



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 23-111

For business meeting on: July 21, 2023

Title

Court Facilities: Revised *Courthouse Naming Policy*

Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

July 21, 2023

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

July 12, 2023

Recommended by

Court Facilities Advisory Committee

Hon. Brad R. Hill, Chair

Hon. Patricia M. Lucas (Ret.), Vice-Chair

Hon. Keith D. Davis (Ret.), Chair of the
Subcommittee on Courthouse Names

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Executive Summary

The Court Facilities Advisory Committee and its Subcommittee on Courthouse Names recommend adoption of the revised *Courthouse Naming Policy*. Changes over time necessitate an update to the policy since it was adopted by the Judicial Council in 2014.

Recommendation

The Court Facilities Advisory Committee and its Subcommittee on Courthouse Names recommend that the Judicial Council, effective July 21, 2023, adopt the revised *Courthouse Naming Policy* (see Attachment A).

Relevant Previous Council Action

On May 11, 2009, the *Courthouse Naming Policy* was adopted. On April 25, 2014, the council adopted a revision to its policy (see Link A).

Analysis/Rationale

The current *Courthouse Naming Policy* provides that the Judicial Council, acting through its Court Facilities Advisory Committee's (CFAC) Subcommittee on Courthouse Names, name courthouses based on standards for consistency of identification. These standards are applied to newly constructed courthouses and renovated courthouses, which the Judicial Council has financed in whole or in part, and to existing courthouses, where the council is the facility owner or majority tenant.

The proposed revision to the current policy maintains the integrity of the standards and their applicability for consistency in identifying courthouses, and is based on changes over time that necessitate an update to reflect past practices.

The primary update is to the category for naming a courthouse after a person. Policy section III.B.2.b. is revised to maintain the 10-year deceased criterion as a rebuttable presumption but provides an exception for persons deceased less than 10 years or who are still living where articulable circumstances exist that ensure full knowledge of the person's character and the *person's character and reputation were previously investigated, extensively and repeatedly, in connection with the person's prior selection or appointment to position(s) of public service*. Past naming practices are summarized as follows and in Table 1 below:

1. Of all properties (approximately 450) in the council's real estate portfolio, 27 are court facilities named after a person.
2. Half (13 of 27) of these persons were living at the time of naming approval.
3. Only five (Sisk, Foltz, Joseph, Tamura, and Gibson) were deceased more than 10 years.
4. The council has approved six courthouse names (highlighted in Table 1) including two who were living persons and one who was deceased less than 10 years.

