



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Anita Gallagher, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager’s Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution for Updates to City Policy on Place Names and Name Changes – July 23, 2019
DATE: July 16, 2019

SUMMARY:

A Resolution is requested to direct the City Manager to review the City’s Policy on Place Names and Name Changes and provide recommendations for updates to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Council Member Ryan Mello

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

This Resolution is most aligned with the following strategic policy priorities:

- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Tacoma has a policy in place that sets criteria and parameters around the naming of municipally owned property and streets. The scope of the policy includes buildings and structures, including overpasses, bridges and viaducts, Real Property, including open spaces and parks, and Rights-of-way, including under certain circumstances, streets. The policy was last updated in 2010 through Resolution No. 38091.

Since the policy was last updated, certain issues with the policy and its procedural process have been identified. Such issues include:

- The naming policy criteria are not well-aligned with current City policy priorities, including the concepts of equity, inclusion and reconciliation, although a growing number of requests are driven by these goals.
- The current policy limits the discretion of the City Council, and instead provides for the Landmarks Preservation Commission as the primary forum for the process, regardless of whether or not there is a historical component to the request or whether the name change request is sponsored or endorsed by the Mayor or Council Members.
- The current policy is not well-suited for time sensitive or noncontroversial requests that already have the stated support of the City Council.
- The section of the policy pertaining to the naming of property after individuals limits the practice to only those who have passed away.

At the July 16, 2019 Study Session, Council Member Mello shared a Council Consideration Request to improve the City’s responsiveness to naming and renaming requests of municipally owned property and recommended the City undertake a review of the policy to address the issues identified above and



implement improvements to reduce the bureaucracy involved in the process while also being very mindful of the staff time and other many costs to the city, private sector and other government agencies that apply at times for these efforts. Council Member Mello requested a City Council Resolution directing the City Manager to review the City's Policy on Place Names and Name Changes and to bring forth recommendations for revisions to the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee no later than Fall, 2019.

ISSUE:

Since the policy was last updated in the 2010-2011 timeframe, the following issues concerning the policy have been identified:

- not well-aligned with current City policy priorities, including the concepts of equity, inclusion and reconciliation;
- limits the discretion of the City Council, and instead provides for the Landmarks Preservation Commission as the primary forum for the process regardless of whether endorsed by the City Council;
- not well-suited for time sensitive or noncontroversial requests that already have the stated support of the City Council; and,
- naming of property after individuals that have only passed away.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose not to support the Resolution directing a review and update of the City's Policy on Place Names and Name Changes, in which case no changes would be made to the existing policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

The recommended course of action is for the City Council to approve the Resolution for review and updating of the City's Policy on Place Names and Name Changes. The City Manager would then direct the appropriate staff to review the current policy and bring forth recommendations for process and content improvements to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee for discussion.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.