



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Steven D. Jones, Community Development Director
DATE: July 15, 2025
SUBJECT: Purple Heart License Plate Holders Designated Parking Spaces

Description Request for direction to prepare an ordinance for mandatory Purple Heart license plate holders designated parking spaces.

Background and Analysis:

In light of growing public interest and community feedback, direction is sought on drafting an ordinance for mandatory parking spaces on commercial private properties for vehicles with Purple Heart License plates. If directed, this would expand on Resolution No. 2018-41, approved on August 7, 2018, by the Beaumont City Council. This resolution provided for an exclusive parking spot with appropriate signage in City-owned parking lots and designated August 7th as Beaumont Purple Heart Day.

Originally established in 1782 by then-General George Washington, the Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration still awarded today. It is presented to members or families of the United States Armed Forces who are killed or wounded by enemy action during armed conflict. Upon request, recipients of the Purple Heart may obtain specialized recognition license plates bearing the Purple Heart insignia for vehicles they own or co-own, provided the vehicle is not used for commercial purposes. California agencies that have parking facilities of at least 25 parking spaces available to private persons who conduct business with any state agency currently reserve parking spaces free of charge for the exclusive use of any vehicles that display a Purple Heart special license plate. If an ordinance is adopted, requirements for an exclusive parking spot for Purple Heart License Plate recipients would be expanded to all private entities within the City of Beaumont.

Though cities and counties may provide designated parking spaces for vehicles displaying special recognition plates, such as those issued to Purple Heart recipients, most Southern California Inland Empire cities have no specific municipal ordinances requiring commercial properties reserve parking for vehicles displaying Purple Heart license plates. However, California state law under the above-mentioned California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22511.55 may still apply in certain cases.

Summary for Inland Empire Cities:

- Cities like Riverside, San Bernardino, Ontario, and others **are not required** to provide reserved Purple Heart parking unless they choose to do so.
- Some cities or counties **may voluntarily offer such spaces** as a courtesy or policy decision.
- **State-run facilities** (such as DMV offices or Caltrans buildings) in the Inland Empire **are required** to reserve a space under the California Legislature 2017-2018 regular session Senate Bill (SB) 1175.

Veterans who are injured in the line of duty while serving their country often face unforeseen and lasting challenges, including the possibility of living with a permanent disability. The Beaumont City Council, through Resolution 2018-41, recognized that for those who have been awarded the Purple Heart in recognition of their sacrifice, it is both reasonable and respectful for the City to take meaningful steps to ease their transition to civilian life. One such measure includes providing more accessible parking options for Purple Heart recipients as a small gesture of gratitude for their honorable and faithful service.

An ordinance would align with state policy goals and demonstrate the City's commitment to recognizing the sacrifices of veterans and individuals awarded special military honors. Implementation of this program can be managed within existing resources, with minimal disruption to operations and limited long-term costs.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost to prepare this staff report was approximately \$250.

An ordinance amending parking requirements would require all public and private facilities within the City of Beaumont that provide more than 25 vehicle parking spaces to reserve at least one (1) parking space, free of charge, for the exclusive use of vehicles displaying legally issued special license plates (e.g., Purple Heart), in accordance with California law.

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends a directive to propose an amendment to the Beaumont parking standards to include a requirement for Purple Heart recipient parking spaces.

Attachments:

- A. Sample Draft Purple Heart Code Language

B. Resolution No. 2018-41