

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

**APPROVED**  
MAR 04 2009

NO. 09-052

DATE March 4, 2009

BOARD OF RECREATION  
and PARK COMMISSIONERS

C.D. 3, 8, 14

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: WEST VALLEY PARK, HERMON PARK, LANI VEST POCKET PARK,  
EVERGREEN CHILDCARE CENTER, AND EXPO COMMUNITY HALL -  
NAMING AND RENAMING PROPOSALS

R. Adams \_\_\_\_\_  
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V. Israel \_\_\_\_\_

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\*M. Shull *MS*

*[Signature]*  
General Manager

Approved       /      

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Grant conceptual approval to rename West Valley Park as "Officer Randall David Simmons Park" and authorize staff to continue the process relative to the park re-naming proposal for West Valley Park, located at 6731 Wilbur Avenue;
2. Grant conceptual approval to rename the off leash dog park in Hermon Park in Arroyo Seco Park as "Hermon Dog Park" and authorize staff to continue process relative to facility naming proposal for the off leash dog park in Hermon Park in Arroyo Seco Park, located south of Avenue 60 and east of the Arroyo Seco Wash, 5566 Via Marisol;
3. Grant conceptual approval to rename LANI Vest Pocket Park as "Ross Valencia Community Park" and authorize staff to continue process relative to park naming proposal for LANI Vest Pocket Park, located at East 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Chicago Street in the Boyle Heights community;
4. Grant conceptual approval to name the multipurpose room at Evergreen Childcare Center as "Willie Corona Multi-Purpose Room" with plaque installation and authorize staff to continue process relative to multipurpose room naming proposal and plaque installation at Evergreen Childcare Center, located at 211 South Evergreen Avenue, in the Boyle Heights community; and,

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5. Grant conceptual approval to name the community hall at EXPO as "Comrie Hall" and authorize staff to continue to process relative to community hall naming proposal at EXPO Center, located at 3980 South Menlo Avenue in the South Los Angeles community.

### SUMMARY:

Various proposals relative to naming or re-naming Department parks and facilities are hereby submitted for consideration. Upon conceptual approval by the Board and authorization to proceed with each proposal, Department staff will continue to process these proposals according to established Board policy and procedures. Staff will subsequently return to the Board with final reports and recommendations.

### Procedure

The current policy and procedure for handling naming proposals is a policy adopted by the Board in January, 1979. This policy established a Department procedure, process and issues to be used in considering the naming of parks, recreation centers, and park features.

A Naming Committee of identified senior staff utilizes the adopted procedure and issues in arriving at a consensus for each proposed naming. If determined feasible, a subsequent process includes public outreach, and recommends consideration of geographic location/features or the name of the surrounding community as possible names. Parks or recreation centers may also be named for deceased individuals who have made significant contributions to the community, city, state, nation or humanity. The naming of facilities or other features, such as buildings, rooms, lakes, trails, pools, etc., which are located within park boundaries, is considered a means of recognizing the contributions of either living or deceased persons.

The Department is currently in receipt of five (5) proposals for park naming, including proposals for the naming of parks, a designated off-leash recreation feature within a park, the naming of a room with plaque installation, and the naming of a community building. These proposals are summarized in this report.

### West Valley Park

West Valley Park is located at 6731 Wilbur Avenue in the Reseda community. This facility is an 8.38 acre park, which includes a children's play area, walking paths, drinking fountain, picnic tables, benches, landscaping and irrigation.

On December 10, 2008, the City Council adopted a motion by Councilman Dennis Zine that the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners be requested to re-name West Valley Park as 'Officer

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Randal David Simmons Park' in memory of the late Police Department SWAT Officer Randal D. Simmons in recognition of his personal sacrifice and his dedication to the community. Officer Randal David Simmons, a 27-year veteran of the LAPD, was murdered in the line of duty on Thursday, February 7, 2008. Officer Simmons became the first LAPD SWAT officer to die in the line of duty. Officer Simmons was shot and killed in a police action with a barricaded suspect in the West San Fernando Valley, during a standoff that injured another officer, and claimed the lives of five civilians.

Officer Simmons attended Fairfax Senior High School and Washington State University, where he played football. He committed much of his time to helping and comforting people in urban communities including Watts, Hacienda Village, Compton, and Carson. He was an ordained minister at Glory Christian Fellowship International (GCFI) in Carson, California. He was instrumental in developing programs and Christian events that attracted many youth in these communities. His funeral was attended by 10,000 mourners including police officers from around the world. Officer Simmons' funeral was the largest in honor of a police officer in the history of the City of Los Angeles and United States of America.

The Commission has previously approved installation of a commemorative plaque in honor of Officer Simmons at West Valley Park (Board Report No. 08-216).

The Department Naming Committee has reviewed this proposal and found no objections. The next step in the Department's naming process is to gather community input with a community meeting. A report to the Board will then be submitted for consideration. Appropriate funding for any required signage and sign installation would be included in this subsequent report.

### Arroyo Seco Dog Park / Hermon Park

Hermon Park is an approximately 15-acre portion of the much larger Arroyo Seco Park located south of Avenue 60 and east of the Arroyo Seco Wash, 5566 Via Marisol, that was officially designated as Hermon Park in 2003 (Board Report No. 03-84) in honor of its historic community. In 2005, a 1.3 acre portion of this designated area became a designated off-leash area or 'dog park.' The Department has been contacted by the Friends of the Hermon Dog Park with a request to name this off-leash amenity 'Hermon Dog Park.' This request is supported by a petition with nearly 600 signatures as well as letters of support for the proposed Hermon Dog Park name designation from the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council, the Hermon Local Issues Committee of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council, and Council District 14. The residents feel that the name Hermon Dog Park is representative of the community, complies with common dog park naming conventions within the Department, and will reduce confusion for park users.

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The Department Naming Committee has reviewed this proposal and found no objections. The next step in the Department's naming process is to gather community input with a community meeting. A report to the Board will then be submitted for consideration. Appropriate funding for any required signage and sign installation would be included in this subsequent report.

### LANI Vest Pocket Park

LANI Vest Pocket Park is a pocket park located at East 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Chicago Street in the Boyle Heights community. This facility is a 0.08 acre unstaffed park which includes landscaping and walking paths.

The Department was contacted by Council District 14 with a request to rename LANI Vest Pocket Park as 'Ross Valencia Community Park.' Ross Valencia was active in the Boyle Heights community for many years in organizations including, but not limited to the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council, the GI Forum, the Metro Resident Advisory Committee, the American Legion, the Boyle Heights Resident Homeowners Associations, Inc., the Community Redevelopment Agency Adelante Project Area Committee Board, and the LAPD Community Advisory Board. Mr. Valencia was the founding member of the Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce and was an original member of the LANI Vest Pocket Park Steering Committee. The Council Office has supplied the Department with a petition of support for this proposed name change signed by 250 community members.

On December 29, 2008, the Department sponsored a community meeting to discuss the proposed name change. The meeting was attended by over 60 people, with nearly unanimous support for the proposed name change. One alternative proposal was made, to name the park after Officer Steve Gajda, a Boyle Heights police officer who died as a result of injuries sustained in the line of duty on December 31, 1997.

The Council Office has agreed to pay for the costs of the naming, wooden sign, and sign installation.

The Department Naming Committee has reviewed this proposal and found no objections. The next step in the Department's naming process is to prepare a report to the Board to be submitted for consideration.

### Evergreen Childcare Center

The family and friends of Willie Corona have proposed the installation of a memorial plaque in honor of Mr. Corona in recognition of his dedication, time and effort given to the community and park patrons of Evergreen Recreation Center. The memorial plaque will be installed by Department staff at the newly built Evergreen Child Care Center located at 211 South Evergreen Avenue, in the Boyle Heights community.

