



CITY OF OAKLAND

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 14, 2022
TO: City Council and Members of the Public
FROM: Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas
SUBJECT: Resolution Renaming Madison Park to Wilma Chan Park, In Honor Of Her Legacy And Dedication And Service To Chinatown, Asian American Pacific Islander, And Oakland Communities

Dear City Council Colleagues and Members of the Public,

It is my honor to respectfully request the Council adopt the following resolution: Resolution Renaming Madison Park to Wilma Chan Park, In Honor Of Her Legacy And Dedication And Service To Chinatown, Asian American Pacific Islander, And Oakland Communities. Thank you to Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan and President Pro Tempore Sheng Thao for co-sponsoring this resolution.

The Honorable Supervisor Wilma Chan served Oakland and Alameda County residents for more than three decades, with an exceptional and impactful career in public service. Sup. Chan's contributions supporting the wellness of underserved and uninsured communities – especially championing children, families, seniors, immigrants, and AAPI neighbors – spanned her service on the Oakland Unified School District Board of Education, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, California State Assembly, and Alameda County Children and Families Commission.

On November 3, 2021 in the City of Alameda, which Supervisor Chan called home, she tragically passed away in a pedestrian traffic collision. In the wake of her passing, community organizations and leaders, public servants, and residents rallied around Chan's legacy and her loved ones, celebrating and paying respect for her trailblazing advocacy in health care and health equity. This included Oakland Chinatown, where several anchor community organizations providing critical wellness and cultural services, approached my office expressing with conviction the Oakland Chinatown and broader Oakland community's desire to honor Supervisor Chan by renaming Madison Park to Wilma Chan Park.

Madison Park, located in the heart of Oakland Chinatown and adjacent to Lake Merritt BART station, is materially and symbolically an embodiment of Supervisor Chan's service and passion for underserved communities, as the Park is a long-time cultural activity hub, activated nearly daily with vibrant, community-led programming such as:

- Tai-Chi exercise groups for elders,
- physical education classes and playtime for Oakland youth,
- COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics hosted by Asian Health Services,

- Regular community clean-ups of the Park and surrounding streets hosted by community organizations,
- Chinatown Community Ambassador programs which provide public safety support and connection to stabilizing services for individuals in need at and in the areas surrounding the Park, and
- A community hub for grassroots organizers and coalitions to organize gatherings, rallies, vigils, and art installations at the Park.

In alignment with procedures for designating official names for park and recreation facilities outlined in Resolution No. 56600 C.M.S. and Resolution No. 65024 C.M.S., our office submitted a renaming proposal to the Oakland Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) at their March 9, 2022 meeting; PRAC voted unanimously to recommend the renaming of Madison Park to Wilma Chan Park, and this recommendation was subsequently referred to the April 21, 2022 Rules and Legislation Committee for consideration of referral to the full Council.

Thank you to Asian Health Services staff and leadership for partnering with my office to spearhead this effort to honor Wilma Chan’s legacy and organize community members to dedicate attention and resources to our precious Chinatown assets such as Madison Park.

There is widespread support among Oakland’s AAPI communities and the broader Oakland community for the renaming of Madison Park. Asian Health Services organized a [digital petition](#) which has received more than 300 signatures from Oakland residents, leaders, and organizations, including:

- Individuals
 - Daren Chan and the Chan Family
 - Dave Brown, Alameda County Supervisor
 - Nikki Fortunato Bas, Oakland City Council President
 - Abel Guillen, Former Oakland City Councilmember
 - Jinhee Ha, Oakland Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissioner
 - Phong La, Alameda County Assessor
 - Alice Lai-Bitker, Former Alameda County Supervisor
 - Jim Oddie, Former Alameda City Councilmember
- Representatives of Community Organizations
 - ARTogether
 - Asian Health Services
 - Asian Pacific Environmental Network
 - Black Arts Movement and Business District Community Development Corporation
 - Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants
 - Compassion in Oakland
 - East Bay Asian Youth Center
 - Family Bridges
 - Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities

- New Breath Foundation
- Oakland Asian Cultural Center
- Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
- Oakland Chinatown Improvement Council
- Oakland Trybe
- OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates East Bay
- Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce
- Protect Oakland Chinatown
- Urban League of the Greater Bay Area
- Wa Sung Community Service Club

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Tiffany Kang, Policy Analyst & Community Partnerships Manager, Office of Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas, at tkang@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nikki Fortunato Bas
Council President, District 2

Attachments:

- Memo to Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (March 9, 2022)

CITY OF OAKLAND
Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

TO: Princess Allen, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
FROM: City Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas, District 2
DATE: Wednesday March 9, 2022
SUBJECT: Request for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Recommend the Renaming of Madison Square Park in Honor of Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan’s Legacy, and Approve the Installation of a Bench or Plaque Memorializing The Name Change.

