

Agenda Report

October 21, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Recreation and Parks Commission (October 1, 2024)

FROM: Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: PROPOSED OPTIONS TO RECOGNIZE RHYTHM AND BLUES (R&B) MUSIC GROUP TROOP

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed options to recognize Troop are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15061(b)(3), common sense exemption that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment; as well as under Section 15301 as a minor alteration of an existing facility with no change in capacity;
2. Review and select amongst four proposed options to recognize rhythm and blues (R&B) music group, *Troop*; or
3. Provide alternate direction.

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On October 1, 2024, four proposed options were presented to the Recreation and Parks Commission along with relevant background information. The Commission unanimously supported Option 'D' to install a plaque on the exterior wall at the entrance to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

BACKGROUND:

On September 11, 2023, a request was sent by Ms. Keisha Wilkins to the City Manager (Attachment A) proposing the City rename a public street to "Troop Way" in honor of an R&B music group, *Troop*. Ms. Wilkins originally requested a name change for Catalina Avenue from Maple Street to Villa Street, which is the block where a *Troop* member used to reside, and where the group practiced. However, she was unable to garner the support needed from the residents along the block for the name change. Following that,

on December 5, 2023, a second request was submitted by Ms. Wilkins requesting an alternative street segment, Dayton Street from Fair Oaks Avenue to Raymond Avenue, be renamed “Troop Way” (Attachment B).

On April 15, 2024, a proposal to rename a street segment to Troop Way was brought forth by staff to the City Council identifying two options for their consideration: (1) Dayton Street from Fair Oaks Avenue to Raymond Avenue; or (2) Morton Avenue between Hammond Street and Mountain Street. At the meeting, the City Council directed staff to continue the public hearing to May 20, 2024 [later postponed to June 3, 2024] and bring forth consideration of renaming Dayton Street as the only recommendation per the applicant’s initial request. Morton Avenue was identified as a discretionary option by staff. Following the City’s street name change process, notices announcing the June 3, 2024 public hearing were posted along Dayton Street on April 29 and May 21, 2024. Public hearing notices were also mailed to approximately 200 property owners within a 1,000-foot radius, and published in Pasadena Press on May 2 and 23, 2024. Public comments were received and published as an attachment to June 3, 2024 staff report.

At the June 3, 2024, public hearing, the City Council resolved to recognize *Troop* in a meaningful way, directing staff to return to City Council with additional options on how best to honor *Troop*. Council expressed support for recognition of the R&B group in the City, advocating to honor Troop in a manner where people can learn about the group and their contributions, such as a plaque in a public setting. Renaming of the proposed segment of Dayton Street would remain as one of the options for Council’s consideration.

Troop

Troop, initially named 'Five of A Kind', was formed in 1984 in Pasadena. In 1988, they adopted the name *Troop*, an acronym for “Total Respect of Other People” to reflect their commitment to positive values and community spirit. *Troop* members include Rodney Benford, Reggie Warren, Jon Jon (John Anthony) Harreld, Steve Russell and Allen McNeil. Throughout their formative years, *Troop* actively performed in various venues across Pasadena, including numerous talent shows at several Pasadena high schools and at Robinson Park, where they have practiced for over 30 years. In addition, Troop has performed at the Rose Bowl and local community functions such as the City’s Northwest Renaissance community event in 2007. Jon Jon Harreld and Rodney Benford remain current City residents. Reggie Warren passed away in 2020.

Troop's musical prowess is highlighted by three number-one singles and ten top-ten singles on the Billboard R&B Singles chart, a significant contribution to the world of music. *Troop's* journey and work, from their early days in Pasadena to becoming a national music sensation showcased their bond with their hometown, highlighting the City’s name to millions of fans worldwide.

RECOGNITION OPTIONS:

In July and August of 2024, staff from the departments of Public Works and Parks, Recreation, and Community Services met with Ms. Wilkins to identify viable recognition options. On September 11, 2024, upon consulting with *Troop* members, Ms. Wilkins submitted a formal request to the City in support of considering the following options for recognition of *Troop* (Attachment C).

- A. Rename Dayton Street between Fair Oaks Avenue and Raymond Avenue to Troop Way – Per Ms. Wilkins, *Troop* performed and practiced their dance moves at Central Park, and Jon Jon Harreld performed at the Pasadena Jazz Festival held at Central Park. Additionally, Mr. Harreld has strong ties to Friendship Church, the first Black church in Pasadena, located east of Central Park on Dayton, where he has sung many times.
- B. Install a plaque within Central Park near the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and Dayton Street - Per Ms. Wilkins, *Troop* performed and practiced their dance moves at Central Park, and Jon Jon Harreld performed at the Pasadena Jazz Festival held at Central Park. The design, size, material, and specific language of the proposed plaque will be determined later upon City Council's direction on an option. Staff will return to the Recreation and Parks Commission for support of the design should this recognition option move forward.
- C. Rename a room at Robinson Park Recreation Center to Troop Room – Per Ms. Wilkins, *Troop* practiced at the Robinson Park Recreation Center for over 35 years and continues to practice in the Dance Room at the Center.
- D. Install a plaque on the exterior wall at the entrance to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium – A plaque similar and next to the one donated by Pasadena 4 Van Halen in 2021 to honor guitarist, Mr. Eddie Van Halen. The size, material, and specific language of the proposed plaque will be determined later.

