



Agenda Report

August 8, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Municipal Services Committee (July 26, 2022)
FROM: Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGN PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Approve the establishment of a Roadside Memorial Sign Program within the Department of Transportation; and
2. Approve the draft policy to execute this Program.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REQUEST:

On July 26, 2022, the Municipal Services Committee requested that the draft policy be modified to allow for a Council District office to submit a request for a Roadside Memorial Sign when the victim is an unhoused individual and when the next of kin cannot be identified or located through the collective efforts of the City. Staff has modified the policy to include such language. In addition, the Municipal Services Committee recommended that staff review if additional language could be included on the memorial sign, such as "In Loving Memory" or the addition of the date of birth and date of death of the victim. Staff will review this request to ensure consistency with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and best practices. In anticipation of such accommodations being allowed, the policy has been modified to allow for the potential for additional language on the sign.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On June 23, 2022, the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) recommended that the City Council approve the recommended staff policy for establishment of the Roadside Memorial Sign Program. The Commission also recommended that memorial sign

replacement costs, after the useful life of the initial installation, be borne by the City. Staff concurs with this recommendation and has included it in the draft policy.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing a Roadside Memorial Sign Program whose primary purpose is to elevate awareness of traffic safety with the goal of reducing the number and severity of traffic collisions. Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, younger and older individuals make up a disproportionate share of those killed or seriously injured in traffic collisions nationally and in the City of Pasadena. A Roadside Memorial Sign Program would allow the City to display a safety message that humanizes the individual victims of traffic collisions while also honoring their memory.

The City of Pasadena currently has a Public Monument Policy. The policy is primarily for the purpose of installing monuments, memorial plaques, works of art, and other fixtures intended to commemorate individuals, groups, events, or concepts. The Public Monument policy is not well-suited for a pedestrian roadside memorial program because the existing policy requires the request to be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and generally requires the person memorialized to be deceased for at least five years.

Using the existing Public Monument Policy, a memorial sign was installed as a pilot for Aidan Tam in September 2021. Aidan was killed in a fatal collision at the intersection of Colorado Blvd. and Hill St. in May of 2014. Working directly with the family, DOT designed and coordinated with Public Works crews to install the memorial sign. In designing the sign, staff researched and adhered to state guidance in the State Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTDC) related to memorial signs. Staff also located the sign at the intersection where there would be no interference with other traffic controls while ensuring the victim is properly memorialized. The sign contains a traffic safety message related to the circumstances of the crash, and a portion on the bottom that states that the sign is in memory of Aidan Tam. Through the initial installation, it was determined that a program that specifically addresses the intent and purpose of a roadside memorial would be more appropriate in addressing future requests.



A roadside memorial sign program can function to memorialize the victim of a fatal crash, while at the same time raising the awareness of traffic safety to the motoring public. Victims can be pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcycle riders, and/or motorists. The recommended program reflects lessons learned from the first installation and best practices from other existing similar programs in the region. DOT has developed a draft policy (Attachment A), similar to programs developed by other local jurisdictions, to allow for memorial sign installations.

The proposed policy establishing the Roadside Memorial Sign Program requires that signs be requested by the family of a victim(s) of a fatal crash. In the case that the victim is an unhoused individual and, through collective efforts, a next of kin cannot be identified or located, a request can be made by a Council District office. Requests must be submitted to the Director of the Department of Transportation (Director), or their designee. A minimum of six months must pass after the collision before a request can be made. The Director is proposed to be the approval authority for placement of memorial signs under this program. If the proposed installation of a memorial sign is approved, DOT staff will then determine the specifics of the sign design and location, and work with Public Works crews to install the sign.

The cost of the initial sign fabrication and installation will be borne by the City. The effective lifespan of the sign is five to seven years, and will be maintained by the City during this period at no cost to the applicant. Following the effective lifespan of the initial sign installation, if it needs to be replaced, the cost of fabrication and installation of a new sign shall also be borne by the City. DOT initially contemplated asking the family of the victim to fund any subsequent installations, but based on the TAC's recommendation, the draft policy was modified to allow for the City to take on the replacement costs.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This program is consistent with General Plan Mobility Element policies to enhance livability, and encourage walking, biking, transit, and other alternatives to motor vehicles. This program is also consistent with the City's goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure and to improve mobility and accessibility in the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is exempt per Section 15061 (b) (3). The project is covered by the general rule that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The installation of memorial signs will not result in any significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The creation of a single memorial sign represents a material cost of approximately \$200. The material cost of an initial sign will be borne by the Department of Transportation. Staffing and labor charges to design, locate, and install the sign are minimal. Administrative and installation labor costs will be borne by both the Department of Transportation and Department of Public Works. The anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action will be minimal.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director
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Approved by:



CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
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Attachment:

Attachment A – Draft Roadside Memorial Sign Program Policy