
NAMING PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Proposal Overview

Proposal Received Date: 1/14/2026

Proposer Name: Shelia Troxel

Proposed Name: "Dale Bender Community Wellness Trail"

Type of Public Asset: Multi-Use Pedestrian Trail

Request: ☒ New Name ☐ Renaming ☐ Commemorative Designation

Summary of Proposal:

Briefly describe the proposed name, rationale, and public asset, as provided in the Naming Proposal Application. Include key points about historical, cultural, natural, or community significance.

The proposal requests formal naming of the existing multi-use pedestrian trail connecting the USH 14/USH 80 intersection to the Richland Center Middle School as the **"Dale Bender Community Wellness Trail."** The trail was constructed in 2020 as part of the Safe Routes to School project and is owned and maintained by the City. The naming is intended to recognize Dale Bender's long-standing contributions to the Richland Center community, particularly in education, youth development, civic leadership, and support of recreational and pedestrian infrastructure.

Public Works Committee Review

Reviewed On: 1/15/2026

Evaluation Based on Naming Criteria:

The Public Works Committee evaluated the proposal against the criteria outlined in the Naming and Branding Policy.

A. Historical, Cultural, or Natural Significance to Richland Center or Wisconsin:

Describe how the proposed name meets or fails to meet this criterion, referencing supporting documentation.

The name recognizes Dale Bender's community legacy, including 34 years of service in the Richland School District, and his support for public infrastructure and wellness initiatives that directly impact the trail corridor.

B. Contributions of Individuals or Groups to the Community, State, or Nation:

Describe any relevant contributions, or note if not applicable.

Mr. Bender is widely recognized for his civic contributions, particularly in the areas of education, trail development, and school safety. He mentored generations of students and was a strong advocate of safe and accessible routes to schools.

C. Geographic or Environmental Features of the Asset's Location:

Describe any connection to the asset's location or note if not applicable.

The trail directly connects to the Middle School, where Mr. Bender served as principal. Its purpose as a student-access route aligns with his legacy and areas of community impact.

D. Avoidance of Commercial Branding, Controversy, or Duplication:

Confirm whether the name avoids commercial branding, controversial figures/events, or duplication with existing names in the city. Note any concerns.

The proposed name avoids commercial branding and duplications. There are no known controversies associated with Mr. Bender.

E. Additional Considerations:

Note any consultations with the Historic Preservation Commission (if applicable) or other stakeholders and summarize findings.

Naming materials were reviewed in accordance with the City's adopted Naming & Branding Policy and SOP. No historic designations were triggered, and no additional commission review was required.

Community Engagement

Public Engagement Activities (if conducted):

Describe any public engagement activities, as per SOP Section 3, such as public meetings, online surveys, or comment periods. If none were conducted, state "No public engagement activities were scheduled."

- Public Meeting: Date, Location, Attendance: N/A
- Online Survey: Date Range, Number of Responses: N/A
- Written Submissions: Number Received: N/A

Summary of Community Feedback:

Provide a concise summary of feedback received, including key themes, support, or opposition. If no feedback was solicited, state "No community feedback was solicited." Attach full feedback documentation if applicable.

No community feedback was solicited.

Response to Feedback:

Explain how the committee considered community feedback in its evaluation or note if feedback was not applicable.

Not applicable, as no formal community engagement or feedback was conducted for this request.

Proposed Signage, Flag, or Banner Design (if applicable)

Design Description: Standard Richland Center Trailhead aluminum signage stating “Dale Bender Community Wellness Trail.”

Committee Recommended Design Modifications: No modifications recommended at this time.

Estimated Costs:

Total Estimated Cost (including fabrication, materials, etc): \$ TBD; anticipated to be minimal and limited to standard trail signage; to be covered by donation.

Funding Source (all sources including department budget, donation, sponsor, etc): Donation

Compliance with Regulations:

The proposed design ☒ **does** / ☐ **does not** comply with Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), ADA, local zoning, and Wisconsin Historical Society guidelines (e.g., cast aluminum for signs, weather-resistant materials for flags/banners).

- **A WisDOT permit is required:** ☐ Yes ☒ No
- **A Zoning Permit is required:** ☐ Yes ☒ No

Committee Recommendation

Recommendation:

The Public Works Committee recommends the Richland Center Common Council:

- ☒ Approve the proposed name as follows: Dale Bender Trail
- ☐ Approve the proposed name with modifications or conditions: Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Deny the proposed name for the following reason(s): Click or tap here to enter text.

Rationale for Recommendation:

Provide a clear explanation of the committee’s recommendation, referencing the evaluation of naming criteria, community feedback, and any other relevant factors.

The Public Works Committee recommends approval of the proposed “Dale Bender Trail” designation based on the historical and community significance of Dale Bender’s decades of service to Richland Center. Mr. Bender was instrumental in advancing pedestrian infrastructure, including the original trail in question, as part of broader Safe Routes to School initiatives. The name aligns with adopted policy criteria by honoring local civic contributions, poses no branding or duplication conflicts, and reflects the trail’s geographic connection to a school corridor. While no formal community engagement was required, the committee believes the designation will be positively received and serves as a meaningful commemoration of Mr. Bender’s legacy.



PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

Adopted 5/6/2025

Approval

Prepared By: _____, Public Works Committee Chair

Signature: _____ **Date:** 01/15/2026

Reviewed By: _____, City Administrator

Signature: _____ **Date:** 01/16/2026

Submission Instructions

Email the completed report to the City Administrator and Clerk for inclusion in the next Common Council meeting agenda. The Director of Public Works is to maintain a copy as an internal document.