Option 'A' followed the City's Street Renaming Process (Attachment C) as the City does not currently have a Street Renaming Policy. The City process utilized to date follows the procedures established by the California Streets and Highways Code Section 970.5 as its guideline, which includes notification to stakeholders including affected property owners and holding of a public hearing.

Options 'B' and 'D' fall within the City's Public Monument Policy (Attachment D) which establishes the criteria and process for the placement of monuments sponsored by individuals and/or groups on City property which is subject to the administrative jurisdiction of the City Manager. The City's public monuments and their proposed locations must be determined to be appropriate, compatible with existing uses, not adversely impact the use of public spaces, and not create liability or public funding issues. The review is based on the following criteria: appropriateness, compatibility with existing use, aesthetics, maintenance, and safety. Per this Policy, the monument shall

be subject to the review and recommendation as to appropriateness by the Recreation and Parks Commission prior to review by the City Council for final approval.

Option 'C' falls within the City's Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy (Attachment E) which establishes a set of guidelines and procedures for the selection of names for parks and recreational facilities. The appropriateness criteria used include geographical location; natural or geological proximity; cultural or historical significance; or contribution by an individual to the community. Existing names shall not be subject to change unless, after investigation and review, the proposed name is found to be more appropriate than the existing name, based on the criteria listed in this policy.

In compliance with the Policy's process, a notice to gather public input (Attachment F) was mailed out to all property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of Robinson Park Recreation Center and sent out via the City's social media platforms. Notice was also provided to neighborhood associations within City Council District 3. Comments received from members of the public were shared with the Commission and are attached herein. (Attachment G).

Recreation and Parks Commission's Recommendations for Appropriateness

On October 1, 2024, the Department of Public Works presented a report to the Recreation and Parks Commission for their review and recommendations for appropriateness regarding proposed options to recognize *Troop*. After the public comment period, the Commission provided the following advisory findings:

- A. Rename Dayton Street between Fair Oaks Avenue and Raymond Avenue to Troop Way – The Commission recognized that street renaming was not under their purview and therefore could not provide input relative to this option.

Multiple representatives of Castle Green properties attended the meeting in person to voice their objections to renaming Dayton Street for historical and logistical reasons. Castle Green's HOA General Manager also commented that the property has a service address (39 E. Dayton Street) for deliveries and utility accounts and that changing the street name would be impactful to the Castle Green residents. A petition with resident signatures was submitted to the Commission's and City Council's attention and is included in Attachment G.

- B. Install a plaque within Central Park near the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and Dayton Street – This option was evaluated but lost favor to Option D as described below.
- C. Rename a room at Robinson Park Recreation Center to Troop Room – the Robinson Park Recreation Center is within Robinson Park, which is renamed after Mack and Jackie Robinson. Members of the Robinson family who attended the meeting commented that renaming any rooms within the building would diminish the magnitude and intent to honor the legendary brothers in a holistic sense. The sentiment was shared by the Commission.

- D. Install a plaque on the exterior wall at the entrance to the Pasadena Civic Auditorium – Given the presence of a plaque at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium posthumously honoring musician Eddie Van Halen, the Commission determined it would be appropriate to place a comparable plaque recognizing Troop at the same location. The Commission envisioned the Auditorium as a designated venue to honor the significant musical, cultural, and artistic contributions of individuals and groups from or otherwise important to Pasadena.

Attachment H includes additional public comments received subsequent to the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Recognizing Troop through one or more of the proposed options is an affirmation of Troop's significance in the music world and a celebration of Pasadena's pride in nurturing exceptional local talent. Recognition of Troop's contributions adds to the City's rich cultural heritage and helps further the City Council's goals to support and promote quality of life and the local economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed options are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15061(b)(3), common sense exemption that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment; as well as under Section 15301 as a minor alteration of an existing facility with no change in capacity.

FISCAL IMPACT:

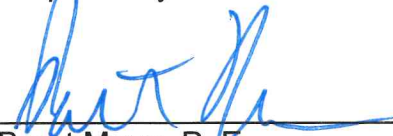
The probable cost for fabrication and installation of the proposed options vary, ranging from approximately \$1,000 for new street name signs to \$4,000 for a plaque at the Civic Auditorium and likely higher for a self-standing plaque at Central Park (depending on the design developed). Funding of up to \$4,000 is available in the Public Works General Fund Operating Budget to cover associated costs.

Respectfully submitted,



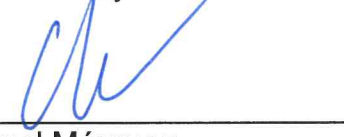
KRIS MARKARIAN, P.E.
Acting Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Brent Maue, P. E.
City Engineer

Approved by:



Miguel Márquez
City Manager

For

NICHOLAS G. RODRIGUEZ
Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Ms. Wilkins’ Appeals to the City Manager, dated 9-11-2023 & 12-5-2023
- Attachment B – Ms. Wilkins’ Request to the City, dated 9-11-2024
- Attachment C – City of Pasadena Street Renaming Process
- Attachment D – City of Pasadena Public Monument Policy
- Attachment E – City of Pasadena Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy
- Attachment F – Notice for Public Input
- Attachment G – Public Comments from the Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting
- Attachment H – Public Comments Submitted After the Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting