



Legislation Text

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Staff Report for a City of San Leandro City Council Resolution to Rename Grover Cleveland Park on O'Donnell Avenue to Mayor Tony B. Santos Park, in Accordance with Title 1 Chapter 10 of the City of San Leandro Administrative Code

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the City Council rename Grover Cleveland Park at the south end of O'Donnell Avenue to Mayor Tony B. Santos Park in accordance with the procedures outlined in Title 1 Chapter 10 of the City of San Leandro Administrative Code.

BACKGROUND

On April 15, 2019, the City Council directed staff to schedule a discussion at the Rules Committee and/or City Council Facilities and Transportation Committee on how to formally honor Mayor Tony Santos who passed away on April 15, 2019.

Chapter 10 of the City of San Leandro Administrative Code (Code) (Attachment 1) provides the procedures for naming/renaming properties and facilities such as buildings, parks, public rights of way, recreation areas, individual rooms in City facilities, and the renaming of City streets to honor individuals who have made a significant contribution to the City.

The Code specifies that the Rules Committee reviews the requested name change and if certain criteria are met, the Committee may identify a structure or facility where there is a well-defined connection between the contributions of the individual and a structure or facility in San Leandro. Upon review by the Committee, the matter is then forwarded to the Library-Historical Commission, with a final determination to be made by the full City Council. The Rules Committee may also request feedback from the Facilities and Transportation Committee.

In addition to the required review by the Committees and Commission, the following rules apply:

- The individual for whom a facility is to be named must be deceased at least one hundred eighty (180) days;
- The individual for whom a facility is to be named (or renamed) must have been one of the following:
 - Long-term resident of the community or owner of a business in the community who has made significant, notable, and tangible contributions to the facility or property in question or to the San Leandro community at large.
 - Elected official or employee of the City whose accomplishments and contributions to

the community clearly demonstrate a commitment over and beyond that which would otherwise be normally associated with the performance of their work;

- There must be a well-defined connection between the contributions of the individual and the property or facility; and
- In the case of a request involving renaming a facility, the next of kin of the individual for whom the facility is currently named (provided that the person was a local resident) should be notified of the proposed change and given an opportunity for input before the City Council acts upon the request.

Other Structures/Facilities names after Notable Citizens

As outlined in Attachment 2, there are many facilities or structures named after former councilmembers or distinguished San Leandro citizens. Most recently, the City Council elected to name the City Hall South Offices Community Room after former Councilmember Surlene Grant.

Other examples of named structures or facilities include: the Maltester-Polvorosa Overpass, Dave Karp Senior Meeting Room, Luster Knight Memorial, Wes McClure Boat Launch Ramp, Mary Brown Room, Estudillo Room and Burrell Field. Each of these facilities or structures was named after an individual who made significant, notable and tangible contributions to the facility in question or to the San Leandro community at large.

Analysis

Mayor Santos served eight years on the City Council from 1984-1988 and again from 1988 until 1992. He returned to the Council in 2000 and served until 2006 when he was elected Mayor. He served as Mayor from 2006-2010.

During his tenure, Mayor Santos was instrumental in a variety of projects and initiatives including the approval of the Senior Community Center that today serves thousands of visitors each year; the construction of the public parking garage on Estudillo Avenue as a means to foster economic development and revitalization in the downtown; and creation of the Kaiser Permanente campus which ultimately brought an underutilized site into productive use, creating approximately 2,600 permanent new jobs.

He was a champion for those living near the Oakland International Airport who were impacted by aircraft noise and helped create the Airport Noise Forum in coordination with the Port of Oakland. He was also a tireless advocate for diversity calling for reform in City Hall to better represent the City's changing demographics and promoting Asian and Latino representation on the City Council.

Mayor Santos dedicated his time as the President of the East Bay Division of the League of California Cities, and was on the League of California Cities Environmental Quality Policy Committee. He served on a variety of internal City committees including the San Leandro Unified School District Liaison Committee, the Civic and Cultural Committee, the Disaster Council, the Joint Oakland/San Leandro City Council Committee, and the Shoreline-Marina Committee, among others.

One of the efforts he was most proud of, as retold by Mayor Emeritus Sheila Young and City Manager Emeritus John Jermanis, was his effort to create Grover Cleveland Park. This is discussed in more detail below.

There are several possible ways to honor Mayor Santos they include:

Rename Grover Cleveland Park

Grover Cleveland Park is located at the south end of O'Donnell Avenue within the East shore-Davis Street neighborhood. The site was originally two parcels, one owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bevilacqua and the other by the State Division of Highways (now known as Caltrans). The City acquired the first parcel in 1950 and the second in 1958. It is unclear the original intent of these purchases; however, records show a discussion in early 1985 by the City Council of potentially moving four housing units onto the vacant property. Shortly thereafter, on September 16, 1985, then Councilmember Tony Santos recommended that the City Council look into developing a mini-park on the property, which was located in his District. By December 1991, a contract was awarded to build the park, the first phase of which was completed in 1992. It was during this time that the "*O'Donnell Property*" was formally named Grover Cleveland Park, to recognize the old Grover Cleveland School, which had been located in the neighborhood and had been demolished to build homes.

While Mayor Santos made many contributions during and after his tenure in office, his advocacy for creating the park at the foot of O'Donnell Street was one about which he was most proud. According to those closest to him, he felt a strong connection to the park, and in his last days expressed a desire to have the park named after him.

In discussions with long-time resident Ms. Esther Collier, who lives in the neighborhood and not only worked with Mayor Santos to create the park but also walked the neighborhood to garner support, she expressed the desire to keep the name Grover Cleveland Park because it is the last vestige of the old school, but re-dedicate the park in Mayor Santos' memory.