Table 1: Courthouse Naming Approvals

Line #	County	Building Name	Approval Authority	Date Approved	Year of Death	Deceased at Time of Approval? (Y/N)	City	Year Built
1.	Alameda	Rene C. Davidson Courthouse	County	circa 1995	1994	Y	Oakland	1935
2.	Alameda	Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse	County	5/21/82	1981	Y	Oakland	1978
3.	Alameda	George E. McDonald Hall of Justice	County	Unk.	2016	N	Alameda	1985
4.	Contra Costa	Richard E. Arnason Justice Center	Judicial Council	10/24/2008	2015	N	Pittsburg	2010
5.	Contra Costa	A. F. Bray Courthouse	County	Unk.	1987	Unk.	Martinez	1986
6.	Contra Costa	George D. Carroll Courthouse	County	2009	2016	N	Richmond	1953
7.	Contra Costa	Spinetta Family Law Center	County	circa 2003	-	N	Martinez	2003
8.	Contra Costa	Wakefield Taylor Courthouse	County	Unk.	2005	N	Martinez	1901
9.	Fresno	B.F. Sisk Courthouse	Judicial Council	4/25/2014	1995	Y > 10 yrs.	Fresno	1967
10.	Humboldt	John Hayes Memorial Veterans Hall	County	Unk.	2004	N	Garberville	1950
11.	Los Angeles	Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse	County	circa 2003	-	N	Lancaster	2003
12.	Los Angeles	Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse	Judicial Council	2/25/2011	2018	N	Long Beach	2013
13.	Los Angeles	Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse	County	circa 1992	2016	N	Monterey Park	1992
14.	Los Angeles	Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center	County	2002	1934	Y > 10 yrs.	Los Angeles	1972
15.	Los Angeles	Alfred J. McCourtney Juvenile Justice Center	County	Unk.	1975	Unk.	Lancaster	1960
16.	Los Angeles	Stanley Mosk Courthouse	County	2002	2001	Y	Los Angeles	1957
17.	Merced	Robert M. Falasco Justice Center (Los Banos Division)	Judicial Council	8/21/2015	2012	Y	Los Banos	2016
18.	Merced	Charles James Ogletree, Jr. Courthouse	Legislation	9/18/2022	-	N	Merced	2006
19.	Modoc	Robert A. Barclay Justice Center	County	1993	2010	N	Alturas	1976
20.	Nevada	Joseph Government Center (Truckee Courthouse)	County	circa 1970	1897	Y > 10 yrs.	Truckee	1970
21.	Orange	Betty Lou Lamoreaux Justice Center	County	5/14/1992	2018	N	Orange	1992
22.	Orange	Stephen K. Tamura Courthouse (West Justice Center)	Judicial Council	4/16/2020	1982	Y > 10 yrs.	Westminster	1967
23.	Placer	Howard G. Gibson Courthouse	Judicial Council	10/27/2015	1986	Y > 10 yrs.	Roseville	2008
24.	Riverside	Larson Justice Center	County	1997	2020	N	Indio	1997
25.	Sacramento	Carol Miller Justice Center	County	circa 1991	1990	Y	Sacramento	1991
26.	Sacramento	William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse	County	circa 1999	1998	Y	Sacramento	1999
27.	Sacramento	Gordon D. Schaber Sacramento County Courthouse	County	2002	1997	Y	Sacramento	1965

As shown above in Table 1, most of the facilities were named at the local level and prior to the transfer of responsibility of court space or transfer of title to the state. Moreover, the following should be noted for the six courthouse names approved by the council:

1. The Richard E. Arnason Justice Center was approved prior to the implementation of a naming policy, as the council adopted its first naming policy in 2009.
2. The Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse was approved in conformance to the 2009 naming policy that allowed for names after living persons.
3. The Sisk, Tamura, and Gibson courthouses were approved in conformance to the current policy.
4. The Robert M. Falasco Justice Center was approved with an exception to the current policy since he had been deceased less than 10 years.

In addition, the proposed revision captures minor edits to remove outdated references, such as to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Policy implications

In proposing a revision to the council's naming policy, the process for naming a courthouse under policy section III.C. is unchanged. Moreover, the revised policy was evaluated first by the CFAC's Subcommittee on Courthouse Names, with a recommendation to the full advisory committee. Each evaluation was carried out at a public meeting as described below.

Comments

The CFAC's Subcommittee on Courthouse Names previously discussed the attached revised policy at a meeting, open to the public, on June 12, 2023. It was posted in advance of that meeting for public comment, and no public comments were received. Moreover, the subcommittee directed its posting, again, for a 14-day public comment period for the CFAC to consider public comments before taking final action. The draft policy was shared via email with all presiding judges and court executive officers, and posted on two separate webpages on the California Courts website—CFAC and Invitations to Comment. The public comment period was from June 12–26, 2023, and only one public comment was received. On June 27, 2023, at a meeting open to the public, the full advisory committee directed that the revised policy, incorporating language suggested by that public comment and as shown under Tab 6 of the meeting materials available at www.courts.ca.gov/documents/cfac-20230627-materials.pdf, move forward to the Judicial Council for adoption.

