

# City of Sacramento

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2019-00116, **Version:** 1

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**Title:**

**Renaming Richfield Park as LeVar Burton Park**

File ID: 2019-00116

**Location:** District 8

**Recommendation:**

Adopt a Resolution: 1) approving renaming of Richfield Park as LeVar Burton Park; and 2) appropriating \$20,000 from Park Impact Fee Available Fund Balance (Fund 3204) to Richfield Park Playground L19154100.

**Contact:** Brianna Moland, Assistant Planner, (916) 808-6188; Raymond Costantino, Park Planning and Development Services Division Manager, (916) 808-1941, Department of Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment

**Presenter:** None

**Attachments:**

- 1-Description/Analysis
- 2-Park Location Map
- 3-Resolution

**Description/Analysis**

**Issue Detail:** The Department of Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment (Department) recommends approving the renaming of Richfield Park as LeVar Burton Park.

Richfield Park is an existing 3.14-acre neighborhood park located at 1900 Expedition Way in South Area (District 8). Existing park amenities include basic landscaping, a group picnic area with a shade shelter, seating areas, open turf, a turf amphitheater, a volleyball court and a basketball court. This existing park name was based on name of a nearby street, Richfield Way. A new sign and plaque will be installed to reflect the renaming to LeVar Burton Park.

LeVar Burton was born Levaradis Robert Martyn Burton, Jr. in Landstuhl, West Germany in 1957. His

father was a photographer for the U.S. Army Signal Corps and was stationed in Europe for a tour of duty. At three years old, when his parents divorced, his mother moved him and his two sisters to Glen Elder in Sacramento.

His mother Erma was an English teacher who wanted her children to value their education and be raised Catholic. She supported LeVar when he decided to study at a Catholic seminary in Galt, California to become a priest. However, the seminary had a strong theater tradition, and LeVar was subsequently bitten by the acting bug.

After attending Christian Brothers High School in 1974, LeVar received a drama scholarship to attend the University of Southern California's School of Theater. As a sophomore at the University of Southern California, LeVar auditioned and was cast in the award-winning mini-series *Roots*, which broke all viewing records when it aired. Burton's performance earned him an Emmy nomination for Best Actor in a Drama Series. He was just 19 years old. Burton later went on to star in all seven seasons of the science fiction success *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. He was given the opportunity to direct his first episode of the show in 1993.

During the same time that LeVar was starring in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, he was also hosting and producing the Public Broadcasting Service's educational children's series titled *Reading Rainbow*. LeVar was the Executive Producer of the show which encouraged young people to read and connect with literature. The show ran for 23 seasons and was the longest running children's shows ever. It won over 200 broadcast awards including a Peabody Award in 1993, and 26 Emmy Awards for excellence in the television industry. LeVar Burton won 12 personal Emmy Awards as host and Executive Producer of the show.

LeVar has been credited as an actor, a television director and producer, an author, presenter, film director, and voice actor. He currently sits on the board of directors for the Directors Guild of America. For his accomplishments, Sacramento recognized LeVar in 2016. He was among the first to be honored in Sacramento's Walk of Stars with a 3-by-3-foot star installation at 18<sup>th</sup> and L streets. The program annually honors three to five people with strong ties to the Sacramento area. Burton wrote in a statement to the Sacramento Walk of Stars nonprofit organization that he has always been proud of his Sacramento roots, "Sacramento has imprinted itself on me in a most indelible way."

One of LeVar's passions is promoting literacy for children. He believes that reading is the ticket to knowledge. LeVar credits his mother for his belief that one's life should be a service to the greater community. In November 2018, he told *The Atlantic Magazine* that education is the family business. LeVar recently launched a *Reading Rainbow* app for the newest generation. The value LeVar places on literacy is undeniable and he continues to use his career and influence to be a strong advocate for education.

**Policy Considerations:** On February 26, 2008, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2008-0112,

establishing a Facility Naming Policy. The policy contains guidance when naming facilities or portions of facilities. One of the guiding policies encourages facilities to be named for individuals or families that have contributed substantially to the community or facility, with priority for a deserving local individual or family.

Providing parks and recreation facilities is consistent with the City's strategic plan to enhance livability in Sacramento's neighborhoods by expanding park, recreation, and trail facilities throughout the City. Park naming is part of the Park Development Process as outlined in the City of Sacramento's 2005-2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**Economic Impacts:** Not Applicable

**Environmental Considerations:** The proposed project consists of the construction and installation of two new small structures - a new park sign and a new plaque. The construction of a new park sign is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

**Sustainability:** Not Applicable

**Commission/Committee Action:** The park renaming was considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission at its February 7, 2019 meeting. The Commission recommended approval of renaming the park as LeVar Burton Park.

**Rationale for Recommendation:** Renaming the Richfield Park as LeVar Burton Park is consistent with the City's Facility Naming Policy. The policy allows for facilities to be named for an individual who is living if they have contributed substantially to the community. LeVar Burton is a deserving local individual to be honored for his achievements.

**Financial Considerations:** There are sufficient funds in the Park Impact Fee Fund Available Fund balance to support the proposed transfer of \$20,000.

**Local Business Enterprise (LBE):** Not Applicable