



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Steven D. Jones, Community Development Director
DATE: September 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Purple Heart License Plate Holders Designated Parking Spaces

Description: Summary of the Economic Development Committee's recommendation for consideration of Purple Heart license plate holder designated parking spaces program.

Background and Analysis:

At its regular meeting on July 15, 2025, the Beaumont City Council directed staff to collaborate with the Beaumont Economic Development Committee to assess the potential effects of a proposed ordinance requiring certain commercial properties to designate parking spaces for vehicles with Purple Heart license plates.

Designating parking spaces for Purple Heart license plate holders through a city ordinance would be a gesture of honor and respect for combat-wounded veterans. But like any policy, it comes with a mix of benefits and challenges for businesses. While the intent is commendable, the Committee has identified both benefits and challenges for the business community.

Benefits:

- Enhances public goodwill and business reputation.
- May increase patronage from veterans and their families.
- Minimal cost if signage is provided by veterans' organizations.

Challenges:

- Reduces general parking availability.
- Ambiguities in enforcement and implementation.
- Unclear responsibilities for signage installation and upkeep.
- Disproportionate impact on small businesses compared to larger chains.

Existing Legal Context

Currently, under California law¹, state-operated parking facilities with 25 or more spaces must reserve at least one free, exclusive space for Purple Heart license plate holders. Beaumont has voluntarily adopted similar practices at municipal sites, supported by

signage and adopted Resolution 2018-41, which also designates August 7th as Beaumont Purple Heart Day.

Potential Policy Approach:

Rather than a mandatory ordinance, the Committee agrees with the City Council on having a voluntary, community-driven initiative to honor Purple Heart recipients. This approach gives businesses the option of supporting such a program without impacting any potentially limited parking while fostering civic pride, strengthening ties with veterans' groups, and allowing businesses to participate based on capacity.

Proposed Potential Program Key Features

1. Voluntary Participation

- Open to all businesses, shopping centers, and public venues within a certain geographical area to start.
- Participants could be entered into a database to receive promotion through the Economic Development Department and/or Committee.

2. Designated Parking

- Business agrees to reserve one or more parking spaces for Purple Heart license plate holders.
- Spaces are marked with standardized signage provided through partner organizations.

3. Community Partnerships

- Veterans' Organizations:
 - i. Collaborate with local VFW, American Legion, and Purple Heart award chapters, chambers of commerce, and others, as applicable, to promote and assist with outreach.
 - ii. Chambers of commerce could recognize and/or promote participating businesses.

4. Recognition and Promotion

- Annual "Veteran-Friendly Business" award/posting on City social media.
- Other forms of social media spotlights and local press coverage are coordinated through City and chamber outlets.
- Education and Awareness:
 - i. Purple Heart award significance and City and community recognitions efforts.
 - ii. Businesses and veterans could provide feedback on a pilot program through short surveys. City staff and partner organizations could assess impact and explore expansion after reporting back after 6 – 12 months of activity.

Next Steps:

Should the Council determine whether a voluntary pilot program, or the launch of a new program, is warranted, staff would initiate contact first with the local veterans' organization for signage that matches existing signage at City facilities. A kickoff event could be announced by the City in connection with the expanded military banner program pilot or some other event centered around the celebration and recognition of veterans in the coming months. Incentivized business enrollment would occur online or at Chamber events.

| Phase | Timeline | Key Actions |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Program Launch | Month 1 | Press release, kickoff event, enrollment opens. |
| Business Enrollment | Months 1–3 | Sign-up, signage distribution, map updates. |
| Community Engagement | Months 2–6 | City partnerships, social media campaigns. |
| Evaluation | Month 6–12 | Surveys, feedback sessions, impact report. |

Following the pilot, the Council may consider broader implementation or Citywide expansion based on participation and community impact.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost to prepare this staff report was approximately \$450.

If given the directive to develop and launch a pilot program, any proposed activity for staff review and public engagement carried out would occur in the normal course of business. Staff costs would be incurred for social media posts and any publishing for community group feedback and business participation.

Recommended Action:

Waive the full reading and adopt by title only "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Beaumont, California, Endorsing the Launch and Promotion of a Voluntary Pilot Purple Heart License Plate Parking Honor Program", and

Direct staff to develop and launch a pilot program.

Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution
- B. Resolution 2018-041
- C. PowerPoint presentation