the mural *Global Chessboard*, and in 1997 he served as a visiting professor at Pitzer College in Claremont. His work is rooted in symbolic narrative, often drawing on personal and public experiences to address social issues through a distinctive use of color and composition.

The Rubén F. Salazar Park Multi-Phase Remodeling Project (C.P. 87723) is currently underway, with a total project budget of \$11,049,000, which includes a civic

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art component as a key investment in the community. The original civic art allocation of \$100,000 was increased by an additional \$100,000 from the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation in recognition of the importance of art to local residents. In collaboration with the community, the incorporation of Paul Botello's existing 2001 mural elements at the park was identified as the most feasible approach. The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture determined that the south-facing wall of the gym adjacent to Paul Botello's existing mural and within a shared sightline, was the most appropriate site, with the design reflecting community input from East Los Angeles stakeholders.

On November 7, 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis to enter into a sole source agreement with artist Paul Botello for the civic artwork component of the Rubén F. Salazar Park Multi-Phase Remodeling Project. Paul Botello engaged in a multi-pronged community engagement process to gain input into the design of a new mosaic artwork, which extends the composition of the existing mural around the corner to the south facing wall. The new artwork required fabrication by highly skilled artisans, specialized in translating artist's designs into the mosaic medium. Mosaic art is the creation of images by arranging small pieces of colored materials, such as stone, glass, or ceramic, onto a surface to form the design.

The artwork was recently fabricated and being readied for shipping, and includes

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an image of César Chávez as part of its tribute to Salazar. However, in light of recent survivor testimonies regarding allegations of abuse involving Chávez, the artist has expressed his intent to revise this area of the design and refabricate the work to remove Cesar Chavez' image and ensure the final design reflects the community's shared values of justice, dignity, and respect. Activity is being held at the fabrication studio pending a redesign and refabrication order.

Because the mural project was originally approved as a sole source agreement with artist Paul Botello, the proposed additional allocation of \$25,000 would amend the existing sole source agreement to support the redesign and refabrication of the artwork. As the artwork has not yet been formally accepted into the County's civic art collection and is not considered complete, the County may proceed with revisions prior to installation.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture to enter into a sole source agreement with artist Paul Botello in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 to re-fabricate the mural for the Rubén F. Salazar Park Multi-Phase Remodeling Project.

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