

Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park Naming Presentation

Department of Recreation and Parks

July 12, 2021



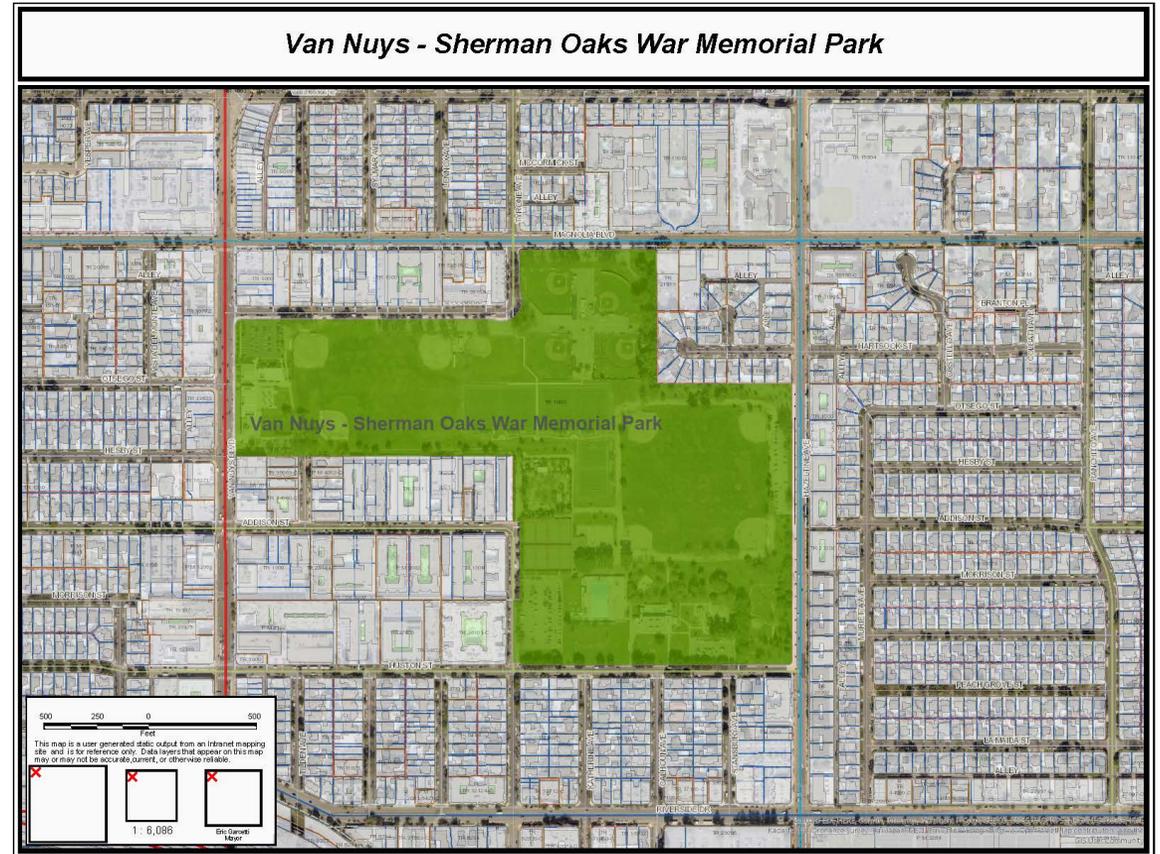
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Agenda

- About Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park
- Surrounding Parks within 2 Miles
- RAP Naming Policy
- Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park Background
- Proposed Names
- Naming Process Next Steps

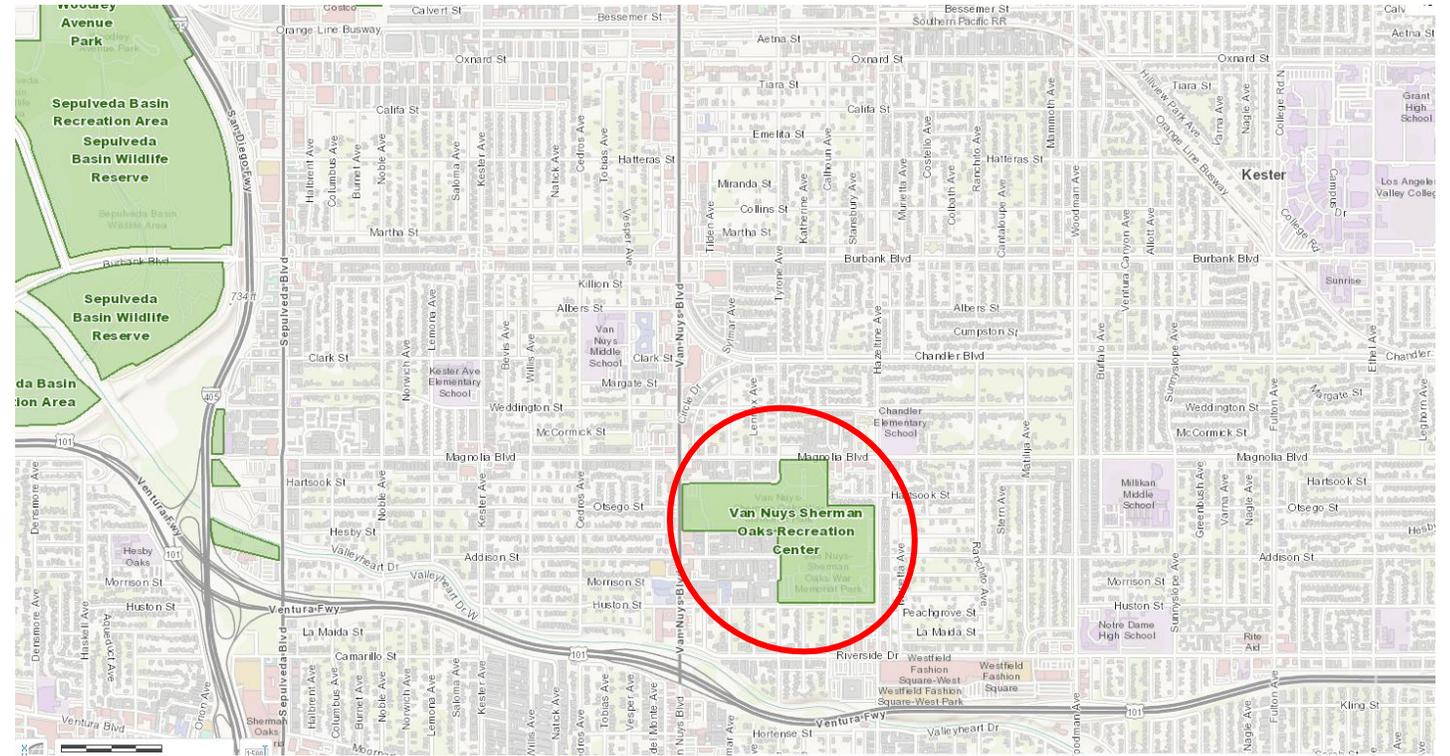
About Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park

