

INFORMATIONAL BOARD REPORT

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

November 17, 2022

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS  
FROM: JIMMY KIM, General Manager   
SUBJECT: VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications addressed to the Board have been received by the Board Office, and the action taken thereon is presented.

| <u>From</u>   |          | <u>Action Taken</u>         |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Edith Lobrot comments regarding Griffith Park Pony Rides   | #9054bvm | Referred to General Manager |
| 2) Janet Bennett comments regarding Griffith Park Pony Rides  | #9054bvn | Referred to General Manager |
| 3) Christine Chipiwalt comments regarding Griffith Park Pony Rides                                      | #9054bvo | Referred to General Manager |
| 4) Dr. Martha Herrero comments regarding Griffith Park Pony Rides                                       | #9054bvp | Referred to General Manager |
| 5) Linda M Blank, VP of Westwood HOA comments on behalf of Westwood HOA regarding Westwood Gardens Park | #9056e   | Referred to General Manager |
| 6) Laura Ceballos comments regarding Oakwood Park   | #9150u   | Referred to General Manager |
| 7) Francisco Juarez comments regarding Oakwood Park   | #9150v   | Referred to General Manager |
| 8) Mike Bravo comments regarding Oakwood Park   | #9150w   | Referred to General Manager |
| 9) Mike Tomas comments regarding Pickleball Proposal  | #9166k   | Referred to General Manager |





Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Cancel the Contract: Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo**

1 message

Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 7:27 AM

To:

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Fri, Nov 4, 2022 at 5:07 PM Edith LOBROT &lt;

&gt; wrote:

Dear Recreation and Park Commissioners Recreation and Park Commissioners,

As a Los Angeles resident who cares about the wellbeing of animals and an In Defense of Animals supporter, I urge you to stop animal suffering in your district by eliminating the Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo's contract, replacing Griffith Park with a non-animal model and sending all of the animals to a sanctuary.

For five years, your agency has passed inspection reports for the concession, while the owner Stephen Weeks has been breaking California Health and Safety Code 25998. Elderly ponies and horses at Griffith Park Pony Rides have documented depression. Spot the pony has lameness, yet is forced to carry people on his back.

Recently an overweight sheep was in distress with no worker attending to her needs, and many horses and ponies were itching due to their halters, which appear to be on all the time. Elderly ponies and horses were also seen being hit and chased for almost eight and half hours on the weekend.

No amount of improvement will ensure that these animals are not suffering from depression. Independent equine expert Rachael Sacher DVM, CVA reported elderly ponies working with saddle sores, elderly ponies with no dental treatment, no identification methods for any of the animals, and an elderly pony with a fever undetected by this concession while your department and Stephen Weeks make millions off the backs of these elderly ponies. Griffith Park Pony Rides pays Recreation and Parks a revenue-sharing fee of 25 percent of their gross income, and as a Los Angeles constituent, I oppose city funds generated from animal abuse.

Pony rides exploit animals for amusement and profit. This practice teaches children the wrong lessons about animals as objects for amusement instead of appreciating our animal neighbors as sentient beings.

This concession also poses a risk to children. Last year, a child was reportedly dragged by a pony after her saddle slipped, and the pony continued dragging her body because the pony was spooked.

I respectfully request that the pony ride contract be canceled rather than renewed. Please undertake a study to consider alternative proposals that are generated from a non-animal model for the site that would engage children and families. Lastly, I urge you to send all of the animals to a sanctuary, which advocates have already arranged and confirmed.

Thank you for considering the well-being of animals in our community. Please make compassionate choices to improve the quality of life for our animal neighbors.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Edith LOBROT

--

City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Cancel the Contract: Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo**

1 message

Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 7:27 AM

To:

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Sat, Nov 5, 2022 at 3:56 AM Janet Bennett &lt;

&gt; wrote:

Dear Recreation and Park Commissioners Recreation and Park Commissioners,

As a Los Angeles resident who cares about the wellbeing of animals and an In Defense of Animals supporter, I urge you to stop animal suffering in your district by eliminating the Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo's contract, replacing Griffith Park with a non-animal model and sending all of the animals to a sanctuary.

For five years, your agency has passed inspection reports for the concession, while the owner Stephen Weeks has been breaking California Health and Safety Code 25998. Elderly ponies and horses at Griffith Park Pony Rides have documented depression. Spot the pony has lameness, yet is forced to carry people on his back.

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Thank you for considering the well-being of animals in our community. Please make compassionate choices to improve the quality of life for our animal neighbors.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Janet Bennett

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City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Cancel the Contract: Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo**

1 message

Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 7:27 AM

To:

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Sat, Nov 5, 2022 at 9:28 AM CHRISTINE CHIPIWALT &lt;

&gt; wrote:

Dear Recreation and Park Commissioners Recreation and Park Commissioners,

As a Los Angeles resident who cares about the wellbeing of animals and an In Defense of Animals supporter, I urge you to stop animal suffering in your district by eliminating the Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo's contract, replacing Griffith Park with a non-animal model and sending all of the animals to a sanctuary.

For five years, your agency has passed inspection reports for the concession, while the owner Stephen Weeks has been breaking California Health and Safety Code 25998. Elderly ponies and horses at Griffith Park Pony Rides have documented depression. Spot the pony has lameness, yet is forced to carry people on his back.

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Thank you for considering the well-being of animals in our community. Please make compassionate choices to improve the quality of life for our animal neighbors.

Sincerely,  
Ms. CHRISTINE CHIPIWALT

--  
City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Cancel the Contract: Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo**

1 message

Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 7:27 AM

To:

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Sat, Nov 5, 2022 at 4:55 PM Martha Herrero < > wrote:

Dear Recreation and Park Commissioners Recreation and Park Commissioners,

As a Los Angeles resident who cares about the wellbeing of animals and an In Defense of Animals supporter, I urge you to stop animal suffering in your district by eliminating the Griffith Park Pony Rides and Petting Zoo's contract, replacing Griffith Park with a non-animal model and sending all of the animals to a sanctuary.

For five years, your agency has passed inspection reports for the concession, while the owner Stephen Weeks has been breaking California Health and Safety Code 25998. Elderly ponies and horses at Griffith Park Pony Rides have documented depression. Spot the pony has lameness, yet is forced to carry people on his back.

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Thank you for considering the well-being of animals in our community. Please make compassionate choices to improve the quality of life for our animal neighbors.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Martha Herrero

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City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

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**Re: Westwood Parks**

1 message

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**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Mon, Oct 31, 2022 at 1:30 PM

To: linda blank

&gt;

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Mon, Oct 31, 2022 at 1:18 PM linda blank

&gt; wrote:

**see attached****Linda M. Blank**  
LAW OFFICES OF LINDA M. BLANK

Telephone

Facsimile

Cell

The information contained in this e-mail message, is legally privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you have received this message in error, please immediately notify the sender by reply e-mail or telephone and return the message to Law Office of Linda M. Blank,

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City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners  
Figueroa Plaza  
221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (213) 202-2640  
Fax: (213) 202-2610  
Mail Stop: 625/15  
Website: [www.laparks.org](http://www.laparks.org)

**LINDA M. BLANK**

Telephone  
Facsimile  
Email:

October 31, 2022

Via e-mail (rap.commissioners@lacity.org)

Commissioner Sylvia Patsouras

Commissioner Lynn Alvarez

Commissioner Tafari Bayne

Commissioner Nicole Chase

Commissioner Joseph Halper

Re: Westwood Gardens Park and Westwood Recreation Center Park

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Westwood Homeowners Association regarding the Westwood Gardens Park and the Westwood Recreation Center Park.

The Westwood Gardens Park is a small park in our neighborhood that is adjacent to the Westwood Library. This park is especially appealing to those members of our community that have young children who attend classes at the library. Several years ago the park added play equipment. Now we have become aware that additional play equipment is needed. For the past year I have unsuccessfully attempted to discuss this need with RAP. I have not had the courtesy of a response to my requests from Mr. Kim or any of his staff. As I indicated at the last commission meeting, I was hoping that RAP would initiate contact with me after I voiced my frustration. Since that has not happened we are asking for your help.

Please know that even though RAP is a public department and should be accessible to the community, there is no current public listing of the contact numbers for the various RAP personnel and departments. The contact information I had is now obsolete. Thus RAP has insulated itself. We have maintenance concerns with respect to both parks and have no way of getting a response. For instance we understand that none of the landscaping or trees in the Westwood

Commissioners  
October 31, 2022  
Page 2

Recreation Park are being watered. These trees cannot survive unless they receive water. And as we know, Mayor Garcetti specifically provided that trees are exempt from the water restrictions. We do not want our park to turn into a desert. We need to hear from RAP regarding the maintenance of the park landscaping.

We appreciate your help .

Very truly yours



Linda M. Blank  
V.P Westwood Homeowners Assoc.

Cc: Stephen Resnick, President :



Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

## Re: Meeting for Oakwood Park Name Change

1 message

**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 10:30 AM

To: Laura Ceballos <>

Cc: Jimmy Kim <jimmy.kim@lacity.org>, Frank Sr Juarez <>

Gonzalez <>, Hector Garcia <>, Jose Barrera <>, Darlene

Rodriguez <>, ethics.commission@lacity.org, mayor.garcetti@lacity.org, mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org,

<laura.island@lacity.org>, Sonya Young-Jimenez <sonya.young-jimenez@lacity.org>, matthew.rudnick@lacity.org,

desiree.ramirez@lacity.org, Raymond Delgado <>, Anthony Noriega

<>, alfonsina.gonzalez <>

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 10:19 AM Laura Ceballos <>

> wrote:

Hello Jim,

I am writing to inform you that the zoom meeting regarding the Oakwood Park Name Change in Venice you are scheduled to have on November 17, 2022 needs to be cancelled.

Policy and procedures were not followed and there was no community input. To move forward with the meeting and ignore the community is unethical and unjust.

Council Member Mike Bonin allowed 11 people to decide the name change of Oakwood Park in a matter of 2 months.

Oakwood Park is a Historical Park that both the Brown and Black Community share deep roots to. By changing the name you would erase the the Chicano- Mexican American History from the Oakwood Area. Preserving ones history while erasing another's does more harm than good to POC in the community who have been marginalized.

The Venice Community is very upset over this matter. We have a petition with 1,200 signatures from the Venice community opposing the name change. I have attached the petition down below.

I am asking that you cancel the meeting and allow for the next CD11 CouncilMember to step in and resolve this issue.

Let's be inclusive and fair in the decision making process.

I am looking forward to hearing back for you. Thank you.

<https://www.change.org/p/support-to-keep-oakwood-parks-name-retract-motion-for-oakwood-park-name-change-in-venice>

Laura Ceballos  
Venice Community Organizer



Oakwood Community Center

767 California Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90005  
Department of Recreation & Parks  
City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles  
Department of Recreation and Parks

invites you to a renaming discussion for

# OAKWOOD RECREATION CENTER

Thursday, November 17th, 2022 at 7pm  
Virtual Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83688731669>

Webinar ID: 836 8873 1669





Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

## Re: Regarding the "DISCUSSION" at Oakwood Park

1 message

**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 2:02 PM

To: Francisco Juarez < >  
 Cc: Jimmy Kim <jimmy.kim@lacity.org>, Jose Gonzalez < >, Hector Garcia < >  
 < >, Jose Barrera < >, Darlene Rodriguez < >  
 ethics.commission@lacity.org, mayor.garcetti@lacity.org, mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org,  
 < >, Ethics Enforcement <ethics.enforcement@lacity.org>, Laura Island <laura.island@lacity.org>, Sonya  
 Young-Jimenez <sonya.young-jimenez@lacity.org>, matthew.rudnick@lacity.org, desiree.ramirez@lacity.org, Raymond  
 Delgado < >, Anthony Noriega < >, alfonsina  
 gonzalez < >, LAURA CEBALLOS PYFC DIRECTOR of MARKETING <l >

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 1:38 PM Francisco Juarez < > wrote:  
 RAP Commissioners,

To be clear, the word "Discussion" is publicized on a taxpayer funded flyer as the reason to attend the meeting, to talk about renaming the Historic Oakwood Park.

This is the first such meeting and it is serious to our portion of the immediate community, surrounding the Park.

This announcement follows our portion of the neighborhood having to call out L.A. City Council Member Mike Bonin, City Council, certain City staff members, and RAP employees to stop from trying to "railroad" this matter without due diligence, proper process (emails & phone call records are available upon request).

Now, that there will be a "discussion", and we do plan to be present, will you RAP Commissioners ensure that the "discussion" is fair and that all of our talking points are engaged in "discussion", are answered, or, resolved?

The correct method of doing this would be for the RAP Commission to provide for a paid professional facilitator to moderate. Someone who is not a resident of the area or an employee. The Facilitator must be neutral and objective. The Facilitator will ensure that the "discussion" has a goal and fairly guide towards that goal.

The "discussion" must, with equal emphasis, identify opposing views and opinions. After identifying them, those should be the focus of debate and, if the body agrees by 2/3rds of those present, a vote by all present may be entertained.

If the facilitator identifies that information missing another facilitated meet may be called for.

The key is that the meeting must be objective and fair and that is where the professional Facilitator will help the most.

If this community matter is held any other way there will be a failure to communicate and that will reflect upon your commitment to your Commissioner oath. It will be your failure to genuinely serve and represent.

Respectfully,

Francisco Juarez  
 NHDVS COALITION

On Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 10:30 AM, Rap Commissioners  
 <rap.commissioners@lacity.org> wrote:



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Please Do Not Change the Name of Oakwood Park in Venice**

1 message

Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

Fri, Nov 4, 2022 at 7:58 AM

To: Mike Bravo &lt;&gt;

Cc: "Councilmember.Bonin@lacity.org" &lt;Councilmember.Bonin@lacity.org&gt;, "jimmy.kim@lacity.org" &lt;jimmy.kim@lacity.org&gt;, Jason Douglas &lt;jason.p.douglas@lacity.org&gt;

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Thu, Nov 3, 2022 at 3:05 PM Mike Bravo &lt;&gt;

&gt; wrote:

Hi name is Mike Bravo. I am a 5th generation Venice resident who is also an established political community representative. I am a Venice Neighborhood Council representative speaking for myself. I also represent dozens of Chicax and Indigenous families who also have cultural contributions to the Venice area community. We are asking that you please keep the name of Oakwood Park in Venice, CA as Oakwood Park. As you know our histories also run deep and are intertwined in this area which was formerly known as Rancho La Ballona, and even before that, the Tongva village of Kechegna.

While the intention to honor our community's Black cultural forebearers is honorable, we acknowledge that there are problematic issues with what we feel is hasty name change. The top issues we have are with the unilateral and non-transparent nature of the name change as well as the reinforcement of the invisibility of Chicax/Indigenous families. There were only 11 people along with LA Councilperson Mike Bonin who initiated the name change process. There was zero community engagement.

It should be noted that Oakwood is a name and identity highly revered by both the historic Chicax and Black communities of Venice. Contrary to recent narrative by lead proponents of the name change, even the strong majority of the Venice African-American community does not want Oakwood's name changed. Oakwood is also a cultural identity point that has united both the Black & Brown communities of Venice for at least three decades. To sacrifice one beloved name (Oakwood) for another (Tabor & Reese) is both unnecessary and shortsighted.

While Mike Bonin's August 17, 2022's updated motion to instead propose "Reese-Tabor Oakwood Park" as a compromise is well meaning, it still does not address the unilateral nature of the name change, the lack of community outreach, and the reinforcement of invisibility for the Chicax/Indigenous families of Venice. Mind you this harm is happening in the midst of socio-political declarations for systemic change and inclusivity.

In a historically diverse and intersectional community like Venice we must be mindful not to perpetuate harm toward other historically targeted people in our restorative process to amend racial injustices.

Ethnologist Andrew Deener who has done great work in Venice and authored a short piece (2010) titled "[The 'black section' of the neighborhood: Collective visibility and collective invisibility as sources of place identity](#)" (pdf attached) notes:

*"During the course of six years of research, I attended over a dozen political forums held by the city specifically to address the issues of the black community that never even mentioned the Latino (Chicano) majority. This phenomenon raises a host of questions about how Latino residents fit into an evolving urban 'color line'."*

This is the chance to remedy this pattern of harmful erasure toward the Chicanx and other Spanish surnamed Indigenous peoples of the West LA area. As a city and community we now have the opportunity to be creative in expanding historical equity and spaces. We can do this without contributing to creating tension in BIPOC communities where spaces and opportunities to acknowledge our ancestors is extremely limited.

It should also be noted that Arthur Reese and Irving Tabor already have at least four buildings and streets named after them. We also feel Tabor and Reese deserve a more meaningful monument that reaches beyond the once redlined boundaries that created Oakwood . Tabor and Reese were bigger than Oakwood and were instrumental in creating the world famous Venice of America that the world loves and is inspired by today.

Thus, the historic families that I represent and myself, will gladly support a more significant and meaningful monument dedicated to Tabor and Reese . A monument placed in a more popular and public Venice space where they can be acknowledged by the millions of international visitors they helped create the magnet for.

Please do not cut corners on racial reconciliation initiatives by changing the name of Oakwood Park. Help us do it the right way, in a way that advances spatial justice and is beneficial to everyone.

Thank You.

Mike Bravo  
Director, Save Venice

<https://savevenice.ca>

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City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners  
Figueroa Plaza  
221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (213) 202-2640  
Fax: (213) 202-2610  
Mail Stop: 625/15  
Website: [www.laparks.org](http://www.laparks.org)

## The 'black section' of the neighborhood Collective visibility and collective invisibility as sources of place identity

■ Andrew Deener

*University of Connecticut, USA*

**ABSTRACT** ■ The public identity of a neighborhood does not always reflect its demographic composition. Some groups sustain their collective visibility as they experience demographic decline. Oakwood, a neighborhood in Los Angeles where African Americans once made up the largest segment of the population, is still known as the 'black section of Venice' despite the fact that Latinos have outnumbered African Americans since 1980 and whites have outnumbered them since 1990. Historical and ethnographic research illuminates the divergent processes through which African Americans and Latinos became associated with Oakwood, established qualitatively distinct ties to the area, and maintained differing degrees of influence over its local culture. African Americans' social institutions, political organizations, visible patterns of public interaction, and periodic celebrations and commemorations enabled them to sustain their claim to the neighborhood, while Latino immigrants' marginal citizenship status, avoidance of public spaces, and affiliation with other places prevented them from attaining collective visibility.

**KEY WORDS** ■ neighborhood, place identity, collective visibility, collective invisibility, color line

About 8500 people live in the one-and-a-half square-mile area called Oakwood, which consists of two census tracts in the center of Venice, a coastal community in Los Angeles. Its name is derived from Oakwood Avenue, where the area's central gathering place, the Oakwood Community Center and Park, is located. For decades, residents and city officials have defined Oakwood as the 'black section of Venice', and activists have commonly described it as the last remaining 'pocket of poverty' in the vicinity because of the low-income housing that was constructed by an African American community organization during the 1970s.

The public perception of Oakwood as a black neighborhood masks the dramatic demographic transition that took place there between 1970 and 2000. In 1970, African Americans made up the largest racial-ethnic group in Oakwood, at 45 percent of the population, with Latinos following at 31 percent.<sup>1</sup> By 1980, those proportions had been inverted, with Latinos making up 45 percent of the population and African Americans following at 30 percent. According to the 2000 census, Latinos still make up the largest single racial-ethnic group in the Oakwood area, at 47 percent, but non-Hispanic whites follow them at 33 percent, trailed by African Americans at 15 percent (see Table 1).

African Americans have sustained collective visibility despite dramatic demographic decline, while Latinos have remained collectively invisible despite dramatic demographic growth. How and why has a contradiction between Oakwood's demographic composition and the public perception of its identity continued for so many years?

According to Harvey Molotch et al. (2000), urban sociologists have given too little thought to the mechanisms that govern the coherence and continuity of place character, that is, the perception of a place's features that distinguish it from other places. To explore how 'place differences develop and persist', they examine how 'physical and social elements cohere' at a particular time and place, giving rise to the perception of local

**Table 1.** Oakwood Population by Black and Hispanic, 1960–2000

| <i>Year</i>         | <i>1960</i> | <i>1970</i> | <i>1980</i> | <i>1990</i> | <i>2000</i> |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Population    | 8228        | 8152        | 8962        | 9216        | 8536        |
| Black Population    | 3191        | 3660        | 2729        | 2022        | 1244        |
| Percent Black       | 39%         | 45%         | 30%         | 22%         | 15%         |
| Hispanic Population | 1481        | 2635        | 4039        | 4572        | 4049        |
| Percent Hispanic    | 18%         | 32%         | 45%         | 49.60%      | 47%         |

*Source:* U.S. Censuses (1960–2000).

character, and they show how people have actively drawn upon the 'existing conditions' in a place, creating continuity in each city's place character over time (Molotch et al., 2000: 816, 793).

