

Agenda Statement

Meeting Date: April 21, 2026
To: City Council
Through: Jackie C. Wilde, City Manager



Agenda Item: Resolution No. 2026-017 Expressing Support for the City of Whittier's Pursuit of Designation as a World War II Heritage City.

BACKGROUND, JUSTIFICATION, & INTENT:

The City of Whittier was established during World War II as a purpose-built military port and rail terminal constructed by the United States Army to support operations in the Pacific Theater. The community's infrastructure, transportation systems, and waterfront facilities were developed to serve national defense needs, and many of those systems remain in active use today. Whittier's origin as a military installation continues to define the community's role as a transportation hub and gateway for the movement of people and goods across Alaska.

The National Park Service administers the World War II Heritage City designation program to recognize communities that made significant contributions to the United States home front during World War II. The designation is honorary in nature and does not impose federal control over local land use decisions, demolition, redevelopment, or infrastructure planning. Communities that receive this designation are recognized for their historical significance and commitment to preserving and sharing their wartime history through education and responsible stewardship.

Pursuing this designation represents a significant opportunity for the City of Whittier to formally recognize its role in supporting the United States military during World War II and to strengthen the City's position when pursuing future funding opportunities related to infrastructure, environmental remediation, tourism management, and historical interpretation. National recognition of Whittier's historical significance supports the City's ongoing work to responsibly manage legacy military facilities, including the Buckner Building and other historic sites, while maintaining the City's authority to address safety, environmental, and redevelopment needs.

This effort also supports the City's long-term economic sustainability by reinforcing Whittier's identity as a destination of national historical importance. With increasing visitation and tourism activity, clear recognition of the community's historical role helps guide responsible tourism development, supports local businesses, and strengthens the City's ability to advocate for infrastructure investments necessary to serve residents and visitors. Adoption of the attached resolution allows the City Council to formally express its support for this effort and recognize the value of this opportunity for the community without creating any financial obligation or regulatory commitment.

CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST:

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Legislative Priorities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Comprehensive Plan: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Whittier Code:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Other:

FISCAL NOTE: None

ATTORNEY REVIEW: Yes No Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATION: Move to approve Resolution No. 2026-017 expressing support for the City of Whittier's pursuit of designation as a World War II Heritage City.