- Located at 14201 West Huston Street, Sherman Oaks
- Classified as a Community Park
- Current features of Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park:
 - Recreation Center
 - Aquatic Center
 - Tennis courts
 - Basketball courts
 - Play Area
 - Synthetic Soccer Fields
 - Ball Diamonds



Surrounding Parks within 2 Miles VNSO Park

- Teichman Family Magnolia Park
- Delano Recreation Center
- Deervale-Stone Canyon Park
- Valley Glen Community Park
- Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area
- Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve
- Van Nuys Multipurpose Center
- Woodley Avenue Park
- Sherman Oaks Castle Park
- Studio City Recreation Center
- Tujunga Greenbelt



RAP Naming Policy

- The RAP Board adopted a Naming Policy in June 2013 (Report No. 13-161)
- The Naming of parks after individuals shall be limited to those who are deceased and have made exceptional contributions to the park or community within which the park is located.
- Parks shall only be named after living persons under circumstances requiring such naming as a condition precedent of a grant deed or covenant.
- The Naming of a park after a major historic event must be based on a direct connection between the park and such event.
- The Naming engenders a positive public image which does not unduly commercialize the park or recreational facility.
- The proposed name for the park or recreational facility, and/or contributor, must be compatible with the Mission of RAP.
- Initial Park Names shall be administratively assigned by RAP staff based on geographic features such as street and community names or prominent features

Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park

- Official name of the park is Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park. The park property was deeded to the city with a clause that it must remain as a war memorial park in perpetuity.
- The city acquired the property in 1947 with assistance from the Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park Association, Inc. and funding from the State
- The current name is consistent with the RAP Board's naming policy
- “Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park” shall remain the name of the future park site until the RAP Board approves a new name



Proposed Names for Van Nuys – Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park

RAP is proposing the following name(s) for the current park:

- Rafer Johnson Park

Please note: this discussion is not limited to these previously submitted names. Additional naming proposals may be submitted to RAP staff for consideration at rap.commissioners@lacity.org

Rafer Johnson Biography

- Rafer Johnson was a former Olympic gold medalist who was an athletic icon that broke racial barriers, played a role in Cold War politics in the 1960s and helped bring the 1984 Summer Olympic Games to Los Angeles.
- Johnson won the silver medal in the decathlon at the 1956 Olympic Games. He then won the gold medal in the 1960 Olympic Games held in Rome with one of the most memorable finishes to a decathlon in Olympic history over C.K. Yang of Taiwan. Johnson also made history as the first black American to be the U.S. flag bearer in the 1960 Olympic Games' opening ceremony.
- Johnson worked closely with Robert F. Kennedy in his presidential campaign.
- Johnson had the honor of lighting the Olympic flame in the opening ceremony of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.
- Johnson also helped launch the California Special Olympics and, later, served as the President of the Special Olympics of Southern California from 1983 to 1992.
- A member of the US Olympic and & Paralympic Hall of Fame and the National Track & Field Hall of Fame and Sherman Oaks resident, Johnson passed away in his Sherman Oaks home on December 2, 2020.
- **RAP staff has reviewed the proposed name and determined that it is within the RAP Naming Policy**



Photo credit: People.com

Community Outreach for Proposed Renaming

- Sherman Oak Neighborhood Council Meeting – July 12, 2021
- Van Nuys Neighborhood Council Meeting – July 14, 2021
- Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park's Park Advisory Board – July 22, 2021

Next Steps...

- Determine if there is a consensus in the Community on a new name for Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park.
- RAP staff will present the proposed renaming options to the RAP Facility Repair and Maintenance Task Force for preliminary approval
- If/Once a consensus name is identified, staff will prepare a Report to be presented to the RAP Board of Commissioners recommending approval of the renaming for Van Nuys Sherman Oaks War Memorial Park.