Focusing on the coherence and continuity of place character is a useful starting point for this inquiry. African Americans and Latinos initiated connections to Oakwood at different periods of time, established qualitatively distinct ties to the area, and exercised differing degrees of influence over its local culture. I use the concepts of collective visibility and collective invisibility to make sense of these contrasting historical trajectories and the continuing contradiction between Oakwood's demographic composition and the public perception of its identity.

### **Collective visibility and collective invisibility in place identity**

How do some populations become associated with certain places? Once established, how does the perception persist? Scholars have described place character as the outcome of the construction and accumulation of observable features. People envision, at a given moment, a combination of signs, building structures, bodies in public spaces, and other observable qualities that filters their perception of a place through a storied lens (Firey, 1945; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Strauss, 1976; Suttles, 1984). I refer to the construction of internal place attributes as collective visibility.<sup>2</sup> Several features have coalesced in Oakwood to generate collective visibility for African Americans, including a solid institutional infrastructure, a culture of public interaction, labeling of spaces in honor or memory of community members, and ceremonial events, as well as other collective actions.

A group that achieves collective visibility becomes intertwined with the identity of a neighborhood, often overshadowing the presence of other groups. The social cohesion of African Americans in Oakwood during the early 20th century laid a foundation that later generations built upon, sustaining and reinforcing their connections to this territory even as the black population declined. 'Interaction ritual chains' (Collins, 2004: 7), the historical web of social situations in which individuals present 'solidarity and symbols of group membership', connect a population with local institutions and symbols over time, creating moments of visible social cohesion that reinforce public perceptions of the group's collective presence.

Neighborhood ethnographers have pointed to the role of the majority population in achieving collective visibility at the expense of minority groups (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Suttles, 1968). Yet, the contradiction between Oakwood's demographic composition and the perception of its identity makes that explanation insufficient. Other Los Angeles neighborhoods exhibit a similar contradiction: Latinos make up over 70 percent of

the population in Koreatown, and over 60 percent of the population in Watts, the city's most famous 'African American neighborhood'.<sup>3</sup> Because Latinos have made up the largest segment of Oakwood's population for decades, we must also consider why they have not developed this same degree of social cohesion. As Collins (2004: 4) notes, people's 'mix of situations across time' can 'differ from other persons' pathways'. Whereas African Americans initiated and sustained a culture of collective visibility, Latinos have faced constraints in their daily lives that have given rise to a culture of collective invisibility.

A number of scholars have explained how powerful agents, often affiliated with the state, impose the conditions for collective invisibility (Bourdieu, 1991; Scheper-Hughes, 1992; Wacquant, 2001). Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992: 230) defines 'collective invisibility' as the way a population 'is lost to the public census and to state and municipal statistics'. Loïc Wacquant (2001: 98) discusses how slavery, Jim Crow, the ghetto, and the hyperghetto have culminated in a system that renders the problems of the black ghetto invisible. In my study of neighborhood identity, collective invisibility arises from the constraints imposed upon the daily lives of Latinos that have limited their capacity to challenge or take part in the existing local culture and hidden them from the public view of the place they live.

I use a historical and comparative ethnographic approach to emphasize how the collective visibility of the African American population and the collective invisibility of the Latino population were generated and maintained over time. Historical ethnography of urban neighborhoods encompasses both internal and external constraints and possibilities and examines both the micro-dynamics that influence social interaction and collective organization and the macro-dynamics that influence neighborhood demography and politics. This approach studies all these dimensions as they interact and shape a place over time. I focus on neighborhood history as a grounded phenomenon, paying close attention to the historical structure of opportunities and constraints as people have experienced them and as they have influenced collective responses during different periods.

This study draws upon data compiled from oral histories, interviews, informal conversations, observations, photographs, maps, local newspapers, and censuses. First, I show how deliberate efforts to render African Americans collectively invisible in Venice created conditions in which social cohesion in Oakwood initially became possible. Segregation, institutionalization, community organization, public interaction, and stigmatization have supported and sustained Oakwood's identity as the 'black section of Venice'. I then discuss how a different set of constraints and opportunities – state-authorized harassment of undocumented

immigrants, interactions with and perceptions of a changing territorial African American community, the diversity of Latin Americans' origins, and their participation in community spaces beyond Oakwood's boundaries – have led Latinos to remain collectively invisible within Oakwood. I conclude by analyzing the mechanisms that support and sustain collective visibility and collective invisibility over time.

### **Oakwood becomes the 'black section of Venice'**

Arthur Reese moved from Louisiana to Venice in 1903, becoming the first African American to live in the community. Before the beachside amusement park opened to the public in 1905, he was employed by the developer, Abbot Kinney, in the company's janitorial department. A brilliant decorator, Reese played an important role in creating Venice's identity as a carnival location. Kinney relied on him to invent floats, banners, and festival themes that attracted people to the fantasy environment. At the same time that African Americans were forbidden from participating in public events on the famous Venice Pier, Reese and his team, comprising mostly African American men, worked to construct its identity as a leisure-time destination.

Kinney permitted servants and laborers, some of them African American, to build houses on a mostly empty tract of land located north of the canals. Navalette Bailey, who at 92 is the oldest surviving member of Reese's extended family, says that when Reese first came to Los Angeles:

he ran on the railroad and he heard about this area, with the canals being put in. It was going to be a replica of Venice, Italy . . . So one of his stops out here, on the railroad, he met Kinney. And he got talking with Kinney, and he made suggestions, and Kinney was interested in him. He needed someone to clean the pier, and different jobs, and there was nobody to do it . . . The blacks that were here [in Los Angeles] were living in [central and downtown] Los Angeles mostly and they didn't want to come down here [to Venice] because it was a long distance for them to come to work everyday. So [Kinney] wanted somebody to come and settle.

Reese bought a parcel of land in this section. According to his granddaughter, Sonia Reese Davis, 'he built a house, and he encouraged his cousins to come and build a little shack in the back of his house. And they did . . . Each one in secession would build houses on the back of their houses and bring more relatives. So they started the black community that way.'<sup>4</sup>

One of Reese's cousins, Irving Tabor, took a job sweeping the Venice Pier and eventually became Kinney's personal chauffeur. Over time, the two men became quite close, and when Kinney passed away in 1920, he left Tabor his house located on the Grand Canal, the central waterway and the most

luxurious residential setting in Venice. Tabor was aware that no black family could live in such close proximity to wealthy whites. A team of Tabor's friends and relatives split the house into three sections and hauled it on trucks to Oakwood, the only area where African Americans were permitted to live, where they then reassembled it. Members of the Tabor family lived there for decades.

Navallete Bailey, Irving Tabor's niece, is an encyclopedia of local knowledge, having lived her entire life in the neighborhood. Flipping through old black and white photographs and newspaper clippings as we sit in the living room of the house her father built, she recounts her family's early experiences in Oakwood.

Andrew: When you came here, how'd you know that you had to live behind West Washington Boulevard and Lincoln? How'd you know that this was the area?

Navallete: This was the only place that they would sell to you. We knew.

Andrew: Did your family try to buy in other areas?

Navallete: No, we never did. But right here in this area, Jataun's family, they were the last ones [in the extended family] to come out. My dad moved 'em all in there . . . There were two or three houses built from the ground up, but the others were brought in, and there were eight altogether. So, as the family came out, they all had places to stay anyway, and their kids, later on, had a place to stay . . . So when more families were coming in, when the neighbors found out, you know, they resented it – the white neighbors did. My dad and them would go over at night, and check 'em out, you know, with guns on 'em and everything. Because they threatened to burn 'em out. Then my youngest uncle, my dad's youngest brother, he bought a house across the street. He bought it from a guy that wanted to get away from us so he sold him the house. That was the property across the street, and now we were spread out all over two, three blocks.

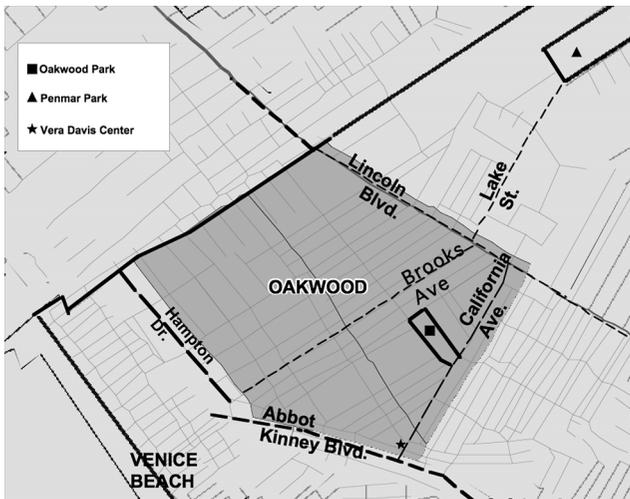
As the African American population of Venice grew steadily over the next 50 years (see Table 2), restrictive covenants on housing, exclusion from stores, restaurants, beaches, and other activities, and racist encounters with residents and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers in surrounding white neighborhoods limited black residents' movements and rendered them collectively invisible to the rest of Venice. James Thomas, now in his 80s, who moved to Los Angeles from Hope, Arkansas, in 1936, describes the geographical boundaries around Oakwood: 'See you wasn't accepted across Lincoln. You wasn't accepted too much south of California. And you didn't cross Washington. Never! We just knew we were outside of where we was supposed to be.' Lila Riley, now in her 60s, recalls that during her childhood (see Figure 1):

**Table 2** Growth of the African American population, 1910–2000

| <i>Year</i> | <i>African American population</i> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1910        | 33                                 |
| 1920        | 102                                |
| 1930        | 330                                |
| 1940        | 346                                |
| 1950        | 1157                               |
| 1960        | 3368                               |
| 1970        | 4013                               |
| 1980        | 3503                               |
| 1990        | 3142                               |
| 2000        | 2248                               |

Sources: United States Censuses, 1960–2000; Cunningham (1976), 1910–1950.

Then the blacks couldn't go east of Lincoln . . . Brooks Avenue, they changed the name on the east side of Lincoln. West we called it 'Brooks' and then on the east, when you cross Lincoln, they called it 'Lake Street'. They didn't want to be associated with poor black people.



**Figure 1** Map of spatial boundaries in Oakwood

These constraints strengthened the ties between different waves of black migrants who came to Oakwood, reinforcing their collective attachment to the place and producing a strong local culture. Although African Americans in Oakwood never constituted a majority of neighborhood residents, they became the largest demographic group. Entire streets were filled with houses owned and apartments rented by black families, giving rise to a culture of public interaction. Lakesha Holt, now in her 50s, describes growing up in the tightly knit neighborhood.

That would be a real community, because they would watch us. And if anything would happen, Miss Reese would call my parents before I even got home. 'I saw your little girl and she was doing this, or this, or that. She's on her way.' Or coming from this way, you'd know everybody. Older people ... sat out on their front porches and they watched you. We knew everybody ... And they all knew you, because we were a family, we were a community. I remember when I was little, walking to school, every single house you'd know them. Hi Miss Carter. Hi Miss Yates. Hi Miss McClen-don. All the way down the street. Because those old people would be out there just to make sure, and if they saw anything funny they would come out. They'd be like, 'You get away from those kids', doing this, that, or the other! 'You leave 'em alone! You get away from 'em!' And they would. You didn't take no stuff, because people knew, from one point to the next everybody knew each other.

Local institutions and public places fostered continuity of this culture over time. By 1912, although there were only 30-some black residents, Oakwood already had two African American churches (Cunningham, 1976). Fifty years later, the First Baptist Church had over 600 members (Adler, 1969). Five black churches have served as gathering places, building bridges among families with different socioeconomic backgrounds and enabling African Americans from other neighborhoods as well as those who moved away to forge and sustain ties to Oakwood. Because these are the only religious institutions in the neighborhood, the collective presence of African Americans is especially visible.

The African American community has a history of building organiza-tions, nonprofit institutions, and smaller grassroots political groups. During the 1960s and 1970s, when Oakwood experienced a severe contraction in employment opportunities that was typical of African American neighborhoods throughout the country,<sup>5</sup> local activists – all longstanding residents, many of them homeowners – searched for new ways to improve the livelihoods of their relatives, friends, and neighbors. Community organizations helped people acquire affordable housing, provided food baskets for those in need, offered opportunities to voice complaints about alleged police harassment, opened up teen centers and

after-school programs, created job-training services, and started a theater group for children.

The most important of these organizations was Project Action. When federal funding was made available to black communities after the 1965 Watts Riots, Project Action secured resources for the construction of 14 buildings of subsidized housing that are scattered through the neighborhood (see Figure 2). The project, collectively called Holiday Venice, was occupied mostly by the children and grandchildren of long-term African American homeowners and renters in Oakwood. During the 1970s, when Oakwood was incrementally becoming Latino in its demographic makeup, 98 percent of the residents living in the 176 units in the first eight buildings were African American (Cunningham, 1976).

After Project Action fell into receivership, a private developer purchased the properties. Although the buildings became designated as Project-Based Section 8 housing, a program run by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that gives the developer stable subsidies from the government while tenants are chosen on the basis of their exceptionally low incomes and special needs, units were often allocated in ways that circumvented the bureaucratic rules by negotiating with a local building manager. The discontinuity in property ownership and federal housing programs was countered by the continuation of an informal process through which long-time local residents obtained housing in Holiday Venice.

Shanisse Small, a third-generation resident in her 40s, describes how she got an apartment in Holiday Venice when she was 18. She had filed a regular application and heard nothing for nine months.

Shanisse: My friend Larisa, she called me and was like, 'Let's go see if they have any apartments ... Joe [the manager] said he was going to give me an apartment, he gonna give you one too.' ... So we went over there and we talked to him. And he was like, 'Do you think you're ready for an apartment? You already had one baby, and I see you're pregnant again.' I was like 'Yeah, and I can't bring no baby into my mom's house again, she gonna kill me.' He was like, 'OK, well I got some apartments coming up and I'll see if you're responsible ... and I'll think about getting you one.'

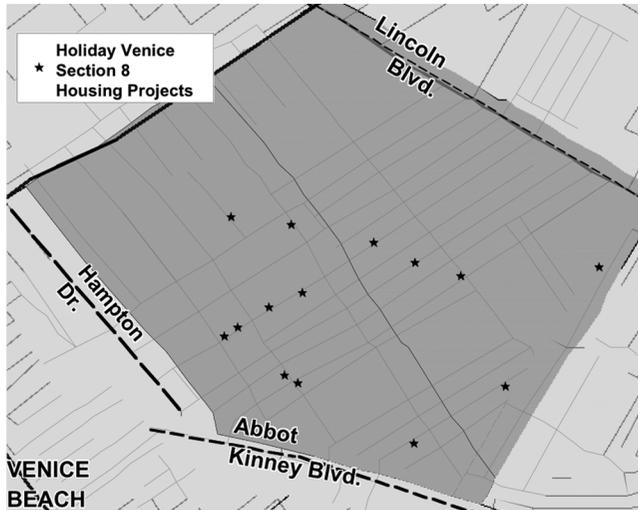
Andrew: At this time there was no waiting list or anything like that? I mean, now it's really hard to get apartments in there and Section 8 has a really long waiting list.

Shanisse: No. At this time the list was moving [snapping her fingers to show the rapid pace] ... See, then, when these apartments were first built, they were built for the community. People that lived in the community got 'em. That's how it worked.

The dispersed placement of the 14 buildings throughout Oakwood, coupled with occupants' connections with long-term homeowners, gave African American residents a sense of stability and territorial control, unlike more concentrated public housing projects that are often isolated from the surrounding neighborhood. Years later, when the buildings were sold once again and the new owners attempted to dissolve the Section 8 contracts with HUD, although Latinos had become a large residential contingent in the 14 buildings, it was almost entirely African American homeowners and renters who joined together to resolve this crisis and protect the community's subsidized housing.<sup>6</sup>

A history of organized attachment to Oakwood has enabled African American activists to promote its identity as the 'black section of Venice'. They have persuaded city leaders and developers to label spaces to celebrate the memory of important community members. Streets and housing complexes are named after the Reese and Tabor families. The sports field at the Oakwood Park was renamed in memory of an African American resident influential in organizing the youth football league. When the Venice Library moved out of Oakwood, the old building was renamed the Vera Davis Center in memory of a local black activist and became used for community social service programs. The block surrounding the First Baptist Church was renamed Holmes Square, in memory of its long-term pastor who passed away in 1999.

The visibility of institutions and memorials evokes a historical narrative about the organizational capacity of the African American community, even



**Figure 2** Map of the distribution of housing projects in Oakwood

though the black population has declined. Symbolism, however, only carries a story if community practices and rituals reinforce it. African Americans sustain their collective visibility through their continued use of neighborhood institutions and by staging well-attended events. Oakwood Park is the central and most visible public space in the neighborhood. Over the course of decades, the directors of the park have been African American men. African American seniors have long congregated at the picnic tables on a daily basis to play dominoes and reminisce about the past. African American activists have organized and held meetings and protests in and around the park. African American children have used the gym and resources in the recreation center.

Young black men and women also hang out around the park. While many are just socializing, drug and gang related activities are particularly visible. The drug trade has been commonplace on the streets of Oakwood since the emergence of the Shoreline Crips in the 1970s. Police have contained much of their activities in the vicinity of the park, pushing together African Americans with different routines into the same physical space and enabling the LAPD to monitor the area through the use of 24-hour surveillance cameras.

In the 1990s, a widely publicized gang war broke out in Oakwood between the local African American gang and two Latino gangs, the Venice 13 and the Culver City Boys. Seventeen people were murdered and over 50 more were shot in just 10 months in this small area (Umamoto, 2006). As Venice 13 recruited more members, it did not sustain visible connections with Oakwood. Members of the Shoreline Crips, on the other hand, continued to operate out of Oakwood's public spaces. Gang members who no longer lived in the neighborhood returned to Oakwood Park on a daily basis, sometimes staying with friends and relatives nearby. When a former gang member whose grandmother and uncle still lived in Oakwood gave me a tour of the area, it lasted over six hours because he repeatedly stopped to talk with people he knew.

Today, Shoreline Crips continue to tag public buildings (see Figure 3), reinforcing the public association between 'black' and 'crime'. Despite the internal economic and cultural heterogeneity of the black community, collective stigmatization has led new white residents moving into Oakwood to raise concerns about the congregation of African Americans in public spaces. Ceremonial events and political meetings become moments of African American visibility. Crowds of families and friends come together, sometimes associating openly with gang members, and drawing the attention of politicians and law enforcement officers. I describe one occasion from my fieldnotes:

What began as a funeral turned into an all-day reunion that lasted for many hours, and people around the neighborhood, made uneasy by the number of black people in the streets, repeatedly called the police. Throughout the



**Figure 3** Photograph of the Oakwood Community Center with Venice Shoreline Crip Tag

day, the community gathering slowly transformed into a site of intense police surveillance, as LAPD cars continued to drive around in circles and officers monitored the streets on foot to make sure things were ‘under control’. Angry about the heightened police presence, African Americans participating in the social event questioned why they were under the watchful eye of the police, becoming defensive about their right to visit family and friends and celebrate the life of a community member.

Constraints that historically rendered African Americans invisible from white residents and visitors in the rest of Venice facilitated the development of collective visibility in Oakwood. Black community-based organizations have obtained resources from the city and the state and drawn recognition from politicians at all levels. During the course of six years of research, I attended over a dozen political forums held by the city specifically to address the issues of the black community that never even mentioned the Latino majority. This phenomenon raises a host of questions about how Latino residents fit into an evolving urban ‘color line’ (Du Bois, 1989 [1903]; Gans, 1999; Lee and Bean, 2007). In the next section, I focus on how and why the substantial growth of Oakwood’s Latino population has not had a proportionate degree of influence over public perceptions of the local environment.

## Latinization without Latino identity

The Latinization of Los Angeles has had an overwhelming influence on the city's public culture. In 2005, Los Angeles elected its first Latino mayor since the 19th century. The remnants of a Mexican mural movement appear on walls throughout the city. Businesses operate on the sweat of low-income Latino men and women. Latin American-influenced restaurants exist in every neighborhood. Vendors from Mexico and Central America distribute fresh produce on countless street corners. Latino gardeners and Latina nannies and housekeepers tend to the homes of LA's white, middle and upper classes. Public marches draw attention to tens of thousands of underpaid, non-unionized Latino laborers and hundreds of thousands of Latino men, women, and families to protest proposed federal legislation targeting undocumented immigrants.

The visible Latinization of Los Angeles has not translated into collective visibility in Oakwood. During the 1970s, Latinos were moving into Oakwood in such large numbers that they overtook African Americans as the largest demographic group. In this neighborhood, however, the collective invisibility of the Latino population and the collective visibility of the African American population have reinforced each other.

Historically, African Americans who migrated to Oakwood shared a common origin in the southern United States and developed institutions that supported associations between those who arrived at different periods. Latinos, by contrast, came from a wide variety of places in different phases, which contributed to their lack of social cohesion in Oakwood.

Some immigrants from Mexico who arrived before the 1960s developed multigenerational ties to the area and established closer relationships with African American families as children grew up and went to school together. The second phase of Latino population growth, which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, consisted largely of undocumented immigrants from Jalisco, Nayarit, and Guadalajara in Mexico, and San Salvador in El Salvador. When Interstate 10 was extended into Santa Monica in the mid-1960s, a Latino neighborhood was uprooted, leading some families to relocate to Oakwood. More recently, undocumented immigrants from Oaxaca in Southern Mexico have moved into the area; today they probably make up the largest segment of the Latin American population.

Over time and across generations, Latinos in Oakwood have adopted a more private lifestyle than the neighborhood's African Americans. Different cohorts have remained fragmented rather than coalescing around a common identity, and they tend to participate in an array of institutions and social activities beyond rather than within Oakwood.

Historically, those who came without papers or overstayed their visas found that their precarious legal position constrained their relationship to the locality. Immigration officers monitored and harassed them, generating a palpable sense of fear about occupying public space. Juan Gutierrez, now in his mid-50s, moved from Guadalajara to Los Angeles in the 1960s. He said, 'They hunted for us. They would wait at different places, bus stops, where we worked, and around the neighborhood, just looking for us.' Silvia Vargas, now in her late 50s, told me that her bus driver would avoid dropping off residents at the bus stops when he spotted immigration officers waiting; he wanted to give his regular riders, almost all of whom were Latino, a chance to escape.

Their justifiable fear of immigration authorities forced undocumented immigrants to remain discreet in their activities. Many traveled between home and work not by public transit but less visibly, walking several miles to work in hotels and restaurants in Santa Monica and navigating through back roads and alleyways – a central feature of Los Angeles neighborhoods. Maria Beltran, an undocumented Salvadoran immigrant, explained that they avoided going out to parks, restaurants, movies, or other public places; instead they often held parties in their already crowded apartments.

Latinos arriving during this period also encountered a neighborhood with a well-organized African American community, which helped to shape their perceptions of racial and ethnic differences. For new immigrants, language barriers limited their social contacts with black people in the neighborhood.

Despite African Americans' marginalized status in relation to whites, Latino immigrants saw them as 'Americans'. Sal Beltran, the 30-year-old son of undocumented immigrants who grew up in Oakwood, pointed to the differences between African Americans and Latinos: 'Black people were very patriotic in their views. The African Americans saw themselves as just that. "We're American. We're African Americans." And that's how they viewed it first and foremost.' Impoverished African Americans sometimes expressed hostility toward undocumented immigrants who, they believed, obtained jobs that paid less than the minimum wage. The outcome was a rise in street crime aimed at Latinos, which reinforced their sense of insecurity and a belief that some African Americans were dangerous.

Latino residents often found themselves in a difficult predicament, risking being robbed as they avoided immigration authorities by walking through back alleys. One former resident, Cecilia Aguilar, now in her mid-50s, described the fear she and other Latinas felt while walking home from work:

I had to go through the neighborhood, and every day I thought about if I was going to be attacked, ya know, mugged. Ya know, they [African

Americans] stop you and take your money ... It was a frightening feeling. But everyone in my family, all the women, someone was always robbed on the way home.

The visibility of African Americans exacerbated Latinos' fears. Louis Moreno, a third-generation Latino resident now in his mid-50s who grew up in the neighborhood, recalled the culture of street life in Oakwood: 'there were so many blacks on the streets. Just standing around, hanging out. On the corners, outside their houses, at the park, just everywhere. Not like it is now, where there's a few here and there about. They were everywhere.'

Sal Beltran and Pedro Gonzalez, both Latino men in their 30s, explained that the older generation was uncomfortable with African Americans not only because they worried about being mugged but also because of the sheer number of black people they observed in public.

Sal: There wasn't much association [with African Americans] for them [their parents].

Pedro: A little bit more for us [children of immigrants], because we knew a lot of kids at school.

Sal: 'Muchos negros.' [They both laugh.]

Pedro: [Still laughing, he repeats] 'Muchos negros.' We heard that all the time, 'muchos negros'. Because they felt like black people were everywhere ... Always out there, chillin' and everything.

Latinos in Oakwood did not coalesce socially or unify politically. Those who had been in Oakwood for a longer period of time tended to distance themselves from those who had arrived more recently. They grew up in the neighborhood and became Americanized in their values and beliefs. They avoided close associations with new immigrants so as not to draw attention to themselves as different. Louis Moreno, a third generation Mexican American now in his late 50s, remembered with regret how as a teenager he and his friends called the new Latin American immigrants 'Putos', 'Wetbacks', or other derogatory terms that separated them from others in the neighborhood. He stressed the strength of the ties between long-time residents that linked Latinos and African Americans and the fragility of the ties between new Latino immigrants and older Mexican American residents:

Anyone that was unfamiliar, whether they were new to the neighborhood or were coming to visit or whatever, they were considered suspect. We knew who lived here, on our streets – black and brown. We knew the familiar faces. So new people were the ones that we took a second look at.

As African American activists worked hard to solve problems through collective efforts, Latinos largely distanced themselves from local political

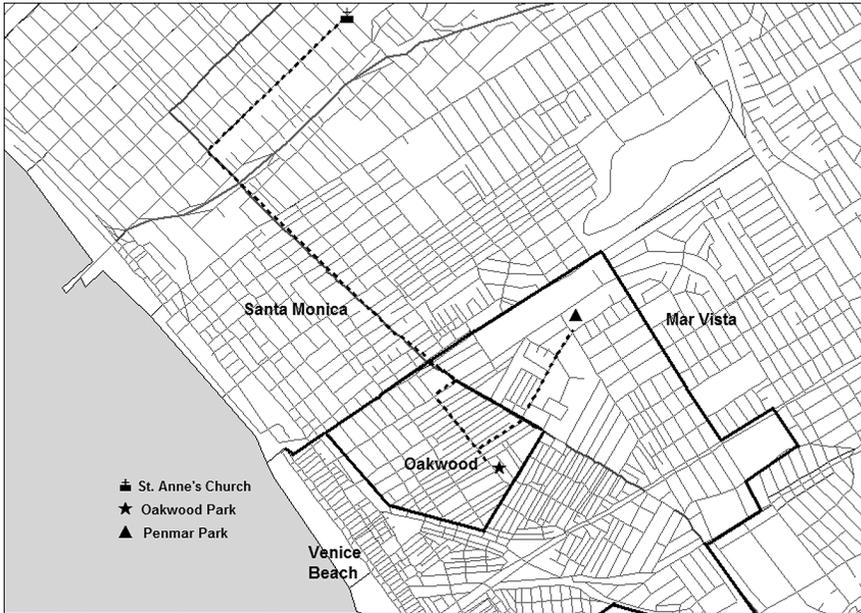
involvement. Only when the stakes were extremely high, involving employment or immigration policy, did Latinos organize politically. Maria Daldivia, a Latina activist during the early 1990s, said that many Latinos told her that they were too busy working to attend meetings, and undocumented immigrants did not want to risk public participation because of their citizenship status. Daldivia pointed out to a *Los Angeles Times* reporter that although African American women had a long tradition of grassroots activism in Oakwood, Latina women were hesitant about joining without the support of their husbands.<sup>7</sup> Liliana Vasquez, now in her mid-40s, moved with her family to Venice from Nayarit, Mexico, when she was five years old. She articulated the view that different phases of migration have generated different ‘types of Latinos’, which has limited their cohesion and collective visibility.

There isn’t like a social component to the Latino community here somehow. Or a centrally localized place where people congregate, basically. Not like black people, who have their park and their groups and, ya know, their leaders. Maybe you go to church, everybody worships, and then maybe they have a little something once in a while. But they [Latinos] don’t really rally around issues. Also, another thing is there’s different types of Latinos that are here. The newer people, like the Oaxacans. There’s a lot of Oaxacans who, ya know, I have absolutely nothing in common with. And then there’s the people that have been here for a long time. Also you have the gang and drug type families and that whole environment too.

Latinos have participated in public life, but they have not established institutions, spaces, and interaction ritual chains (Collins, 2004) within the boundaries of Oakwood that make them collectively visible. They have commonly attended churches outside of Oakwood and even Venice. Since the 1980s, the Oaxacan community, for instance, has attended St Anne’s Catholic Church in nearby Santa Monica (see Figure 4). St Anne’s provides a vibrant public life, including festivals, ritual celebrations, parties, political meetings, and services and resources, but it is located more than four miles away from Oakwood.

Latino residents also commonly use public spaces in other parts of Venice. They describe the Oakwood Park as an exclusive site for African American sociality. Carlos, a Latino man in his late 30s who grew up in Venice, said:

We didn’t have access to resources, or access to school settings ... [O]ne thing you have to ask yourself is, who uses the recreation center at the Oakwood Park? Who uses the California space [Vera Davis Center]? So even to this day, these people [African Americans] feel very comfortable going in there. But we [Latinos] don’t. And in fact, every time when a Latino went



**Figure 4** Map of Latino residents' routes to a church and a park beyond Oakwood

in there to use it, they pushed us out. They always found ways to weed us out . . . by picking fights, by making us look like we were instigators, and by making us look like we were going in there and starting racial tension. And what we took from that was that they were saying, those are our resources, we don't want you freeloading on them . . . And our parents had no idea that these places existed for the youth. All they knew was that these were places that the blacks hung out. That's the way that they saw it . . . Because of the relationship we had with them, they would always tell us, 'No quiero que va en alli'. We don't want you to go there, we don't want you to hang out there.

Latinos found alternative avenues for public participation, regularly attending events and activities elsewhere. Penmar Park, located about a mile east of Lincoln Boulevard, has a history as a Latino site for cultural events, festivities, and celebrations (see Figure 4).

This series of constraints that Latinos encountered impeded the development of social cohesion and political unity and facilitated their participation in institutions and spaces outside of Oakwood. The collective invisibility of the Latino population has helped to sustain the collective visibility of the African American population as its numbers have fallen.

## Reinventing the white/black paradigm

During the last decade, as wealthier whites have moved into Oakwood and overtaken African Americans as the second largest segment of the neighborhood's population, some have organized in private to challenge the public culture of the African American community. This effort to limit African American visibility and control their activities in public spaces is strangely similar to the racial politics that prevailed in the early 20th century when African Americans were rendered invisible from the rest of Venice by being confined to Oakwood.

The new cohort of white residents works behind the scenes, paying attention to public spaces and lobbying city council members and LAPD officers to respond to any hint of 'trouble'. They persuaded the police to park a mobile police station in front of the Oakwood Park and Recreation Center; then the LAPD mounted surveillance cameras to monitor the park and nearby sidewalks and streets. Complaints to the representative on the Los Angeles City Council motivated her to temporarily remove the picnic tables in the Oakwood park, eliminating a central site of sociality for elderly black men. Many newcomers absorb the historic culture of racial stigmatization, associating African American public life with danger and categorizing the black population as a uniform entity, blurring its internal cultural and economic heterogeneity.

As white residents in Oakwood work behind the scenes politically, they construct their own privatized, exclusive domains as a sign of privilege. Their large houses and condominiums, surrounded by tall fences or stone walls, signal a culture of privacy. Although African Americans continue to be the largest group at neighborhood political meetings, they are now forced to defend their collective presence to the city councilman, LAPD officers, and representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation. They often transform meetings into ritual performances by pointing out how new patterns of surveillance and racial and economic change fall into a long history of harassment against the African American community. In Oakwood, as the conflict over territory has emerged through the lens of white/black dynamics, the Latino population, which is still the largest segment of the local population, has been completely overshadowed.

## Conclusion

Understanding how different racial-ethnic groups became differentially associated with a neighborhood they shared requires us to analyze how that place became publicly identified with one group and how that

identification persisted over time as the area underwent marked demographic shifts. Some scholars have sought to explain the association between a population and a territory by calling attention to the demographic majority's interest in shaping outsiders' perceptions. By the logic of territorial density, the largest group produces a system of signs that points outsiders to a particular interpretation of the locality (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). In Oakwood, however, demographic predominance is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain collective visibility: the neighborhood remained identified with African Americans long after their numbers had been surpassed by Latinos. Historical circumstances provided conditions for distinct path-dependent relationships to local institutions and symbols over time. The constraints and opportunities that African Americans encountered enabled them to construct and reinforce a collective representation, while the constraints and opportunities that Latinos encountered undermined the possibility of a pathway to collective representation for them.

Urban ethnographers studying African American communities have dispelled the myth of black homogeneity by showing the political rifts, diverse lifestyles, divergent class and status positions, and varied character types among individuals of African descent (Anderson, 1978, 1999; Duneier, 1999; Pattillo, 2007). Several key mechanisms underlie 'interaction ritual chains' (Collins, 2004), the web of situations through which individuals come together over time. In Oakwood, these interaction patterns combined to propel African Americans toward collective visibility: institution-building; a culture of public sociability; political organization and collective action; labeling of spaces in honor or memory of residents; and stigmatization by others. Collective visibility based on a public perception of social cohesion has continued to label Oakwood as the 'black section' of Venice.

Institutionalization provides a stable set of resources, including a location for meaningful associations. Churches, community-based organizations, commercial establishments, and other forms of group affiliation provide opportunities for interactions that link past and present (Collins, 2004). Churches continue to attract people of the same racial background despite their geographic dispersion (McRoberts, 2003), and organizations fight for the protection of historical attachments, supporting territorial connections across economic and generational positions through job training, construction of affordable housing, and social service agencies.

A culture of public interaction and occasional collective actions in public spaces attract attention and help to reproduce visibility. African Americans defined the street culture in the neighborhood through regular use of the Oakwood Park and collective celebrations, protests, and other

ritual performances, thus cementing this place's public identity. Latino immigrants, by contrast, have tended to avoid attracting attention on the streets, rarely congregating in the park, and participating in organized activities elsewhere. The contrast between the two groups' patterned uses of neighborhood spaces, recurring and mutually reinforcing among African Americans and fragmented and disparate among Latinos, strengthens public perceptions.

Signs visible to passersby correlate in their minds with patterns of public interaction. For African Americans, labels honoring their collective history in this place link past and present. Signs naming spaces in memory of black residents become recognition of territorial status and a way to link together various elements of the neighborhood. The perception of racial cohesion motivates politicians to meet with black community leaders and hold large collective forums, a ritual performance in Oakwood by which African Americans draw attention to police harassment, crime, and misrepresentation and address the 'problems of the black community' even as black people constitute a small and declining minority of residents.

By focusing on the historical formation, sustenance, and ramifications of collective visibility and collective invisibility, this article addresses concerns about the problematic place of Latinos in a culture that historically defines the color line through the prism of black and white (Du Bois, 1989 [1903]; Gans, 1999; Lee and Bean, 2007). The more recent influx of white residents may affect the territorial status of Oakwood in a way Latin American immigration has not. The path-dependent direction of territorial association is quickly shifting to a white-black lens, reinforcing the collective invisibility of the Latino population. Some newer white residents stigmatize African American public life by categorizing the black community as homogeneous, and long-time African American residents complain about new residents' lack of interest in getting to know their neighbors. This binary opposition reveals the potential for new chains of interaction rituals and a new pathway toward collective visibility as politicians and law enforcement officials focus their energies on white-black relations. The Latino population, still the neighborhood's largest demographic segment, remains collectively invisible on this emerging public front.

### **Acknowledgements**

For their helpful comments, I am especially grateful to David Halle, Jack Katz, and Gail Kligman, who offered advice on earlier drafts, and to Rene Almeling, Claudio Benzecry, and Jooyoung Lee, who read the revised version.

## Notes

- 1 Table 1 is based on data from the United States Census, which uses the term Hispanic to refer to individuals of any Hispanic origin regardless of geographic location. Throughout the article, I use Latino to refer to individuals of Latin American origin. In conversations and interviews, persons of Latin American origin consistently used this term. The reader will notice, however, that when people identified as 'Mexican American', I adopted their term.
- 2 The case of Oakwood, where a number of residential characteristics have come together over time to enable its public perception as an African American neighborhood, can be juxtaposed to other cases where outsiders have imposed labels on places without attending to their internal attributes. Burgess's definition of community areas is the most famous case in the history of sociology, although there are many others like it across urban landscapes. According to Sudhir Venkatesh (2001: 276–7), Burgess's effort to 'prescribe' stable community areas in Chicago was often at odds with his sociological efforts to 'describe' the 'uncertainty, fluidity, and discordance' in the city's settlement patterns. Outsiders impose stability in place identity despite the fluctuation of its internal characteristics. In Oakwood, the perseverance of its identity as a 'black neighborhood' is the result of an ongoing relationship between internal and external labels.
- 3 This demographic information comes from the Los Angeles Almanac [<http://www.laalmanac.com/population/po241a.htm>].
- 4 Interview with Sonia Reese Davis about her grandfather and the history of Venice, by Farai Chideya for National Public Radio, 4 July 2005, available online at: [<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4728758>].
- 5 William J. Wilson (1987, 1996) argues that structural shifts in the national economy produced terrible consequences for African American urban communities across the country as meaningful work opportunities rapidly disappeared. This analysis shifts explanations of black poverty from racism, which has always existed, to the combination of historic patterns of racism with current patterns of economic restructuring. Notwithstanding the advances won by the civil rights movement, the contraction of employment opportunities for less-educated African Americans, particularly a substantial loss of jobs in manufacturing industries, led to a sharp decline in the economic resources available in black urban communities. Wilson's model applies to Venice, where the aviation industry, which had provided previous generations of Oakwood residents with reasonably stable and relatively well-paying employment, contracted severely.
- 6 The informal process used to obtain housing in Holiday Venice projects has dissolved, altering the composition of the 14 buildings' residents. The rising number of Latino tenants and shrinking number of African American

tenants has been a source of controversy and has affected the organizing potential of the Holiday Venice Tenants Association. During the 1990s, the tenants joined forces with African American homeowners to influence contract negotiations between the property owner and HUD to uphold the contracts until they expired. Recently, as the property owner has been attempting to pay off mortgages with HUD in order to move away from affordable housing status, leaders of the tenants association are finding it difficult to mobilize tenants.

- 7 Shawn Doherty, 'Not Welcome', *Los Angeles Times*, 5 March 1992, p. 1.

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■ **ANDREW DEENER**, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, is currently writing a book based on six years of ethnographic and historical research on neighborhood formation, continuity of local culture, and change in Venice, California, an economically and racially-ethnically diverse community in Los Angeles. *Address*: Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut, Unit 2068, 344 Mansfield Rd., Storrs, CT 06269, USA. [email: andrew.deener@uconn.edu] ■



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

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**Re: Proposal update and the pickleball situation**

1 message

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**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>  
To: Mike Tomas <

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 8:25 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

**From:** Mike Tomas < >  
**Date:** November 5, 2022 at 2:54:39 PM PDT  
**To:** JOSEPH HALPER <>  
**Subject:** Proposal update and the pickleball situation

Hi Joe -

We are working on the proposal - Todd is doing a tremendous job putting ideas together and gathering information. We are looking forward to sharing it with you soon.

This recent article in SM Mirror clearly reaffirms just how paramount a true pickleball center is to the City of Los Angeles - and even more so that the center be at a public park where there are **rules and protocols to regulate it:**

<https://smmirror.com/2022/11/letter-to-the-editor-tennis-v-pickleball-and-the-city-of-santa-monica/>

The pickleball currently being played at Palisades Park is the same hoax as the one at Memorial Park in Santa Monica. These felonious "clubs" have found a way to circumvent the system, seize control over the courts, and illegally collect money.

This will do nothing but destroy the tennis community and erode at the fabric of the public parks itself.

As tennis concessionaires, Todd and I are prepared to step up and help the LA Parks provide this service to our public park patrons the right way: by following rules and keeping order and thereby representing the best of our city parks.

Thanks again for your guidance and wisdom.

Best regards,

Mike T.

--  
City of Los Angeles  
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Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

## Re: Cruel, insane rules at Felicia Mahood senior Center, update

1 message

Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>  
To: Eric Yves Lafayette <

Mon, Oct 31, 2022 at 7:46 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

Please see attached response from previous email. Thank you.

On Fri, Oct 28, 2022 at 11:44 AM Eric Yves Lafayette < > wrote:

Update on oct 27th 2022

Since the last email a week ago you have not done anything and what is below still stands  
Please Implement a simple new rule which is allow only 20 senior citizens with a mask per day instead of forcing them to do activities they don't know how to do or they cannot do which mean barring senior citizens to have access to Senior Center. Please Commissioner do something against this cruel and stupid rules without closing this remarkable very large Senior Center.

