



AGENDA REPORT



TO: Honorable Mayor and
members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Kaplan
At-Large District

SUBJECT: Bruce Lee Way
Commemorative Street
Renaming

DATE: May 16, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Councilmember Kaplan recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution.

RESOLUTION TO (1) COMMEMORATIVELY RENAME THE INTERSECTION OF BROADWAY AND GARNET STREET AS 'BRUCE LEE WAY' AND (2) AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION OF A PLAQUE HONORING BRUCE LEE, PURSUANT TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 77967 C.M.S.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Council finds that Bruce Lee (b. November 27, 1940 – d. July 20, 1973), in life and death, has contributed to the common good and betterment of the City of Oakland and stands as one of the most influential figures of the 20th century.

It is on-site at 4157 Broadway in Oakland, where Lee and his training partner, James Yimm Lee, founded their studio. Originally named the "Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute," the studio and Lee exemplified many traits held dear to Oaklanders, such as tolerance, health, discipline, and community.

Lee's studio welcomed students of all races and creeds and served as the location where Lee created his hybrid style of martial arts, Jeet Kune Do. Lee's skills and prominence in the martial arts world garnered a massive following of students, including legends in acting and sports, such as Steve McQueen, James Coburn, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Here in Oakland, on the site we wish to honor, Lee met his long-time business partner, Ed Parker, a prominent promoter and organizer in American Martial Arts. Through the partnership with Parker, Lee would star in films such as *Enter the Dragon* and *Game of Death*, showcasing his talent to a global audience. Lee would also star in the television series *The Green Hornet*.

City Council
May 16, 2024
File # 24-0342

Despite his untimely passing in 1973, Lee's legacy continues to thrive through his hybrid creation of Jeet Kune Do, his influential writings on martial arts, and pieces of prose on life. Lee's global influence began at the Jun Fan Gung Institute in Oakland, and this City Council intends to honor the site and life of Bruce Lee, an Oaklander whose influence lives on well after death.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

California Government Code section 34091.1 allows a jurisdiction by resolution to name a new public street or rename an existing one. The naming of a new public street or the renaming of an existing public street is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970.

The City Council will occasionally honor the contributions of an outstanding individual with commemorative street names or by renaming a public street, such as Joe Morgan Way, Herbert Guice Way, Peter Van Kleef Way, Dr. Huey P. Newton Way, Deontae Bush Way, Dorothy King Way, and Too \$hort Way.

Under Oakland City Council Resolution No. 77967 C.M.S. (passed July 15, 2003), the City Council may, on its motion, consider the renaming of a public street as a tribute to an individual or as a result of a significant event or activity, if one of the following criteria is met: (1) the individual has positively impacted the lives of a nation or the world; or (2) the name change is related to an economic development or redevelopment activity; or (3) The renaming commemorates a significant historical event.

The City Council may commemorate a nominee either by (a) retaining the existing street name and installing commemorative plaques or signs or (b) renaming the existing street for the individual and installing new street signs.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City Council intends that Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan's office bear the costs of such a commemorative act, \$1,200.29, pursuant to the City of Oakland's Master Fee Schedule.

Adopting proposed resolutions, such as this, reinforces the City's commitment to nurturing a healthy and productive environment for artists. By honoring the City's rich history, the work and stories of Oaklanders past and present can inspire the next generation of local artists.

The City is home to various artists from across the artistic spectrum. By investing in Oakland artists' rich history, the City sends a message to potential artists and investors, declaring its commitment to supporting emerging talent in any form. Thus, the City attracts more residents and businesses, such as filming and film production, including soundstage work, graphic design, wardrobe, set design, and film training. Further, the City can build upon its martial arts history and attract an assortment of martial arts trainings and events. By honoring Lee, the City reiterates its commitment to uplifting and recognizing the artists who call or once called Oakland home.

Lee is not only an influential figure in film and martial arts, but Lee is also an influential figure in the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Oakland is proud to continue to nourish and uplift its AAPI community by taking action to increase artistic outlets and business opportunities. Undertaking actions like this underlines the City's desire to attract and foster creative individuals and businesses.

The City has the potential to maximize and cultivate a bustling film industry. By investing in our past, we ensure our past successes can catapult the City's film industry into a trajectory that creates jobs, related industries, and revenue. Further, recognizing Lee's achievements in an official capacity can foster a positive community spirit and attract potential investments in our emerging local film industry.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

Various organizations have urged the City Council to recognize Lee's life and stories through acts like this one, as he is one of the most celebrated figures of the 20th century. This legislation was drafted with the input of Lee aficionados. Further, we have discussed and implemented the suggestions of film industry persons and community stakeholders with significant relevance to Lee.

COORDINATION

The Oakland Department of Transportation and the Office of the City Attorney have coordinated the proposed resolution. Officially recognizing Lee has been discussed at great length in the past and through legislation. This item will be the council's first proposal to honor Lee's legacy and business in the City officially. The drafts of this proposal were shared with various City Staff members and community stakeholders in the Lee sphere. This proposal culminates years of attempts to uplift the Lee legacy.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan recommends adopting the following resolution:

RESOLUTION TO (1) COMMEMORATIVELY RENAME THE INTERSECTION OF BROADWAY AND GARNET STREET AS ‘BRUCE LEE WAY’ AND (2) AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION OF A PLAQUE HONORING BRUCE LEE, PURSUANT TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 77967 C.M.S.

For questions regarding this report, please get in touch with Michael Alvarenga, Legislative Analyst, at malvarenga@oaklandca.gov

Respectfully submitted,



Councilmember Kaplan
At-Large District

Prepared by:
Michael Alvarenga, Legislative Analyst
Office of Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan

Reviewed by:
Kimberly Jones, Chief of Staff
Office of Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan