



AGENDA

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

4:00 PM - Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Pasco City Hall, Washington Conference Room

Page

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

B.1. Commissioners:

City Staff:

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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C.1. **MOTION:** I move to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2026 meeting.
[HPC Minutes 04-7-2026](#)

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D.1. Sylvester Donation Discussion

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

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E.1. Lewis Street Underpass by Richa Sigdel, Deputy City Manager
[Lewis Street Underpass Report](#)

F. WORKSHOP

F.1. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center DAHP Discussion by Ryan Mehaffey

G. MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

H. ADJOURNMENT



CALL TO ORDER

City of Pasco Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Chair Stafford.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Marilyn Baker, Jay Hendler, and Devi Tate Chair Dan Stafford

Commissioners Excused: Chair Dan Stafford

Staff Present: C&ED Deputy Director Craig Raymond & CIP Manager Ryan Mehaffey

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioners unanimously approve the meeting minutes from March 3, 2026.

UNFINSHIED BUSINESS

• **Sylvester Donation Discussion**

Commissioner Hendren discussed keeping the project simple, suggesting a roughly 4-foot marble or granite plaque for display. The group toured the Sylvester Room and determined it was not a suitable location, then explored alternative areas near the main entrance. Craig will follow up with the City Manager’s Office to seek approval for a downstairs location. Marilyn suggested adding an online component and reaching out to Mr. Sylvester for a better photo.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

WORSHOP

None

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

• **Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center Update by Ryan Mehaffey**

Ryan provided an update on the MLK facility and distributed the MOU Annual Report to all signatories. The group discussed the large community room, noting it is not currently available for public use due to security and occupancy concerns, though Marilyn expressed interest in encouraging future public access. Fundraising, grant opportunities, and the potential for private donations were also discussed.

- Commissioner Tate raised a state request regarding the use of submitted photos in a conference guidebook, and Craig will verify whether additional permissions are needed.

- Commissioner Baker shared a concern, via Tanya Bowers, about the possible demolition of the remaining BN right-of-way wall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioners at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Patrick, Administrative Assistant II
Community & Economic Development Department



REPORT TO HISTRIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall – 525 North Third Avenue – PASCO ROOM
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026
4:00 PM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Richa Sigdel, Deputy City Manager
SUBJECT: Lewis Street Underpass

BACKGROUND

The Lewis Street Underpass was built in 1937 in downtown Pasco. During an era of racial segregation, East Pasco — the neighborhood south and east of the BNSF railroad tracks — was the only area where Black and Asian residents were permitted to live. Chinese railroad laborers were among the first forced into this area as early as the 1880s. During and after World War II, thousands of Black Americans recruited to work at the Hanford Site were similarly confined to East Pasco.

The underpass was the sole crossing point connecting East Pasco to downtown businesses, schools, and services. While it served as a practical lifeline, it also marked the boundary of a segregated city. Despite these conditions, East Pasco's residents built a vibrant community, churches, businesses, and civic life, and Pasco is home to Washington State's longest-running Juneteenth celebration.

The underpass is now being demolished. The City has preserved a physical section of the structure to honor this history in a permanent public installation.

THE ARTIFACT & PROPOSED COMMEMORATION

The City has retained two salvaged sections of the Lewis Street Underpass that are suitable for public display. The intent is to pair this artifact with interpretive signage, a commemorative plaque or panel that contextualizes the structure's history, including its role in Pasco.

The goal of this installation is to:

- Acknowledge the lived experiences of Black and Asian community members who were restricted to this area
- Create a permanent, publicly accessible point of historical reflection in downtown Pasco
- Ensure the demolition of the structure does not erase the memory of what it represented

SITE CONSIDERATIONS & PROPOSED LOCATION

Preferred Community Request: BNSF Right-of-Way

Some community members and stakeholders have expressed a preference for placing the artifact within or immediately adjacent to the BNSF right-of-way near the underpass' original footprint. This location would place the commemoration directly at the historic site.