In addition you have not answered any of my emails

Cruel, insane rules at Felicia Mahood senior Center

Dear commissioners

I am sure you are against setting a trap to harm or risking the lives of senior citizens at the senior citizen Centers but it is what is happening at many Senior Citizen Centers in Los Angeles and I personally experienced it and I am 72 years old and went to the Felicia Mahood Center in West Los Angeles which is on Santa Monica Boulevard next to the public library

When I say insane I am not exaggerating:

I was rejected twice at the Felicia Mahood Senior Center because the first time I didn't want to participate in the only activity going on which was aerobic yoga and the reason I didn't want is that I have an illness that hurts when I stretch my body. The second time there was no activity.

I was very kind but the manager yelled at me three times "Leave now, Leave now, Leave now" then of course I left The second time the manager was not there but the assistant manager was there and she was very polite but she insisted extremely strongly for me to leave and she explained to me that if I did not enter any activity I couldn't stay and this time there was no activity we are talking absolute insanity and cruelty.

My two attempts were during heat waves and even during heat waves and I'm talking real heat waves the managers at the Felicia Mahood Center kicked me out, me the 72 years old senior citizen.

Each time I went in this gigantic facility it was empty, there were one day three seniors the other day Zero senior at the place that could hold at least twice as many people as in the library because it is three time as big as the library.

To have zero seniors in a huge Senior air conditioned Center is not the goal I hope of the city of Los Angeles

I finally found the rules in writing thanks to a remarkable man outside the Park and Recreation Center division of Los Angeles. This guy is remarkable, put him in charge at a very high level of park and recreation. He actually is not part of Park and recreation center.

. " to address a few of the concerns you brought up about the Felicia Mahood Center:

1. The City's Recreation and Parks (RAP) department owns and operates the Felicia Mahood Center. There are staffing issues at Felicia Mahood preventing them from fully opening. Per RAP:
2.
  - o "Starting October 1st, Felicia Mahood's hours of operation will be Monday - Friday (8:00 am - 5:00 pm). Patrons will be able to call or visit the center during those hours for office assistance. The facility will continue to be open for center programs and permit groups. Patrons not participating in center programs or permitted activities will not be allowed to linger inside the facility."
3. RAP has current COVID-19 protocols that all centers must follow (including, proof of vaccination for everyone entering the facility, health screenings, mask-wearing, etc). All RAP facilities are not open to full operations. Felicia

[Mahood is available for center programs and permit groups only](#). Only registered participants are to be inside the facility to participate in programs.

4. The City's Emergency Management Department (EMD) [designates certain City facilities \(mostly Recreation Centers and Libraries\) during heat waves](#). EMD has not designated Felicia Mahood as a cooling center. I would be happy to look into why that is and if it can be used as a cooling center in the future.

While this may not be the response you were hoping for, I hope this clarifies the situation.

Have a great rest of your week.

All the best,  
Noah Fleishman

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 **City of Los Angeles Mail - Re\_ Cruel, insane rules at Felicia Mahood senior Center.pdf**  
177K



Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

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## Re: Unprofessional Behavior of Jimmy Kim on Video at Rancho Cienega Sports Complex

1 message

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**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>  
To: Phyllis Taylor < >

Tue, Nov 1, 2022 at 3:22 PM

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Tue, Nov 1, 2022 at 3:07 PM Phyllis Taylor <

> wrote:

--  
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Website: [www.laparks.org](http://www.laparks.org)

October 31, 2022

Attention: Mr. J. Michelle District 10 Field Deputy

To: Heather Hutt and Rap Commissioners City of Los Angeles

I would like to lodge a complaint against Los Angeles City General Manager Jimmy Kim, Recreation and Parks.

Mr. Kim was at the Rancho Cienega Sports Complex on Saturday Oct 30, 2022 and displayed behavior that is not consistent with the level of professional courtesy government employees show local constituents. Mr. Kim engaged in a verbal dispute with a park visitor who parked his car in the wrong place. This exchange was embarrassing to witness as a local resident who has relied upon city employees to provide guidance and real-life examples of how to engage with community members.

Mr. Kim's behavior lacked the professionalism that members of our community are accustomed to when interacting with city employees. Mr. Kim's exchange with the park visitor was unable to be resolved in a professional manner due to Mr. Kim's aggressive tactics. Eventually, Mr. Kim brought in Phil the Park Director to solve the problem he created. He came to the front of the tennis court and continued his extremely disrespectful manners to members of the tennis community. The behavior was to intimidate people at the park who didn't know him. He was out of control calling three cars of park police. At no time

was there a need to waste public police resources. The Park director Phil tried to calm Mr. Kim, but he continued to be very rude to your constituents of District 10. The way he spoke to your constituents was, as if he was going to put us in our place. (you people attitude) He has made a very poor impression introducing himself to this community park. His behavior let us know he does not value us in this community. Rancho Cienega Tennis Club has been a part of the Rancho Cienega Sport Complex over 70 years. We have the blessing of the late GM Jackie Tatum and we have a tournament in her honor every year. We would like to have a meeting with you or your field deputy to resolve this problem. We also have a video of Mr. Kim behavior on Oct 30, 2022 at the park.

Sincerely,  
Phyllis Taylor

- 
- 
- 
- 





Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

**Re: Unprofessional City Employee**

1 message

**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 2:31 PM

To: Brigitte Champion &lt;

&gt;

Cc: Brigitte Champion &lt;

&gt;

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 2:05 PM Brigitte Champion &lt;

&gt; wrote:

I would like to lodge a formal complaint against Los Angeles City, General Manager Jimmy Kim, Recreation and Parks.

On October 30, 2022, at approximately 2:00 p.m. The Rancho Cienega Tennis Club hosted a USTA sanctioned women's tennis match. As a team member, I was present, and totally embarrassed of what took place during the match. At approximately 2:50 p.m. I observed six (6) Park Rangers, exited three cars and began interacting with tennis members. The former President notified me and others to quickly move our cars. I stepped off the court to move my car and overheard Mr. Kim, explaining to one of the Park Rangers how he had to get the Park under control. I approached Mr. Kim, and asked why it was necessary to move cars, since there was no signage present or gates around the so-called "restricted area". I also asked what City position did he hold? He stated with his arms folded, he was the new General Manager. I told him he was not presenting a positive first impression. As the new General Manager, he should be working harmoniously with the community, not coming out and dropping the hammer on us. I told him I was a board member of The Rancho Cienega Tennis Club and we work harmoniously with the local staff. All pertinent information regarding the Park is communicated through our monthly meetings. Case and point is construction of the lights on the tennis courts last month. Phillip and his staff notified us, we in turn communicated to our membership.

It was overkill and a bit intimidating to bring Park Rangers, to organize movement of cars from an area with zero signage. I have been playing tennis at Rancho for over 30 years and have never experienced such disrespectful treatment by a City official. The message I left with, there is a new Sheriff in town and we had better comply.

I'm respectfully requesting someone respond to my concerns via e-mail or telephone.

Brigitte Williams-Champion, MBA

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Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

---

**Re: Public Comment RAP Report 22-276**

1 message

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**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 1:49 PM

To: Ron Bitzer &lt;

&gt;

Cc: Nicole Chase &lt;

&gt;, Bill Jones &lt;bill.jones@lacity.org&gt;, Ron Bitzer &lt;

&gt;

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Wed, Nov 2, 2022 at 1:03 PM Ron Bitzer

> wrote:

| Please refer to the attached public comment for the Board of Commissioners. Ron B.

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6245 Gentry Ave.  
North Hollywood, CA 91606

Ms. Sylvia Patsaouras, President  
Board of Commissioners  
Department of Recreation and Parks  
City of Los Angeles, CA 90012  
221 North Figueroa Ave., #300  
Los Angeles, CAA 90012

RE: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Project Report 22-276

Dear Madam President and Members,

Upon review of the pending Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant proposal— an agenda item at your November 3, 2022. Commissioners meeting — the following excerpt pertains to public engagement as well as to planning and technical studies. These activities comprise major objectives of the grant proposal as I understand them.

Recreation and Parks draft grant proposal states on page 12,

While the FHCP (Friends of Hollywood Central Park) continues its much needed engagement and organizes delegations to Sacramento and Washington, DC to advocate for the Project, it is critical for the success of the Project for the City to actively and continuously engage with local stakeholders. Federal Funds - Reconnecting Communities: \$800,000  
Local Match Funds - Measure A: \$500,000, Application for Federal assistance, p. 12..

The following considerations are relevant before the City opts to enter into a second contract with the Friends of Hollywood Central Park; the discussion should be public.

1. A three-year contract between the City and Friends of Hollywood Central Park ended with termination of the contract by your Board on July 15, 2021, Report 21-129. The City did not, I believe, recoup any of the funds expended to Friends of Hollywood Central Park and FCS International following the engagement of Friends of Hollywood Central Park in a July 11, 2018 agreement.

Page Two

2. Friends of Hollywood Central Park, a tax-exempt qualified charity, reports as recently as fiscal year 2020 that it carries a debt of \$462,000.00. I do not know how this charity proposes to service this debt (Attachment A).

In my July 13, 2021 written statement to your Board, I said, "You may have or wish to seek current financial statements from your partner (Friends of Hollywood Central Park) when considering what the partner is or is not capable of."

3. A fund raising gala for Friends of Hollywood Central Park is promoted online for January 12, 2023, and lists the Department of Recreation and Parks as a "Partner" featuring a portrait photo of Mr. Anthony Diaz, staffer.
4. Other timely projects for public parks in Hollywood have been identified by the respected 2022 Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Park & Recreation Needs Assessment (Attachments B). If the federal government is the principal source of funding for the Central Park, Friends of Hollywood Central Park could be recruited for more manageable fund raising goals in light of this charity's history of administering both City and its own funding.