SUMMARY

The Honorable Wilma Chan served Oakland and Alameda County for over 30 years with a distinguished career in public service, first on the Oakland school board, then as the first Asian-American to be elected to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, as well as representing District 16 on the State Assembly before returning to her role as an Alameda County Supervisor. Chan left a powerful legacy of prioritizing and serving our marginalized communities, championing youth, families, immigrants, health equity, AAPI community members, and much more.

With her tragic death last year in a pedestrian traffic collision in the City of Alameda, many of my constituents – including community organizations that anchor and provide life-giving services in Chinatown, such as Asian Health Services, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and Oakland Chinatown Improvement District – have expressed with conviction to my office the community’s desire to honor Chan’s legacy with the renaming of Madison Park, a historic Oakland Chinatown park that Chan demonstrated strong support and advocacy for throughout her career in public service. Madison Park is presently and historically a critical activity hub for the Chinatown and broader Oakland community, through robust programming and activation such as Tai-Chi exercise groups organized among our Asian elders, nearby public school physical education classes, and one of the city’s most active COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites.

The Oakland Chinatown community considered Supervisor Chan to be a powerful champion for health access, women’s empowerment, and immigrant rights. In honor of her legacy, my office respectfully requests the PRAC recommend renaming Madison Park to Wilma Chan Park.

Asian Health Services and OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates East Bay Chapter (OCA-East Bay) are members of Oakland’s Adopt-A-Spot clean-up program and for the past six years have taken responsibility for organizing regular volunteer events to clear trash in and around the Park, make minor improvements to the infrastructure, and water the newer batch of trees along the Park perimeter. There is immense community support for this effort from community organizations, neighborhood leaders, and families both in my district and citywide.

FISCAL IMPACT

There would be potential, minimal one-time costs associated with the renaming of the Park for OPRYD and other City public information / communications (e.g. maps and facilities lists) materials that could be absorbed in existing operations. There would be potential one-time costs in installing new signage in or around the Park by OPW. There currently are no signs at the park identifying the park as Madison Park; the last sign was destroyed during a traffic accident in 2019 and has yet to be replaced.

The Oakland Chinatown community would assume the costs of a COVID-safe re-naming event, including:

- Purchase of a plaque or bench honoring Chan somewhere prominently in the Park, which would be installed by OPW.
- Light refreshments
- Entertainment

PROJECT / PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Renaming this park in honor of Wilma Chan has more than symbolic value. As major developments and thousands of new housing units are being built in and around Oakland Chinatown, it is crucial that public open space like Madison Park be updated and improved to meet our community's needs. As the nearby Lake Merritt BART Transit-Oriented Development is planned to break ground on construction in one or two years, now is an important moment to invest City attention and resources in the Park.

While minor improvements have been possible through more recent city budget cycles, the renaming provides momentum towards much-needed public support and private investment for deepened stewardship, future planning, improvements, redesigns, and capital fundraising.

The signage could also recognize the histories of Madison Square, and before that Caroline Square, so that important community and cultural history are not forgotten or erased.

BACKGROUND

Caroline Square was one of Oakland's original public squares, until the 1960s when the Square was relocated to make space for the Lake Merritt BART Station. The Park was relocated one block over, where Madison Park is currently located.

RECOMMENDATION

Council President Fortunato Bas recommends the PRAC recommend renaming Madison Park as Wilma Chan Park and approve the installation of a bench or plaque memorializing Chan's contributions to the Oakland and AAPI / Chinatown community.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Fortunato Bas

Nikki Fortunato Bas
Council President, District 2

Prepared by:
Tiffany Kang
Policy Analyst and Community Partnerships Manager
Council President + District 2 Office