After discussions at the Rules Committee, the Facilities and Transportation Committee, and the Library-Historical Committee (discussed below), staff believes it is possible to rename the park after Mayor Santos while at the same time acknowledging the history of the school and the work of the neighborhood to create a park.

Rename Eden Road

In 2004 the City purchased right-of-way for Eden Road through a delinquent tax sale by the Alameda County Tax Assessor. It is currently an unimproved dead-end road that serves Alco Iron & Metal Co., Phelps Auto Wreckers, a small portion of the City's Water Pollution Control Plant, and the Port of Oakland. As the Council is aware, the improvement of this road has been contemplated for many years. In order to pay for the design and construction, Engineering and Transportation staff have been working with the contiguous property owners to create an Assessment District that will fund roadway improvements. It is expected that the District will be formed in early 2020, with construction to follow in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

Because Eden Road will be a fully-improved street once completed, the Council may wish to consider renaming the road after Mayor Santos. While he did not expressly state his desire to have

the road named after him, the property resides within his former District, and minutes from previous Council meetings indicate his support for the project.

Rename Mulford-Marina Branch Library

The original Mulford Branch Library opened in January 1962 at 2130 West Avenue 132nd (now known as Marina Boulevard). When the Branch was relocated to its current location at the corner of Aurora and Fairway Drive, it was renamed the Mulford-Marina Branch Library to increase awareness of the marina area and to honor its geographic location. When the current branch opened in 1976, it was heralded as the City's first round library and the first building to be constructed as a branch library.

As the Council is aware, this branch is scheduled for a complete re-build in coordination with the Shoreline development. Staff is currently working with consulting architects to design the new building, and it is expected to be completed in late 2021. As such, should the Committee wish to rename a building in honor of Mayor Santos, the timing may be appropriate to do so with the opening of this new facility.

While it is unclear Mayor Santos' specific affiliation with the Mulford-Marina Branch Library, other than it was in his District, City Council minutes do reflect that Mayor Santos was a staunch supporter of the library system as a whole including advocating for resources during budget season.

Should the Council wish to consider renaming the Mulford-Marina Branch Library after Mayor Santos, staff would recommend robust outreach to the surrounding neighborhood as it is well known and documented that there is a strong sense of ownership and identity to this branch library.

Bestow the Title "Mayor Emeritus"

The title Emeritus is often bestowed on an individual in recognition of distinguished service, awarded only to a few upon retirement. It is also used when a person of distinction in a profession retires or hands over the position, enabling their former rank to be retained in their title, e.g., "Professor Emeritus". Three former mayors have received the title "Emeritus" including Jack Maltester, Valance Gill, and Sheila Young, though none posthumously. In 2008, it was Mayor Santos who recommended the City Council designate former Mayor Sheila Young as Mayor Emeritus. Three former City Managers have been honored with the title including, Wes McClure, Lee Riordon, and John Jermanis. Finally former City Attorney Steve Meyers was given the title Emeritus for his many years of service to the City. There is no adopted policy that governs this action.

Current Agency Policies

Title 1 Chapter 10 - San Leandro Administrative Code

Committee Review and Actions

Rules Committee

On June 13, 2019, after hearing from members of the public, the Rules Committee recommended the park retain its name of Grover Cleveland Park so as not to lose the memory of the school that existed in the neighborhood and was demolished to build homes. They did suggest naming the playground or picnic area after Mayor Santos. In addition, they felt it would be appropriate to have a plaque embedded on a large rock that discussed the history of the park that recognized both Mayor Santos and the citizens that worked so hard to create it (Attachment 3).

Facilities and Transportation Committee

On July 3, 2019 the Facilities and Transportation Committee also considered how best to honor Mayor Santos. Members of the public spoke, including Mike Santos, son of the former Mayor. Mr. Santos expressed a strong desire on the part of the family to have Grover Cleveland Park renamed in honor of his father. Other members of the public also expressed concern over President Grover Cleveland's past and a legacy that is not consistent with today's values of diversity and inclusion. After hearing from the speakers, the Committee reached consensus that the park should be renamed after Mayor Santos but that a plaque honoring the role of the neighborhood in creating the park should also be considered.

Board/Commission Review and Actions

Library-Historical Commission

The Commission met on July 16, 2019 to discuss how best to honor Mayor Santos. Former Council member Jim Prola spoke in favor of renaming the park, primarily to honor the legacy of Mayor Santos but also in part because, according to his research, Grover Cleveland's values were not consistent with those we believe in today. The Commission ultimately voted unanimously to recommend the City Council rename the park in honor of Mayor Santos.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the criteria outlined in the Administrative Code, the discussions at the Rules Committee, the Facilities and Transportation Committee, and the Library-Historical Commission, staff recommends the City Council rename Grover Cleveland Park to Tony B. Santos Park, and make preparations for such action as soon as practical thereafter. Given the overwhelming response from the Committees and Commission and the wishes of the family, staff believes this is the appropriate way to honor Mayor Santos posthumously.

Fiscal Impacts

There are no significant fiscal impacts associated with the proposed action. Costs associated with naming a new or existing facility will not be significant and could most likely be addressed through existing appropriations. There are no costs associated with bestowing the title "Emeritus."

Attachments to Staff Report

1. Chapter 10 of the San Leandro Administrative Code
2. List of San Leandro Structures Named After Notable People
3. Photos of Sites and Sample Plaques
4. Minutes - Rules Committee
5. Minutes - Facilities and Transportation Committee
6. Minutes - Library-Historical Commission

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