





City of Long Beach

Office of Robert Garcia
Councilmember, First District

R-20

Date: May 17, 2011
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Robert Garcia, First District 
Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal, Second District 
Subject: Harvey Milk Promenade Park

Background: Long Beach has long been a recognized international leader on issues of equality, fairness, and other causes important to the LGBT community. Our city has a large LGBT population, one of the nation's most popular PRIDE festivals, and recently passed the Equal Benefits Ordinance. The City Council is also on record opposing Proposition 8, and support Gay Marriage.

Harvey Milk, the former San Francisco Supervisor who was assassinated in office, is our nation's most recognized and celebrated LGBT leader. Once known as "The Mayor of Castro Street," he became the first openly gay elected official in American history and went on to bring mainstream attention and support to the LGBT movement with his courage, inspiring oratory, warm personality, and unmistakable commitment to social justice. Known for his street speeches with a megaphone, Milk was able to build nontraditional coalitions, including a strong alliance between the LGBT community and organized labor. His accomplishments on behalf of the people of California cannot be overstated; as one of our most important civil rights icons, he is a hero to LGBT individuals and allies.

Despite the prominence of the LGBT community in Long Beach, little visible public recognition of this population exists within the City. In fact, this would be the first public park to be named after an openly Gay or Lesbian person. The rehabilitation of the Promenade provides a perfect opportunity to honor Harvey and highlight the importance of the LGBT movement and community to the City of Long Beach in a very public, prominent way. The North Park, at 3rd and Promenade, is scheduled to begin construction and planning later this year. This park is the final development of the three-block promenade development.

Naming the new park development after Milk, and placing an artistic tribute to him there, would aptly communicate to visitors and residents the significance of LGBT equality for Long Beach, the influence of Harvey on the LGBT movement and thus on our City, and the commitment of the City of Long Beach to honoring and advocating for equality for the LGBT community.

To honor and remember Harvey's passion for public activism, the centerpiece of Harvey Milk Park will be a free speech platform, which will provide an opportunity for people to gather and honor Harvey Milk's legacy in a profoundly meaningful way.

Recommendation: Request the Housing & Neighborhoods Committee and the Park & Recreation Commission consider naming the future park at 3rd & Promenade "Harvey Milk Promenade Park," and report back to Council with recommendation

Fiscal Impact: There is no significant fiscal impact associated with this action.