



Agenda Report

August 31, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Office of the City Manager
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MONUMENT POLICY

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as defined in Section 21065 of CEQA and Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project;
2. Adopt the proposed Public Monument Policy.

BACKGROUND:

From time to time, individuals and/or groups have sought to memorialize persons and/or significant events through the placement of monuments, including plaques and memorials, on public property often times in City parks. In order to consider such requests, staff developed a Public Park and Recreational Facility Park Monument Policy (Attachment A). Generally, this Policy establishes a process whereby proposed monuments are assessed by staff as well as the Recreation and Parks Commission for appropriateness, compatibility with surrounding uses, potential impact on park use and aesthetics. The current Policy also states that “[p]ublic artworks other than monuments and memorials must be evaluated by the Arts and Culture Commission according to Public Art policy and guidelines.” However, with the exception of the Enduring Heroes Memorial discussed below, the Arts and Culture Commission has not reviewed monuments that are privately funded but placed in public space.

The current policy has worked well for numerous monuments which are generally small in stature and most often take the form of small plaques, landscape features or public benches. In recent times, there have been requests to establish monuments which are significant, both in terms of physical scale and level of community interest, including the recently established Armenian Genocide Memorial and the proposed Enduring Heroes Memorial, which have raised questions as to the appropriateness of the current policy.

Clarifying the role of City commissions, establishing an early opportunity for the City Council to review significant projects before considerable effort and cost is expended and allowing the public an opportunity to be informed and comment are just some of the changes staff believes are appropriate to be made to the existing policy.

As proposed, the revised policy renamed the Public Monument Policy (Attachment B), would apply to all monuments; memorial plaques, works of art and other items intended to commemorate individuals, groups, events, or concepts which are to be placed on City property and that are sponsored by individuals or groups. The policy would not apply to public art paid for by the City and which is developed in accordance with the existing Capital Public Art Program guidelines.

Monuments covered by the proposed policy would be divided into two categories, as determined by the City Manager. Monuments of less than City-wide significance, generally small plaques, landscape features and public benches, would be subject to a process similar to what exists in the current policy; review by City staff and Recreation and Parks Commission as it relates to placement, taking into account appropriateness, compatibility with existing uses, impact on park use, maintenance and safety. However, unlike the current policy, City Council approval would not be required; thus the Recreation and Parks Commission would be the decision body.

Monuments of City-wide significance would be subject to a more extensive process which would involve a number of steps, as outlined below, and a bifurcated process that distinguishes consideration of proposed subject matter from the physical form.

- Concept Review by the City Council. Somewhat similar to the Preliminary Plan Review (PPR) process for large development projects, an initial concept review would be presented to the City Council for consideration. This would provide the community a greater opportunity to be made aware early on of a potential monument and to provide public input. Only applications receiving Concept Approval from the City Council would proceed through the remainder of the process.
- Artist Selection and Artwork Development Process overseen by the Arts and Culture Commission. Once Concept Approval has been given, the Arts and Culture Commission would oversee an artist selection and artwork development process consistent with the process for Capital Public Art projects funded by the City, which includes a method for artist selection that considers artistic excellence, aesthetic appropriateness to the site, public input and formal elements of the proposed artwork design.
- Review by the Recreation and Parks Commission as to location, if proposed to be in a City park.
- Consideration by the City Council for final approval.

Staff is recommending the adoption of this policy and its application on a prospective basis, i.e., going forward for any new applications. Currently, there is a proposal for a monument recognizing the ultimate sacrifice paid by members of the United States Armed Services who came from Pasadena and other nearby cities. Consistent with the existing Public Park and Recreational Facility Park Monument policy, the Enduring Heroes Memorial sculpture was presented to the Recreation and Parks Commission on May 5th. The staff recommendation was for the Commission to endorse the placement of the Memorial at Defenders Parkway West. After lengthy discussion, the Commission tabled the item and requested input from the Arts and Culture Commission.

On May 13th an informational presentation was made to the Arts and Culture Commission by the sponsors of the Enduring Heroes Memorial. On June 1st the Chair of the Arts and Culture Commission sent a letter (Attachment C) to the Chair of the Recreation and Parks Commission outlining the results of that meeting and relating a number of concerns held by the Commission which included lack of an open design competition and public involvement in the process. The proposed Public Monument Policy would address the types of issues raised by the Arts and Culture Commission.

As it relates to the final disposition of the proposed Enduring Heroes Memorial, given that the sponsors have followed the City's existing policy, staff is proceeding with it in that fashion. Specifically, the Recreation and Parks Commission is expected to make a final recommendation at its September 1st meeting which will be presented to the City Council for consideration at its September 28th meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 21065 of CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378. The adoption of a Public Monument Policy is an organizational and administrative action (i.e., procedure making) that would not cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Therefore, the proposed action is not a "project" subject to CEQA, as defined in Section 21065 of CEQA and Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. The cost of monuments covered by the proposed policy would be borne by the applicant(s).

Respectfully submitted



Steve Mermell
Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



Michael J. Beck
City Manager

Attachment A – Current Public Park and Recreational Facility Park Monument Policy
Attachment B – Proposed Public Monument Policy
Attachment C – Letter from Arts and Culture Commission Chair to Chair of the
Recreation and Parks Commission