Very truly yours,



Ron Bitzer

Cc: Bill Jones, Chief Management Analyst

**Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax**  
 Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations) Do not enter social security numbers on this form as it may be made public.  
 Go to [www.irs.gov/Form990](http://www.irs.gov/Form990) for instructions and the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047  
**2020**  
 Open to Public Inspection

For the 2020 calendar year, or tax year beginning 02-01-2020, and ending 01-31-2021

- Check if applicable: Address change
- Name change
- Initial return
- Final return/terminated
- Amended return
- Application pending

**C Name of organization**  
 FRIENDS OF THE HOLLYWOOD CAP PARK  
 HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY CENTRAL PARK

Doing business as

Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address) Room/suite  
 6464 SUNSET BLVD 535

City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code  
 HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028

**D Employer identification number**  
 26-4236328

**E Telephone number**  
 (310) 274-8682

**G Gross receipts \$** 133,105

**F Name and address of principal officer:**  
 6464 SUNSET BLVD 535  
 HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028

**H(a)** Is this a group return for subordinates?  Yes  No

**H(b)** Are all subordinates included?  Yes  No  
 If "No," attach a list. (see instructions)

**H(c)** Group exemption number ▶

Tax-exempt status:  501(c)(3)  501(c) ( ) (insert no.)  4947(a)(1) or  527

**Website:** ▶ hollywoodcentralpark.org

Form of organization:  Corporation  Trust  Association  Other ▶

**L Year of formation:** 2009

**M State of legal domicile:** CA

**Part I Summary**

**1** Briefly describe the organization's mission or most significant activities:  
 TO RAISE FUNDS TO CREATE A NEW PARK IN HOLLYWOOD, ONE OF THE MOST DENSE AND GREEN SPACE STARVED NEIGHBORHOODS IN LOS ANGELES, BY COVERING A PORTION OF THE HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY (US 101) WITH A 38-ACRE STREET LEVEL REGIONAL PARK.

**2** Check this box  if the organization discontinued its operations or disposed of more than 25% of its net assets.

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| <b>3</b> Number of voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1a)             | 3  | 37 |
| <b>4</b> Number of independent voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1b) | 4  | 37 |
| <b>5</b> Total number of individuals employed in calendar year 2020 (Part V, line 2a)  | 5  | 1  |
| <b>6</b> Total number of volunteers (estimate if necessary)                            | 6  | 30 |
| <b>7a</b> Total unrelated business revenue from Part VIII, column (C), line 12         | 7a | 0  |
| <b>7b</b> Net unrelated business taxable income from Form 990-T, line 39               | 7b |    |

|   | Prior Year                | Current Year |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| <b>8</b> Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h)                                      | 1,697,915                 | 94,669       |
| <b>9</b> Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g)                                       |                           | 0            |
| <b>10</b> Investment income (Part VIII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d)                     |                           | 0            |
| <b>11</b> Other revenue (Part VIII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e)          | 5,832                     | 2,172        |
| <b>12</b> Total revenue—add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12)  | 1,703,747                 | 96,841       |
| <b>13</b> Grants and similar amounts paid (Part IX, column (A), lines 1-3)                  |                           | 0            |
| <b>14</b> Benefits paid to or for members (Part IX, column (A), line 4)                     |                           | 0            |
| <b>15</b> Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits (Part IX, column (A), lines 5-10) | 338,615                   | 240,699      |
| <b>16a</b> Professional fundraising fees (Part IX, column (A), line 11e)                    |                           | 0            |
| <b>b</b> Total fundraising expenses (Part IX, column (D), line 25) ▶ 84,618                 |                           |              |
| <b>17</b> Other expenses (Part IX, column (A), lines 11a-11d, 11f-24e)                      | 986,553                   | 134,622      |
| <b>18</b> Total expenses. Add lines 13-17 (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)         | 1,325,168                 | 375,321      |
| <b>19</b> Revenue less expenses. Subtract line 18 from line 12                              | 378,579                   | -278,480     |
|   | Beginning of Current Year | End of Year  |
| <b>20</b> Total assets (Part X, line 16)  | 93,108                    | 36,909       |
| <b>21</b> Total liabilities (Part X, line 26)   | 277,336                   | 499,631      |
| <b>22</b> Net assets or fund balances. Subtract line 21 from line 20                        | -184,228                  | -462,722     |

**Part II Signature Block**

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Signature of officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date 2021-11-19

LAURIE GOLDMAN President  
 Type or print name and title



# PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

3

**Study Area:**

City of LA Hollywood - South

Study Area ID

104

**Prioritized Projects**

| Project Number                | Project Description   | Cost                |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1                             | Replace Playgrounds at Lemon Grove Recreation Center                        | \$500,000           |
| 2                             | <u>Replace Community/Recreation Center at Lemon Grove Recreation Center</u> | \$6,300,000         |
| 3-5                           | Build New Park in the General Vicinity of Edgemont St and Santa Monica Blvd | \$17,365,326        |
|                               | New Park Tasks:   |                     |
|                               | Land Acquisition  | \$14,835,326        |
|                               | Infrastructure/General  | \$1,780,000         |
|                               | Playgrounds   | \$500,000           |
|                               | Picnic Shelters   | \$250,000           |
| 6                             | Repair ADA Restroom Upgrade at All Parks in Study Area                      | \$252,000           |
| 7                             | Repair ADA Walkway/Sidewalk Improvement at All Parks in Study Area          | \$744,800           |
| 8                             | Repair Infrastructure/General at Barnsdall Park                             | \$1,457,100         |
| 9                             | <u>Replace Community/Recreation Center at Hollywood Recreation Center</u>   | \$6,300,000         |
| 10                            | Replace Lighting- LED Conversion at All Parks in Study Area                 | \$304,920           |
| <b>Study Area Total Costs</b> |   |                     |
|                               | TOTAL COST FOR PRIORITIZED PROJECTS   | \$33,224,146        |
|                               | TOTAL DEFERRED MAINTENANCE*   | \$3,522,669         |
|                               | Replace amenities in "poor" condition                                       | \$906,278           |
|                               | Repair amenities in "fair" condition  | \$2,616,391         |
|                               | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$36,746,815</b> |

Each Study Area prioritized 10 projects. These project lists are not intended to supersede or replace any planning documents, nor to obligate the lead agency to implement these projects. For further discussion of projects, please refer to the "Potential Park Projects and Cost Estimates" section of the report.

\*Does not include repairs or replacement projects listed as prioritized projects.

# PROJECT COST ESTIMATES



**Study Area:**  
City of LA Hollywood - North



Study Area ID  
103

## Prioritized Projects

| Project Number                | Project Description   | Cost                 |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1                             | Repair ADA Restroom Upgrade at All Parks in Study Area                    | \$812,000            |
| 2                             | Repair ADA Walkway/Sidewalk Improvement at All Parks in Study Area        | \$6,825,560          |
| 3                             | Replace Lighting- LED Conversion at All Parks in Study Area               | \$2,794,374          |
| 4                             | Replace Playgrounds at Selma Park   | \$500,000            |
| 5                             | Repair Trails at Runyon Canyon Park                                       | \$35,000             |
| 6                             | Add Restrooms at Runyon Canyon Park                                       | \$280,000            |
| 7                             | Replace Senior Center at Las Palmas Senior Citizen Center                 | \$13,200,000         |
| 8-10                          | Build New Park in the General Vicinity of Normandie St and Hollywood Blvd | \$10,330,014         |
|                               | New Park Tasks:   |                      |
|                               | Land Acquisition  | \$7,604,814          |
|                               | Infrastructure/General  | \$1,780,000          |
|                               | Dog Parks   | \$695,200            |
|                               | Picnic Shelters   | \$250,000            |
| <b>Study Area Total Costs</b> |   |                      |
|                               | TOTAL COST FOR PRIORITIZED PROJECTS                                       | \$34,776,948         |
|                               | TOTAL DEFERRED MAINTENANCE*   | \$90,716,581         |
|                               | Replace amenities in "poor" condition                                     | \$83,601,932         |
|                               | Repair amenities in "fair" condition                                      | \$7,114,650          |
|                               | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$125,493,529</b> |

*Each Study Area prioritized 10 projects. These project lists are not intended to supersede or replace any planning documents, nor to obligate the lead agency to implement these projects. For further discussion of projects, please refer to the "Potential Park Projects and Cost Estimates" section of the report.*

*\*Does not include repairs or replacement projects listed as prioritized projects.*



Rap Commissioners &lt;rap.commissioners@lacity.org&gt;

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**Re: Park Renaming Proposal**

1 message

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**Rap Commissioners** <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>  
To: Jonathan Serrano

Fri, Nov 4, 2022 at 8:00 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office, your email will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

On Thu, Nov 3, 2022 at 9:03 PM Jonathan Serrano &lt;

&gt; wrote:

Hello Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation,

My name is Jonathan Serrano, and I am reaching out on behalf of myself and my community in hopes of getting our local park's name changed. The name of our park in question is Central Park Recreation Center (1357 E. 22nd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90011). My community and I would like to change the name of the park in honor of the previous park director, John Wesley Willingham II who unfortunately passed away on October 21, 2022. Mr. Willingham was an integral part of our community who was loved by children, teenagers, and parents alike. When Mr. Willingham came to Central Park and our community, he was welcomed with open arms as many community members showed up with food to the park's gymnasium to celebrate his arrival. For years, Mr. Willingham worked to better our park and remove traces of gang members and drug activity to make it a safe and inviting place for all people. He resuscitated our sports programs for both boys and girls, and even added an additional and consistent program which he dubbed "Friday Night Extreme." This program was essentially for teenagers to come and play basketball and cap the night off with pizza and drinks that he bought from his own money. The motive behind this program as we understood it was to keep teenagers off the streets on Friday nights and keep them from trouble by providing a positive outlet of community building through sports. Not only that but he also purchased much of the baseball equipment with his own funds as well and took players to the batting cages and breakfast afterwards every weekend morning, again out of his own pocket. Mr. Willingham also was able to upgrade the computers at the park and got an additional set as well which he designated for students to come and use to complete homework assignments because many did not have a computer and/or internet services available to them at home. When it came to the adults in the community he dedicated the basketball gymnasium to them on Saturday's where they could run their games as it was always filled to the brim with people. He also always took the input of parents when it came to setting up for both holiday and non-holiday related events at the park. There are many instances where Mr. Willingham went above and beyond for community members such as when he bought someone their suit for prom and made college possible for someone by offering to pay their tuition. There are countless stories such as these that many community members have of him, and there isn't one person in our community that does not know the name John Willingham. There was a time

that he was going to be transferred to another park, but the community protested and he was able to stay with us because the community truly cared for him and saw him as family. We are holding a memorial for him on November 4th, 2022 at Central Park Recreation Center where a majority of the community will show up to pay their respects and honor his memory, work, and dedication to our community. I urge you to please consider renaming the park in his honor. The community as a whole is in favor of honoring Mr. Willingham's legacy. The proposed name would be,

John Willingham Recreation Center.

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City of Los Angeles  
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners  
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