



City of Chicago



R2019-963

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	12/18/2019
Sponsor(s):	Maldonado (26)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Puerto Rican community on 25th anniversary of installation of Puerto Rican Flags of Steel
Committee(s) Assignment:	

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on January 6, 1995, the Puerto Rican Community of Chicago celebrated the installation of two flags of steel on Division Street: one on Artesian and the other on Mozart, the largest steel flags in the world at 59 ft. high and 56 ft. wide; and

WHEREAS, January 6, marks the most important date of the Puerto Rican ritual calendar - *El Día de los Tres Santos Reyes Magos*; and

WHEREAS, in 1995 Puerto Ricans marked the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the national emblem on December, 22 1895, by Puerto Ricans in the diaspora, members of the Borinquen Chapter of New York of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which was an entity founded by the father of Cuban Independence, José Martí, for the express purpose of fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico and Cuba from Spain; and

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican flag - modeled after the Cuban flag as a fraternal sign of unwavering solidarity - became the most intimate and expressive symbol of Puerto Rican identity, particularly among Puerto Ricans in the United States who rescued it from the anonymity and illegality that had informed its history after the adoption of Law 53, which beginning in 1948, prohibited Puerto Ricans on the island from publicly displaying their beloved flag, unless accompanied by the U.S. flag; and

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican steel flags serve as a vivid memory of the Puerto Rican presence and persistence in the city - the flags are made from steel because one of the first waves of Puerto Ricans migrants to Chicago came to work in the steel mills. The stripes are steel pipelines, which pay homage to another wave of Puerto Ricans who came to work in the steel pipeline industry. Finally, all elements were welded together to remember another wave of Puerto Ricans that came to work in the welding industry; and

WHEREAS, the flags draw up the boundaries of an area popularly known as Paseo Boricua - a concept developed by Puerto Rican anthropologist and artist Ramón López - which has become the heartbeat of Chicago's Puerto Rican presence; and

WHEREAS, for the past 25 years, Paseo Boricua has become a thriving commercial strip with nearly fifty businesses enhancing the area between the two flags, and which employ more than 300 people directly from the community; and

WHEREAS, Paseo Boricua is the home of deeply embedded networks of social service initiatives that improve the lives of thousands and provide employment for another 250 people; among which is the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School; and

WHEREAS, Paseo Boricua has become a vibrant niche for Puerto Rican cultural expression and production anchored by the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, and fully expressed with a corridor of public arts representations, including murals, the Painted Doors of Paseo Boricua, the 50 light poles with hanging wrought iron banners depicting Puerto Rican cultural images, the Paseo Boricua Walk of Fame honoring Puerto Rico's legendary musicians, as well as treasured cultural institutions such as The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Africaribe, and the Salsa Dance Academy; and

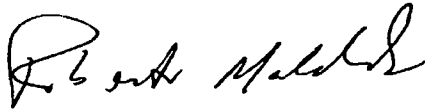
WHEREAS, Paseo Boricua contains some of the most beautiful architecturally designed buildings with elements of Old San Juan, including Hispanic Housing Development Corporation's Teresa Roldán Building, and the Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation's Estancia Apartments; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2020, Chicago's Puerto Rican community will celebrate its Annual 3 Kings WinterFest/Parade and gift giving event, which will usher in a year-long celebration entitled "**1995-2020: 25 YEARS LATER AND OUR FLAGS OF STEEL ARE STILL THERE**"; and

WHEREAS, on that date, the community will also focus its attention on the 20th anniversary of the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (which is now known as the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture), and the 15th anniversary of the foundation of UrbanTheater Company; and

WHEREAS, altogether, the steel flags, Paseo Boricua, the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, the New Life Covenant Church, UrbanTheater Company, and the upcoming new developments such as the Norwegian American Hospital Wellness Center, the Nancy Franco Maldonado Paseo Boricua Arts Building, along with the five distinct affordable housing initiatives of Hispanic Development Corporation, will anchor the future State designated Cultural Sanctuary District of Puerto Rico Town; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this eighteenth day of December, join Chicago's dynamic Puerto Rican Community as it celebrates this historic benchmark honoring the installation of the Puerto Rican Flags of Steel.



Roberto Maldonado
Alderman, 26th Ward

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