

TO: James L. App, City Manager  
FROM: Doug Monn, Director of Public Works  
SUBJECT: Street-side Memorial Sign Program  
DATE: September 3, 2013

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Needs: That the City Council consider a Street-side Memorial Program for recognition of traffic fatalities on City streets.

- Facts:
1. At their meeting of May 7, 2013, the City Council requested a public discussion of roadside memorials.
  2. Concerns have been raised regarding the placement and on-going presence of impromptu street-side memorials as distractions to drivers and for the safety of those that place the memorials.
  3. For the purposes of safety, standards are adopted for signs placed within the public right-of-way. The City typically places all of its signs consistent with the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
  4. As a compromise between the conflicting interests of family members memorializing the loss of loved ones and the City's responsibility to maintain safe streets a standardized memorial sign program may be considered.

Analysis &  
Conclusion:

At its meeting of May 7, Council requested a public discussion of roadside memorials as some placed within the last few years have been large enough to be distracting to drivers and in some cases precariously close to the road edge.

For the purposes of safety there are standards adopted for placement of signs within the public right-of-way. Consistency with sign types, color and location provides drivers guidance and information needed for safe operations.

In recognition of lost family members and the interests of right-of-way safety, other agencies have adopted sign programs for roadside memorials (see sample program attached). A standardized memorial sign could be placed upon request of the family, free of charge. The sign would remain in place for a period of time (determined by Council) and then offered to the family upon its removal

Having the City install the sign eliminates the distractions of impromptu memorials and the danger of family members entering the right-of-way to place and maintain private memorial decorations.

Policy

Reference: California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Fiscal

Impact: The general cost to purchase and place sign is \$160.

Options:

- a. Authorize the Director of Public Works to develop a memorial sign program in memory of any person killed in a traffic accident on a City street. The request must be made by a member of the victim's immediate family, and submitted in writing using an established City application form.
  - 1) Once the application is made and approved the City will install the sign as soon as practical at:
    - i. No charge to the applicant  
Or
    - ii. At a charge of \$160 to the applicant
  - 2) The signs will maintained by the City for:
    - i. One year  
Or
    - ii. Two years
  - 3) After that period of time:
    - i. The sign will be removed and offered to the family  
Or
    - ii. The families will have the one-time option of renewing the maintenance for one year at a cost of \$160
  - 4) The signs will be:
    - i. Standardized  
Or
    - ii. Personalized with the deceased name
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

Prepared by: John Falkenstien, City Engineer

Attachment:

(1) Wyoming Roadside Memorial Sign Program



## A safe compromise

The WYDOT Roadside Memorial Program was created as a compromise between the conflicting interests of meeting the emotional needs of those who have lost family members in crashes and the department's responsibility to maintain a safe highway system.

The memorial signs WYDOT installs are a safer alternative to private memorials being erected beside roads. The memorial signs are located safely at the edge of the right of way, meet federal highway safety standards and are installed free of charge.

Having WYDOT personnel install and maintain the memorial signs eliminates the dangers of family members erecting or visiting memorials beside a road and the risks of having unregulated obstructions in the highway clear zone.

WYDOT hopes the signs serve as fitting memorials to those killed, and a reminder to drivers to keep safety uppermost in their minds while traveling on the state's highways.



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# A memorial program for traffic fatalities on Wyoming highways

# WYDOT'S Roadside Memorial Program

# Program Criteria

- A memorial sign can be erected in memory of any person killed in a crash on a Wyoming highway, except if the crash occurred within city limits or on U.S. Forest Service or tribal lands.
- The request for the memorial sign must be made by a member of the victim's immediate family, and submitted in writing using the form included in this brochure.
- Once an application is made and approved, WYDOT will install the sign as soon as practical and at no charge.
- The signs will be as close to the right-of-way fence as possible at the site where the fatality occurred. No signs will be installed in medians or drainage ditches.
- Signs will be maintained by WYDOT for five years.
- After five years, families have the option of having the

- sign removed and given to them, leaving the sign up without maintenance or having a new sign installed for a \$50 fee to cover the costs of fabrication and installation.
- Original signs left up beyond five years will be removed by WYDOT when it becomes necessary due to deterioration. At that time the family will be given the one-time option of having a new sign installed for the \$50 fee.
- Family members who requested the sign be installed can ask to have it removed and turned over to them at any time.
- Private memorials are prohibited on Wyoming highway right of way, and any that appear will be removed by WYDOT and held for two weeks to allow retrieval by the family.

To mail the form: (1.) cut along dashed line

Wyoming Department of Transportation Roadside Memorial Sign Application			Date memorial requested		
Name of person applying for sign			Relationship to victim		
Address					
City		State		Zip code	Daytime phone number
Date of fatal crash		Location of crash			
Victim's name(s)			Name of driver		
Signature of applicant			Other comments		

(2.) fold along this line

## The memorial design

The broken heart on the memorial signs symbolizes the grief and sorrow families experience due to the loss of the crash victim. The dove symbolizes healing and hope for the future.

The two symbols were adopted for the memorials as a result of a statewide design competition for elementary school students.



(3.) tape long edges together (4.) affix a postage stamp.