

CITY OF HOUSTON

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure Directive

TITLE POLICY FOR NAMING OF PARK PROPERTY	POLICY NUMBER 1010.4 Revised
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1. Summary: The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform procedure for the naming or renaming of park property.

2. Scope: The Park Naming Committee of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) has the authority to review proposals from community organizations to name new parks, buildings and other facilities, or when appropriate, to review proposals from community organizations to change the names of existing parks, buildings and facilities within the Department's inventory. If there is a deed restriction or the given name is of special historical or geographical significance, the property may not be eligible for renaming. The Park Naming Committee will forward proposals meeting the criteria outlined below to Houston City Council and Mayor for approval. The Park Naming Committee is composed of the following members:

- The Council Member representing the District where the park is located
- Chair, Houston City Council Quality of Life Committee (or vice chair if same as above)
- A representative from the recognized Super Neighborhood Council where the park is located
- A representative from the Civic Association where the park is located
- Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department
- Executive Director, Houston Parks Board, Inc.
- President, Houston Parks Board, Inc.

This policy does not apply to park properties or facilities of fair market value less than \$50,000. Those facilities of fair market value less than \$50,000 are named at the discretion of the HPARD Director.

3. General Criteria

The criteria set forth herein shall have no bearing on the present names of parks and recreation facilities.

- a. Park property may be named after streets, geographical locations, historical figures, events, concepts, or local, state or national leaders. Park property may also be named for an individual or group where major donations of land, funds or other exceptional contributions toward the development, maintenance and/or operation of a park or facility have been made by the nominated individual or group.

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- (1) Exceptional contributions include the following:
 - (a) The park site or facility is donated; or
 - (b) An amount of money equal to the fair market value of the land or facility is donated, or
 - (c) An amount of money that would provide for 50% or more of the cost to develop the park or facility is donated, or
 - (d) Total donations made over a period of time equal the percentage values required in (a), (b), and (c) above. Only one park site and one facility shall be named for any individual or group or;
 - (e) Direct, significant, and lifelong services for the betterment of the community and the park system, e.g.:
 - (i) Sustained, continuous public services over a period of 25 years or two-thirds of the person's life span.
 - (ii) Programs and projects must be described in very specific, quantifiable terms, e.g. dates, places, times, people, amounts, costs, etc.
 - (iii) Impact statements must show how services rendered directly impacted the lives of over 50,000 citizens, e.g. (a) protecting the environment, (b) learning marketable skills, (c) enhanced relationships, (d) decreasing gang violence, (e) building stronger schools, homes and churches, (f) a healthy start in life, (g) reducing crime, (h) providing a safe place with structured activities during after school and non-school hours, and (i) contributions to the arts.
 - (iv) Must have established a positive relationship and rapport with the community at large and HPARD.
 - (f) Consideration may be given to an individual or group who has brought national or international prominence and historical significance to the City as a result of a major accomplishment or achievement.
 - (g) Consideration will also be given to an individual or group who donated funds to operate and maintain the park or facility for a period of 20 years or more.

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- (2) A park, community center, or other park facility shall not be named after or in honor of any individual unless such individual has been deceased at least 18 months, or such naming is a condition of a gift or grant accepted by the City.
- (3) In the case of parks where only geographic, conceptual or other generic names exist or have been proposed, and when such names are not of special historical or geographical significance to the neighborhood, nominations may be made to name a park or park facility for a local or community leader:
 - (a) Who has been deceased at least 18 months (the application will not be considered by staff until the proposed honoree has been deceased for a period of six months); or
 - (b) Who has made exceptional contributions to the Houston park system and/or the community as defined in (1) (e).
- (4) Nominations may be made to name neighborhood, community or regional parks for an individual who is a known state or national leader:
 - (a) Who has been deceased at least 18 months (the application will not be considered by staff until the proposed honoree has been deceased for a period of six months) or,
 - (b) Who has made exceptional contributions to the Houston park system and/or community as defined in number (1) (e).
 - (c) The request represents a consensus of the neighborhood as addressed in section 4 of the Procedure for Naming or Renaming Park Property.
- (5) When park property is named for an individual, this action in no way gives the individual or family members naming rights over other features on the property. Features within the facility or on the property will remain eligible for naming without the consent of the individual or family members for which the property is currently named. This matter will be clearly outlined in the written agreement at the time of the naming.
- (6) Nominations will be accepted and considered only when received from community-based organizations which have been in existence a minimum of three years, e.g. advisory councils, neighborhood associations, youth service agencies, churches, etc. The nominating organization will be required to provide information about its history. A formal vote of the organization's executive board must be taken, and the honoree or family of the honoree must agree with the proposed recognition.

