

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 10:40 AM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: I respectfully ask the City Council to pause the proposal to rename Pershing Square as Biddy Mason Park. Biddy Mason was an extraordinary Angeleno who deserves to be honored and remembered. But Los Angeles already has a beautiful Biddy Mason Memorial Park, a remarkable work of public art and historical interpretation on the site of her former homestead. Please restore and properly maintain Biddy Mason Memorial Park, respect the artists who created it, and implement the City's September 2024 action designating the Biddy Mason Legacy Corridor on Spring Street and directing LADOT to install permanent ceremonial signs. Where are those signs? Please complete the Biddy Mason commemorative projects the City has already approved before undertaking another duplicative renaming effort. I also ask the City to respect Pershing Square's history as a war memorial associated with General John J. Pershing and the more than two million soldiers of American Expeditionary Forces. Finally, please use the City's commemorative powers to honor important Angelenos who don't already have a park or other civic place named for them, and ask local historians who they think should be recognized. Thank you, Andrew Murr 323 S. Irving Blvd. Los Angeles 90020

Communication from Public

Name: Don Waterbury
Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 12:55 PM
Council File No: 24-0751
Comments for Public Posting: Why rename Pershing Square when Los Angeles already has a beautiful, but neglected, Biddy Mason Memorial Park—and voted two years ago to honor Mason with signs along 12 prime blocks of Spring Street, a prominent honor which has not yet been installed? Thank you for attention and action.

Communication from Public

Name: Don Waterbury
Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 12:57 PM
Council File No: 24-0751
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Communication from Public

Name: Nathan Marsak

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 01:01 PM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: Esteemed Council: I am a historian who specializes in downtown, and I oppose renaming Pershing Square. There are two elements at work here — why the Pershing name is important, and why the Biddy Mason Park we already have is important. Of Pershing's importance there can be no doubt. Pershing's leadership extended to the African-American Buffalo Soldiers and the Harlem Hellfighters, whom he deployed with a level of trust that defied the prevailing prejudices of the era. Pershing forged the American Expeditionary Forces into a professional combat power during World War I, allowing us to emerge victorious over autocratic tyranny—a fight that involved tens of thousands of Angelenos, including the over 400 dead who never came home. Pershing has a deep relationship to Los Angeles, too; he spent a lot of time with his pal George S. Patton (and became engaged to Patton's sister at the Patton home in San Marino). Patton commanded the Los Angeles headquarters of the Coast Artillery, and delivered addresses to the local Red Cross. Pershing was in Los Angeles to personally dedicate the square named in his honor, and 50,000 people—1/10th of the entire city—came to see him speak. Pershing was back in Los Angeles in 1923, speaking to thousands again, and personally planted a redwood at the War Memorial Building that stands to this day. It would do our nation and our city a disservice to strip the park of his name. Biddy Mason is also unquestionably important; she was a brilliant example of self-made success, leveraging the foundational principles of capitalism to secure her family's future. After winning her freedom, she didn't just survive; she thrived by applying discipline and shrewd judgment to the Los Angeles real estate market. Through meticulous saving and strategic property acquisitions on Spring Street, she transformed her labor into significant capital. From there she rightfully aligned herself with the prevailing Victorian ethos, which held that the affluent had a moral obligation to oversee social welfare through private means. By financing the First A.M.E. Church and establishing schools, Mason reinforced her social standing while serving the public interest. The Biddy Mason park downtown, at the site of her homestead, is a wonderful testament to her memory. I work downtown and visit it often. The mantra that “no one is ever there!” is an obfuscating, embellished claim. If the park is

underutilized that can be remedied by driving more interest to the park, rather than simply naming another park after Mason.

Esteemed Council:

I am a historian who specializes in downtown, and I oppose renaming Pershing Square.

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Of Pershing's importance there can be no doubt. Pershing's leadership extended to the African-American Buffalo Soldiers and the Harlem Hellfighters, whom he deployed with a level of trust that defied the prevailing prejudices of the era. Pershing forged the American Expeditionary Forces into a professional combat power during World War I, allowing us to emerge victorious over autocratic tyranny—a fight that involved tens of thousands of Angelenos, including the over 400 dead who never came home.