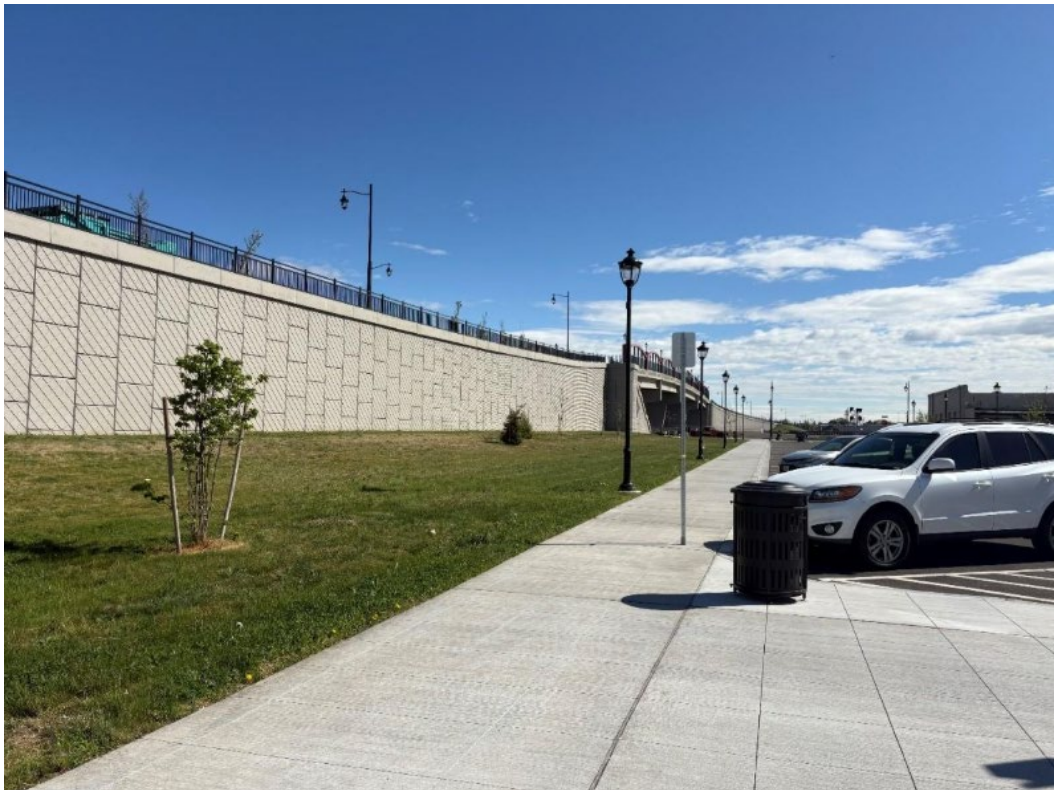
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However, the BNSF right-of-way is private property and placement of public art or commemorative structures within it requires BNSF Railway’s review and approval. At this time, staff anticipates that BNSF is unlikely to grant such approval, and pursuing this location may result in significant delays or a denial. It will also mean restricted access in the future for visitors and residents.

City-Proposed Location: Lewis Street / 1st Avenue

Given the constraints of the BNSF ROW, the City is proposing placement of the artifact at the publicly accessible linear park east of the intersection of Lewis Street and 1st Avenue, directly across the street from the underpass’ original location as shown in Appendix 1. The proposed location is shown below.







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This location offers several advantages:

- Situated on City-controlled, publicly accessible land — no third-party approval required
- In the immediate visual vicinity of the underpass site, preserving geographic proximity and context
- High-visibility location in the heart of downtown Pasco, accessible to residents, visitors, and future generations
- Compatible with planned site improvements already underway in this corridor

The proposed location sits directly parallel to the artifact's original footprint, preserving geographic proximity and maintaining the historical context of the site. We believe this question warrants community dialogue and Commission guidance before a final decision is made.

ITEMS FOR COMMISSION REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests the Commission's input on the following:

- Proposed placement location: Does the Commission support the proposed Lewis Street/1st Avenue intersection site? Are there other City-accessible locations that should be considered?
- Interpretive content: What historical narrative should be conveyed through the plaque or signage? The Commission may wish to engage descendants of affected community members and local historians in developing interpretive language.
- Community engagement process: What level of community outreach and input should precede a final placement decision? Staff is open to a public comment period, a community meeting, or targeted outreach to affected communities.
- Design and materials: Does the Commission have recommendations on the format, scale, or design of the artifact display and interpretive panel?



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COORDINATION WITH PROJECT TIMELINE

The Lewis Street Underpass demolition is anticipated to be awarded in June 2026, with construction beginning in July 2026 and completed within approximately two months. However, this timeline is dependent on approval from BNSF. Staff recommends that the Commission's guidance on artifact placement and community engagement be secured prior to construction award to allow adequate time for site preparation so that the City is prepared to act when the project is able to proceed.

All project communications are being conducted in both English and Spanish. Any community engagement process around the artifact placement should follow the same bilingual approach.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff requests that the Historic Preservation Commission:

- Receive this report and provide direction on the proposed artifact placement location
- Advise on the appropriate scope and format of community engagement prior to finalizing placement
- Provide guidance on interpretive content and design considerations
- Authorize staff to return with a final recommendation, incorporating Commission and community feedback

Respectfully submitted,
City Manager's Office
City of Pasco, Washington