



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Brennan Kidd, P.E. PTOE, Assistant Division Manager, Public Works
Jeffrey A. Jenkins, Director, Public Works
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution - Honorary Street Naming Request ("Willie Adams Way") – East Alexander Avenue west of Alexander Avenue East – December 2, 2025
DATE: November 10, 2025

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SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution conferring the honorary street name "Willie Adams Way" for East Alexander Avenue west of Alexander Avenue East.

COUNCIL SPONSOR(S):

Mayor Woodards

BACKGROUND:

This Department's Recommendation is Based On: In accordance with Resolution No. 41009, which adopted the amendments to the City's *Policy on Place Names and Name Changes*, honorary street naming requests are reviewed and vetted at several levels: the Mayor's Office, individual Departments/Divisions, and the Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee. The final review and decision to approve naming requests lies with the City Council. City staff reviewed the naming proposal in accordance with the City's adopted policy and conveyed the findings to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee (IPS). On October 22, 2025, the IPS Committee unanimously approved forwarding the proposal to the full City Council for consideration. If the proposed resolution is adopted, one new additional honorary street name sign—displaying "Willie Adams Way" will be added atop the existing stop sign/post at the southwest corner of East Alexander Avenue and Alexander Avenue East. The existing, official street name of East Alexander Avenue will remain in effect, and the honorary naming/sign will only be informational.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The City's naming policy requires the applicant to conduct the community engagement for the proposal. A signed petition in support of the renaming must be submitted by the proponents of the renaming prior to consideration by the City. For an honorary street name proposal, at least two-thirds of property owners abutting the linear frontage of the affected roadway and fifty percent of those property owners within 500 feet of the proposal must sign the petition in support. This proposal exceeded the minimum requirements outlined in the City's policy.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Approval of this proposal would not likely reduce, nor increase, racial and other inequities, disparities, or discrimination to underrepresented communities. Mr. Adams was a community leader who became the International Longshore and Warehouse Union's (ILWU) first Black president upon his election, and his long-spanning career has been characterized by advocacy for and dedication to a labor community where all workers are welcome – regardless of their background. Willie Adams was just the 7th President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). The ILWU is a labor union that was founded in 1937, and represents over 45,000 longshore and warehouse workers, mechanics, hospitality workers, farmers, nurses, miners, bookstore workers, daycare and veterinary workers—amongst others—in the states of Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii, and in British Columbia, Canada. The ILWU has a long history of advocating for workers' rights and has been at the forefront of the civil rights



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movement throughout its history. Between 1991 and 1993, and again from 2001 to 2005, Adams and fellow ILWU member Mike Chambers produced an annual event titled "Celebration of Black History and Labor." The Celebration honored the accomplishments of Black workers in Tacoma and also those who battled discrimination and fought for equal opportunities for all workers. The event has recently been revived and has always been popular, featuring notable features over the years, including Danny Glover, Yolanda King, Cicely Tyson, Betty Shabazz, and Ossie Davis.

Bestowing and installing the honorary street naming would provide an opportunity for those new to and familiar with the area, including visiting the ILWU Union Hall, to inquire about the naming and learn more about Mr. Adams and what he and his organization have done for the Port and City of Tacoma.

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score:* Very Low Opportunity
Increase positive public perception related to the Tacoma economy.

Education: *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity
All students will graduate from high school and be prepared to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education.
Increase the number of college students that find employment and remain in Tacoma after post-secondary completion.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score:* Very Low Opportunity
Elected officials, boards, commissions, and volunteer leadership will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community.
Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity
Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Economy/Workforce: The support/approval/investment of acknowledging honorary street name signing in the Port of Tacoma/Tideflats area shows Council support and honors those who also were supportive and instrumental in the success of the City's maritime economy.

Education: Display of the honorary sign draws attention to Mr. Adams' leadership and his affiliation with ILWU and labor unions in general, which can be a viable means for persons of all education levels to achieve their vocational goals while contributing to the community and economy.

Civic Engagement: The presence of the honorary street name sign may encourage visitors and vendors to the area—especially since the site is the only access to/from the Union Hall—to inquire and learn about Mr. Adams' Port- and City-supportive actions and thus may be inspired to do similar.

Livability: The time and investment in enhancing a portion of the City—and specifically in and at an area associated with the Port of Tacoma and the City's maritime economy—shows City support for a thriving economy and those that support it and the quality of life that results from it.



ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
Do not approve.	No potential for ambiguous referencing of the street/location by road users.	Ancillary maintenance (at City's cost) of existing street name sign/post would not be carried out concurrently; community interest in Resolution wanes.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

If the proposed resolution is adopted, the honorary name will be in effect for 15 years. The City will install the honorary sign within a reasonable amount of time upon Council approval and will maintain the sign during the 15-year period. At the end of the 15-year period, the sign will be at the end of its expected useful life and will need replacement. Per Resolution No. 41009, if the applicant desires the name to remain in place after the 15-year period, the City will reconvene the staff workgroup to evaluate the proposal, and if approved, the applicant will be responsible for the cost to install its replacement.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and IPS Committee's recommendation is for Council approval of this request. Honorary naming of this specific city block is appropriate due to Mr. Adams' presence within, and influence on, this overall area and the specific association of the street with the ILWU Union Hall location.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The initial fiscal impact described below, as it relates to the honorary sign and associated other sign-related needs prompted by the request, will be offset through post-installation reimbursement to be provided by the requester. The City's naming policy further stipulates that on-going maintenance costs of the honorary sign are the responsibility of the applicant, so long-term costs to the City are expected to be de minimis.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1065 PW Street Fund	662426	5195000 (Labor) 5295000 (Equipment) 5220100 (Operating Supplies)	\$350.00 (max. estimate)
TOTAL			\$350.00 (max. estimate)

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

The effort is being borne by the Public Works Department Street Operations Division as a street sign replacement task generated by the naming request and thus their full time and materials expended (to install the sign and perform associated work) will be reimbursed by the applicant (per Resolution No. 41009). The applicant is aware of this responsibility and has provided written confirmation of being able to provide reimbursement.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW

Revenues and expenditures for naming proposals are not budgeted. Implementation costs will be billed to the applicant.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No



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Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

No

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application materials