



Legislation Text

File #: 16-364, **Version:** 1

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SUBJECT: Public Hearing - Addition of Honorary Title of “Veterans Boulevard” to “M Street”

REPORT IN BRIEF

The City Council will consider whether to add the honorary title of “Veterans Boulevard” to “M Street” within the City Limits of Merced.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion:

- A. Approving **Resolution 2016-44**, “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, Adding ‘Veterans Boulevard’ as an Honorary Name to ‘M Street’ within the City Limits of the City of Merced;” and,
- B. Directing the City Manager and the Directors of Development Services and Public Works to work with Mr. Miller and the citizens group on the implementation of the honorary title, including the street sign design, the costs and fundraising, which intersections to target for early designation, a dedication ceremony, etc.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the addition of the honorary title as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve the addition, subject to modifications as specified by Council; or,
3. Deny the request; or,
4. Refer back to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in City Council motion); or,
5. Continue to a future City Council meeting (date and time to be specified in City Council motion).

AUTHORITY

Government Code Section 34091.1 allows the City Council to adopt a resolution to approve any change or addition to a street name.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Not Applicable.

DISCUSSION

Background

In April 2016, Mr. Rich Miller appeared before the City Council to present his request for the City Council to rename a major street in the City, specifically M Street, to Veterans Boulevard to provide a permanent, year-round tribute to Veterans in the community. M Street was chosen because it was a prominent north-south arterial with many businesses and homes fronting on it and includes many prominent landmarks, such as the Merced County Administration Building, Merced College, Merced Mall, and Applegate Park. The Merced Sunrise Rotary sponsors the Field of Honor at Merced College on M Street and Yosemite Avenue where U.S Flags are displayed in honor of local veterans and first responders. The M Street Bridge on Bear Creek was also previously named Veterans Memorial Bridge. The request received a lot of public attention, including several articles in the local newspapers and on the internet.

Although City staff explained that there was no formal process for renaming a street, City staff provided Mr. Miller and the City Council with information regarding the process used in 1992-93 to rename J Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Numerous petitions had been presented to the City Council and ultimately, a public hearing was held on May 18, 1992. The City Council adopted a resolution in favor of the change with the agreement that the Citizens Committee would donate the funds for the new street signs, which was estimated at approximately \$2,800. On January 18, 1993, the official celebration and dedication of the new street name was held.

Since April 2016, Mr. Miller and his group reached out to residences, businesses, schools, and governmental organizations along M Street about the name change. According to Mr. Miller, although most of the single-family residences along M Street supported the change and they had approximately 1,000 signatures on petitions, opposition was raised by many businesses and agencies regarding the costs and inconvenience associated with changing stationery, advertising, business cards, etc.

Turlock Example

In May 2016, City staff provided information to Mr. Miller regarding a possible compromise. In 2007, the City of Turlock had added the honorary title of “University Way” to “Monte Vista Avenue” at the request of CSU Stanislaus. The official street name remained Monte Vista Avenue and no businesses or residences needed to change their official address with the Post Office, in official records, nor buy new stationery, business cards, etc. Street signs with both names were added to traffic signals and street sign poles as illustrated in Attachment 2. The cost was estimated to be approximately \$70,000 to be paid for by private donations through CSU Stanislaus. Mr. Miller subsequently agreed to revise his request for an honorary title only.

On July 5, 2016, City staff presented the possible option of an honorary title to the City Council. The City Council subsequently directed City staff to schedule a public hearing on the addition of an honorary title of “Veterans Blvd” to “M Street.”

What Would an Honorary Title Mean?

The official name of M Street will remain M Street. “Veterans Boulevard” would be strictly an honorary title and would appear on street signs underneath the official name and in smaller print. Because the official street name will remain M Street, residents or businesses with M Street addresses would **NOT** need to change their address with the Post Office, in official records, with their credit card companies, etc. These residents and businesses would **NOT** need to change their

stationery, order new business cards, change advertising, etc. Veterans Boulevard would not and should not be used by anyone as their official address.

Cost Estimate

According to an estimate provided by the City's Public Works Department, the total cost for replacing street signs on M Street could total approximately \$61,605 (parts and materials only). This estimate includes the following:

- For 22 Traffic Signals, the signs, arms, & brackets would cost \$2,400 each for a total of \$52,800.
- For 57 12" x 30" Standard Street Signs, the signs & associated materials would cost \$71 each for a total of \$4,047.
- For 2 24" x 72" Street Signs, the signs would cost \$215 each for a total of \$430.
- Total costs for all the signs would be \$61,605 (labor not included, but with \$4,328 in taxes added).

However, there may be ways to reduce the costs and the Public Works Department will work with the citizens group to review alternatives.

Implementation

Because of the cost of replacing the street signs, the implementation will likely take place over a number of years as funds become available. Mr. Miller has indicated that he would like at least one prominent intersection to be dedicated on Veterans Day on November 11, 2016.

If the request is approved, the City Council should direct the City Manager and the Directors of Development Services and Public Works to work with Mr. Miller and the citizens group on the implementation of the honorary title, including the street sign design, the costs and fundraising, which intersections to target for early designation, a dedication ceremony, etc.

Public Hearing

On August 4, 2016, City staff published a public hearing notice regarding the proposed project in the Merced County Times and mailed notices to the 338 parcels with frontage on M Street (except those at the end of cul-de-sacs who don't have M Street addresses). Of those parcels, 269 had different mailing addresses for the property owners than the street address, so for those 269 parcels, a notice was also mailed to the street address in an attempt to reach not only owners, but tenants with M Street addresses. A total of 607 notices were mailed. See map at Attachment 1 for the noticing area. A resolution has been prepared for City Council consideration at Attachment 3.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

No appropriation of funds is needed. The citizens group led by Mr. Rich Miller has volunteered to raise money to fund the new street signs. A preliminary estimate provided by the Public Works Department places the cost for replacing all signs at approximately \$61,605 (see details above). However, there may be ways to reduce the costs and the Public Works Department will work with the citizens group to review alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of M Street Parcels Mailed Public Hearing Notices
2. Example of Street Signs with dual names from Turlock
3. Draft City Council Resolution