Alternatives considered

To implement the revised policy in advance of any future courthouse naming requests submitted to the council, no alternatives to the recommended action were considered. The CFAC and its Subcommittee on Courthouse Names strongly support this proposal.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Implementation of the revised policy will not require new costs, as costs associated with administering it are paid from funds for Judicial Council Facilities Services staffing. Costs associated with the design, fabrication, and installation of signage are paid from different

sources, such as capital project funds or local court operating budgets, depending on the court facility identified for the name.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: *Courthouse Naming Policy* (revised July 21, 2023)
2. Link A: *Courthouse Naming Policy* (revised April 25, 2014),
www.courts.ca.gov/documents/cthse-naming-policy-2014.pdf



Courthouse Naming Policy

ADOPTED: MAY 11, 2009

REVISED: JULY 21, 2023



Judicial Council of California

I. Purpose of the Policy

The Judicial Council of California (Judicial Council) is responsible for California's courthouses under the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002 and related legislation, which also includes responsibility for construction of new courthouses and renovation of existing courthouses. It is the policy of the Judicial Council, acting through the Court Facilities Advisory Committee, Subcommittee on Courthouse Names, through its directives to Judicial Council staff, to name courthouses based on standards. This will provide consistency in identifying courthouses in California.

The naming of courthouses will follow the standards set forth in this policy in naming new courthouses, and in naming existing courthouses—including court facilities that are renovated.

II. Application of Courthouse Naming Standards

The Judicial Council's naming standards will be applied to newly constructed courthouses and renovated courthouses that the Judicial Council has financed—in whole or in part—and to existing courthouses, where the judicial branch is the facility owner or majority tenant.

III. Names for Trial and Appellate Courthouses

A. Definitions

Court facility refers to any building that the local court occupies to provide its main services, its branch services, or other services and operations. As used in this policy, the word *courthouse* is considered interchangeable with this term.

Court Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC) is an advisory body to the Judicial Council on all facilities-related matters. The members of this advisory committee are appointed by the Chief Justice of California. The CFAC is charged with providing ongoing oversight of the judicial branch program that manages new construction and renovations for the superior courts and Courts of Appeal throughout the state. It oversees the work of the Judicial Council staff in its management of court facilities statewide and in its effort to implement the judicial branch's capital improvement program.

Subcommittee on Courthouse Names (the subcommittee) is the subcommittee of the CFAC charged with responsibility to review and consider options in naming specific new and existing courthouses. The chair of the Subcommittee on Courthouse Names is appointed by the chair of the CFAC. The members of the subcommittee are appointed by the subcommittee chair. The subcommittee is responsible for recommending to the CFAC names for courthouses and in doing so may consider comments from members of CFAC, or refer requests for naming to the Judicial Council where appropriate. The subcommittee's operating protocols, including the term of each member, will be established by the CFAC.

Case type can include but is not limited to the following caseload identifiers: family law, juvenile, criminal, civil, traffic, probate, small claims, mental health, and drug.

Location of a court facility refers to the building's physical location in either an incorporated (i.e., town or city) or unincorporated (i.e., county or region) geographical area.

B. Naming Standards for Trial and Appellate Courthouses

1. Courthouses will be named based on one of the following two categories:
 - a. Location and case type, which is the category most commonly used; or
 - b. A person, which is a rarely used category.

A courthouse name will not include the name of any business entity, institution, foundation, or other organization, whether for profit or not for profit.

2. An explanation of each category follows. For all name categories, the courthouse name must include “Superior Court” or “Court of Appeal” *and* “California.” In each case, the building name may include the term “Courthouse,” “Justice Center,” or “Hall of Justice.”
 - a. Naming Preference 1: Location and Case Type (Most Commonly Used). It is the preference of the Judicial Council to name courthouses after their location and, if applicable, case type. This convention supports the Judicial Council’s goal of enhancing access to justice because naming courthouses after the location and case type provides users with key information about where the courthouse is located and the type of proceedings conducted within the courthouse.