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(Pershing rides down Broadway after the park dedication, January 1920)

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The Bidy Mason park downtown, at the site of her homestead, is a wonderful testament to her memory. I work downtown and visit it often. The mantra that “no one is ever there!” is an obfuscating, embellished claim. If the park is underutilized that can be remedied by driving more interest to the park, rather than simply naming *another* park after Mason.



Thank you for your attention to my comments.

Nathan Marsak

Communication from Public

Name: Suzanne Gates

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 10:55 AM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: The collective memory of a community is held in its memorials, and for this reason I strongly object to the renaming of Pershing Square. My objection has little to do with General Pershing himself and much to do with honoring Los Angeles's World War I veterans. To rename is to obscure or erase what has gone before, putting in its place a more desired name. Bidley Mason certainly deserves to be honored, I agree. Yet, for Pershing Square, that means one more old war memorial deleted in an era when World War I is no longer in living memory. Trench war is no longer feared. Most Californians do not know the meaning behind red poppies still sometimes given on Veterans' Day--that they evoke the killing fields of France. Even Veterans' Day itself has been renamed, wiping out its specific WWI connection. The flu pandemic that killed many AEF soldiers onboard ship, before they even reached France's battle, has been obscured by our most recent pandemic. Yet thousands of Californians were part of the American Expeditionary Forces led by General Pershing, and that era in American and world history forced all then living to adapt to a world interconnected for the first time, not by cheap flights or by the Internet or streaming TV but by the horrors of war. I have recently toured England and France, where thoughtful WWI memorials are still central to many communities. They honor those who fought and died from a town or neighborhood. Red poppy wreaths are laid on what is still known there as Armistice Day. Those killed, the honor of their sacrifice for others, and the lives they never got to live are made present in the current community with the knowledge that our past must inform our future. In the US, we are currently in a war with future consequences we can't comprehend. What if, instead of wiping out Pershing Square's history, its WWI connection was explored? What if all of Los Angeles's WWI veterans were honored in that square in specific and direct ways? How would that help all who live in Los Angeles County, me included, to understand that the Great War was thought to be the end of all wars, that it changed absolutely everything, that those AEF soldiers who lived in Los Angeles either did not come back, or came back only to carry on the Great War inside themselves? Trench war was a horror of its own. The Peter Jackson 2018 documentary "They Shall Not Grow Old" makes those horrors very, very clear. In Los Angeles,

surviving veterans returned to a life they might not have recognized. The acronym PTSD had not been invented. There was no organized medical, social, or emotional relief for what those Los Angeles veterans endured. All of this, and much more, is implied in Pershing Square. What if Bidy Mason were given her own new, beautiful park, celebrating her sacrifice and accomplishments without wiping out the sacrifice and accomplishments of thousands of other Los Angelinos?

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 08:46 AM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: I just don't understand why any new name needs to be given to Pershing Square. Everyone talks about preserving history and then you take locations and totally rename them. Pershing Square is a reference marker about Los Angeles in so many stories, books, movies, etc. Then you rename Pershing Square and all of that "reference" becomes obsolete! It will take generations to forget Pershing Square and re-associate that area with the new name. It will be confusing that this new name is really Pershing Square! Stop using time, energy and money for the renaming of things that have so much history as they are already known. What a complete waste for no good reason. D.W.

Communication from Public

Name: Frank Girardot

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 09:26 AM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Committee Members, Please pause any consideration of renaming Pershing Square in Downtown Los Angeles. There is already Biddy Mason Memorial Park, which is more appropriately located at the site of her homestead. Please respect her memory and the artists who have created a monument to such a deserving Angeleno. Also, implement the City's September 2024 action designating the Biddy Mason Legacy Corridor on Spring Street and direct LADOT to install permanent ceremonial signs. As for retaining Pershing Square. Please respect the location as a war memorial to those who died and to Pershing's role as an American hero in WWI. He is the only U.S. General to outrank George Washington for his bravery and tactics defending the U.S. at a time of great peril. Doubtless there are many Angelenos deserving of memorial recognition throughout our great city. Please work with historians to identify those persons and seek out appropriate ways to honor their contributions to Los Angeles and California. This plan doesn't do that. Instead it virtue signals in a way that is clearly unnecessary given that other memorials to Biddy Mason and her memory have yet to be fully realized. Sincerely, Frank Girardot