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Willie Corona was a resident of Boyle Heights who donated his time, skills, money and efforts in making Evergreen Recreation Center a better place. Countless hours were donated to the park by Mr. Corona, whether it was coaching, mentoring children or officiating at games. Mr. Corona's passion and commitment to working with children and giving back to the community could not be measured.

Over the last seven years the Department of Recreation and Parks, with the assistance of Council District 14, conducted several community meetings regarding this naming proposal. At the conclusion of the public process the proposal was submitted to the Department's Naming Committee. The consensus was to place a plaque in a prominent public space outside the door of the new multi-purpose room at the child care center. The room will be named the 'Willie Corona Multi-Purpose Room' in honor of Mr. Corona's countless hours of dedication to the park and local community.

The bronze plaque will be approximately 12-inches high and 15 inches wide. The bronze plaque will read as depicted in Attachment A, and be installed at Evergreen Child Care Center.

Mr. Art Chasco, a coach and volunteer for the past 40 years at Evergreen Recreation Center, and his fellow supporters have agreed to pay for the cost of the plaque. The Department's Construction Division will install the plaque.

The Department Naming Committee has reviewed this proposal and found no objections. The next step in the Department's naming process is to prepare a report to the Board to be submitted for consideration.

### EXPO Center

EXPO Center is a recreation complex located at 3980 South Menlo Avenue in the South Los Angeles community which includes a 66,000 square-foot recreation center; two year-round outdoor swimming pools; a childcare center; a senior citizen center; and an outdoor amphitheater. The Friends of EXPO Center, a thirty (30)-member support group for this facility, have submitted a request to name the Community Hall building at EXPO Center in honor of Mr. Keith Comrie.

Mr. Comrie served as Chairman of the original Board of Directors of the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center, Inc., (EPICC), and continued on as a member of the newly established Friends of EXPO Center Board of Directors. Mr. Comrie is a retired Los Angeles City Administrative Officer (CAO), serving for nineteen (19) years under former Mayors Bradley and Riordan. As CAO, Mr. Comrie supervised the financing, design and construction of Los Angeles' Central Library and Convention Center. Prior to working as CAO for the City of Los Angeles, Mr. Comrie was Welfare and Children's Services Director for Los Angeles County. Mr. Comrie was awarded Governing Magazine's "Public Official of the Year" in 1987, and was well-regarded for his

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dedication, honesty and integrity as a civil servant.

Mr. Comrie was initially recruited to the EPICC, Inc., Board of Directors by former Board Chairman Roy A. Anderson to oversee EPICC's construction. Mr. Comrie was very involved in developing the strategic business plan that transitioned the Board from primarily a Construction Board to a long-term Fundraising and Program Board.

The proposal to name the Community Hall building at EXPO Center as "Comrie Hall" is in honor of Mr. Comrie's years of service as Chairman of the Friends of Expo Center Board of Directors (formerly EPICC, Inc.) from the time that Mr. Roy A. Anderson stepped down to when Mr. Steven Soboroff, the current Chairman, took over, as well as for his personal qualifications and his valued experience. Under Mr. Comrie's leadership, the construction of EXPO Center was completed on time and on budget.

The Department Naming Committee has reviewed this proposal and found no objections. The next step in the Department's naming process is to prepare a final report to the Board to be submitted for consideration.

Council Districts 3, 8 and 14 and Valley and Metro Region management are in support with the recommendations for facilities listed above within their respective Council Districts and Regions and as set forth by the Department.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Fiscal impacts will be described in subsequent Reports to the Board on these proposals.

This report was prepared by Camille Walls, City Planner, and Melinda Gejer, Planning Associate, Planning and Development.

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The Willie Corona Multi-Purpose Room

**In Memory of Willie Corona  
Coach, Mentor, & Friend**

In appreciation of 40 years of exemplary service and  
unwavering commitment to the youth of  
Evergreen Recreation Center and Park.

Dedicated on behalf of:

**Councilmember José Huizar**  
14<sup>th</sup> Council District, City of Los Angeles  
&  
A Grateful Community