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- (7) Nominations will not be accepted from any individual person including elected officials. The only exception to this policy is when a significant financial contribution is made and the naming is a condition of the gift as outlined in number (1) (a) through (d).
- (8) The sponsoring group shall make a commitment to assist HPARD three to six months in advance of the official name change dedication ceremony, in the following manner:
 - (a) If contributing funds, the funds will cover all costs by HPARD to implement the name changing; e.g. fabrication and installation of signs or additional enhancements to the facility, or,
 - (b) If providing volunteer services, the services will be provided to demonstrate commitment to the park system, e.g. installation and maintenance of landscaping or on-going maintenance.
 - (c) There must be a written agreement outlining the terms of the name change as identified by HPARD. Staff will monitor the hours and specific improvements prior to the name change.
- (9) Requests will not be considered when submitted by an individual or a group for self-nomination. The only exception to this policy is when a significant financial contribution is made and the naming is a condition of the gift as outlined in number (1) (a) through (d).
- (10) The Department will not consider a naming or renaming request if any of the following conditions are present:
 - (a) Duplicates the name of another park or park feature;
 - (b) Endorses or advocates religion or a specific religious belief;
 - (c) Has obscene connotations; or
 - (d) Demeans, intimidates or maliciously portrays any racial and ethnic group;
 - (e) The individual for whom the park or park feature is proposed to be named has been found guilty of a felony crime.
- (11) Policy Exception: Special facilities managed by contracts or supported by other entities are exempt from this policy upon request, in writing, to the Director of the Houston Park and Recreation Department. Those facilities may establish specific guidelines for naming and renaming using this policy as their framework. The guidelines must be approved by the Park Naming Committee.

(12) When new park property is proposed, acquired or constructed, the property may be given a temporary, unofficial name until a formal petition is submitted by a community based group on the basis of the criteria and procedures outlined in this policy. The temporary name will be designated by HPARD for the purpose of administration and accounting.

4. Procedure for Naming or Renaming Park Property

- a. Citizens desiring to request a name change must contact the Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department in writing to notify their intent to request a name change and to request research on the history of the name of the property, e.g. historical data such as minutes documenting the official or initial naming, deed restrictions, historical designations, etc.
- b. If there are no restrictions on the park to prohibit a name change and the requestor determines that the proposed name change meets the criteria outlined in this policy, a written, community-based request shall be submitted to the Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, 2999 S. Wayside Dr., Houston, Texas 77023 or its then current address. The request should include the following information:
 - (1) State the reasons for the proposed name change;
 - (2) Show community support for the proposed name change;
 - (3) The number of signatures required as follows unless population density is less than the number stated. Signatures must include the name, age (must be 18 or older), address, zip code and telephone number of each signer as proof of residency.
 - (a) Neighborhood and pocket parks will require 300 signatures with zip codes within a 2-mile radius of the park;
 - (b) Community parks will require 600 signatures with zip codes;
 - (c) Regional, Metro and Linear parks will require 1,000 signatures with zip codes.
- c. The Director and/or designated staff will review the petition in accordance with the nomination criteria as set forth in this policy. If the petition does not meet the policy criteria, the matter will be referred back to the nominator stating the reason for the rejection.

- d. If the name change request meets the criteria as outlined in this document, the Director will arrange a meeting, teleconference or electronic mail notification with the Park Naming Committee to vote on the acceptance or rejection of the new name. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the full committee is required to proceed with approval of the naming.
- e. If the Park Naming Committee approves the name change, **the nominator is responsible for the cost of producing and installing a sign (minimum size 4' x 8')** to solicit public comment from property owners and residents in the area. The sign(s) will remain in place for a minimum of 60 days or longer if HPARD deems it necessary. The sign will solicit comments, written and/or verbal, relative to the proposed name change through the posting of the HPARD mailing address and a phone number.
- f. At the end of the 60-day period, staff will collect all information received from property owners and residents in the area. The Naming Committee will evaluate public comments received by HPARD and make a recommendation to the Director for or against the name change.
- g. If the Park Naming Committee determines that public comments indicate property owners and residents in the area approve the name change, the Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department will request final approval from the Mayor and City Council via Request for Council Action (RCA). The RCA will include pertinent background information on the park or facility. HPARD staff will notify the requestor in writing of the final outcome of Council action.

5. Maintenance Responsibility: The Houston Parks and Recreation Department Director's Office is responsible for maintaining this policy.

6. Policy Review Cycle: This policy shall be reviewed not less than biennially.

This Department Policy supersedes Policy Number 1010.4, issued 11-01-2003 which shall be of no further force or effect.

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