Communication from Public

Name: Kathryn E. Fuller

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 10:04 AM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: Buddy Mason deserves a much bigger and more accessible memorial than the small one she has now , which is certainly not a park. However, it would not be right or fair to rename Pershing Square. Find some unused space for a new Biddy Mason park.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 10:21 AM

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Communication from Public

Name: Tom Grode

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 12:37 PM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: In giving a public comment, I've never done a cut and paste of a previous comment (directly commenting on someone else's comment), but I feel it's the right thing to do here. For starters, I love the map that Kevin Waite included in his comment. Here is an excerpt from his comment: "During the course of my research, I frequently visited Biddy Mason Memorial Park, one of my favorite places in all of Los Angeles. Yet rarely did I encounter any other visitors there." Yes, the lack of visitors is one of the main issues here and one reason is the lack of signage with another reason that Downtown and City leaders/institutions haven't highlighted appropriately the importance of this space. Here is another excerpt: "The existence of Biddy Mason Memorial Park doesn't make additional commemoration redundant any more than the existence of the Lincoln Memorial makes the Lincoln Reflecting Pool, Lincoln Park, or numerous public buildings named for the president redundant. Cities routinely commemorate transformative figures in multiple ways because no single site can capture the breadth of their historical significance. Biddy Mason is one such figure." I don't see this reference to Lincoln as helpful. For one thing, it's not a matter of multiple spaces, it's that the existing space has suffered from a lack of attention and as a result the Wall has needed a deep cleaning for a long time. Also, we're not talking about creating a new space to honor Biddy Mason. We're talking about changing the name of an existing space which has existed for many decades to honor the service of Veterans.

Communication from Public

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Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 04:37 PM

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Communication from Public

Name: Kim Jindra

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 10:52 PM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: As a resident of Los Angeles, I am against changing the name of Pershing Square. First and foremost, this is not in the best interest of Los Angeles taxpayers. At a time when the city is operating with a deficit budget, council members should not be looking for a way to spend more money on an unnecessary change. The proposed name change will cost the city funds it does not have. I mean, we are losing our zoo because of operational costs. So why is the committee pushing for a name change that will cause maps and signage to be changed. Also, why is it necessary to have two city parks honoring the same person less than a mile apart. The current Biddy Mason park does a wonderful job of explaining who she was and how she contributed to the city. More importantly from a historical perspective, the park is on her original homestead, so it has even more significance to the visitor. I understand the church she help found is pushing hard for this change but the church membership does not represent the entire ethnic makeup of the city. In fact, according to the U.S. Census African Americans make up 8.3% of the city and 7.8% of the county. I have no idea how many people attend the one church but I can guess it's less than 8.3% of the city's African American population. I believe in the separation of church and state. It bothers me the committee is ignoring our city's fiscal crisis in an attempt to mollify a small group of constituents with something that is completely unnecessary. Lastly, John J. Pershing Pershing was a national and an international hero after he led U.S. forces during World War I. Twenty three thousand Los Angeles residents served under Pershing. California sent more than 112,000 soldiers and Marines into the conflict. When the war was over, Pershing was honored as the highest-ranking general in the history of the U.S. Army until his death in 1948. The sacrifices of Los Angeles residents (soldiers) during World War One were one reason for Pershing Square. The city mourned the 450 lives lost in the conflict, but were grateful so many returned home. Pershing became the symbol of the victory. He spoke for all soldiers. Residents overwhelmingly showed their support when one tenth of the city's population (50,000) turned out for the dedication of Pershing Square 108 years ago. Don't slap our military history in the face. Biddy Mason has her park. Please leave Pershing Square alone.

Communication from Public

Name: Zach

Date Submitted: 08/24/2026 03:14 PM

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