Examples of courthouse names under the preferred naming standard for trial courts are as follows:

Format Examples	Courthouses	Justice Centers	Halls of Justice
Example 1	El Centro Family Courthouse Superior Court of California County of Imperial	Selma Regional Justice Center Superior Court of California County of Fresno	East County Hall of Justice Superior Court of California County of Alameda
Example 2	El Centro Family Courthouse Superior Court of California Imperial County	Selma Regional Justice Center Superior Court of California Fresno County	East County Hall of Justice Superior Court of California Alameda County

Examples of courthouse names under the preferred naming standard for appellate courts are as follows:

Format Examples	Appellate Courthouse Names
Example 1	State of California Court of Appeal First Appellate District Courthouse
Example 2	California Court of Appeal Fourth Appellate District Division Three
Example 3	State of California Court of Appeal Fifth Appellate District

- b. Naming Preference 2: A Person (Rarely Used). Naming a courthouse after a person must be carefully considered to protect the integrity and independence of the judicial branch. A courthouse may be named after a person upon consideration of *all* the following criteria:
- i. The person made recognizable, significant contributions to the state or national justice system.
 - ii. There is a rebuttable presumption that the name of a living person or one who died fewer than 10 years before the naming of the courthouse should not be used. Ten years is a reasonable time during which facts bearing upon such a person's character would come to light.

If articulable circumstances exist that ensure full knowledge of the character of a living person or one who died fewer than 10 years before the naming of the courthouse, this presumption may be overcome. An example of such circumstances is if the person's character and reputation were previously investigated, extensively and repeatedly, in connection with the person's prior selection or appointment to position(s) of public service.
 - iii. The person, or the estate of the person, or any otherwise related entity deemed to pose a potential conflict of interest by the subcommittee, does not have any case pending before any court, and no such case is reasonably likely to come before any court, in future litigation.
 - iv. The naming does not present a potential conflict of interest as may be viewed by the public, government entities, or private businesses.
 - v. Consistency with the California Code of Judicial Ethics.

Examples of persons who meet these criteria may include a former Governor of California, a former Chief Justice of California, a former member of the California or United States Supreme Court, a former appellate court justice, a former trial court judge, a former court executive officer, a former president of a state or local bar association, or a former state or federal legislator.

C. Process for Naming Courthouses

Courthouses will be named by the following process:

1. Requests for courthouse naming will be submitted to the chair of the subcommittee by the presiding judge or assistant presiding judge, or the court executive officer or the administrative presiding justice, or the clerk/executive officer of the Court of Appeal, or their designee, of the subject court. Concurrently, the chair of the subcommittee will in turn provide the request(s) to the local court or committee as to process and minimum requirements set forth in this policy.

2. The subcommittee will evaluate each proposed name under the standards set forth in this policy.
3. Upon consideration of any request, the chair of the subcommittee will propose requests for names under section 2(a) preference 1, and all requests under section 2(b) preference 2, for consideration by the CFAC.
4. Upon consideration, the CFAC shall present a recommendation on the name of a courthouse to the Judicial Council, which presentation will include the subcommittee's recommendation.
5. Where appropriate, the chair of the subcommittee will be delegated by the chair of CFAC to approve standard courthouse names under section 2(a) of this policy, on behalf of the CFAC of the Judicial Council. This approval shall be subject to ratification by the Judicial Council. Requests for those names must have been duly submitted under C.1 of this policy.

D. Designation of Courthouse Names in Building Signage and Plaques

Signage and plaques on buildings shall designate the duly approved names under this policy subject to the following requirements:

1. Standards: All signage and plaques must comply with the requirements of the *California Trial Court Facilities Standards*¹ and its addenda as pertain to signage, use of seals by courts,² and plaques.
2. Application of courthouse names: Subject to the foregoing, each state trial courthouse shall have reflected in its exterior signage designated under this policy: "Superior Court of California, County of [County name]" and the Great Seal of the State of California.

¹ Judicial Council's *California Trial Court Facilities Standards*, 2020.

² Gov. Code, §§ 68074, 68076 et seq.