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Agenda item 1. Review Final Agenda Review May 5, 2026 Final Agenda

Dear Mayor Mahan and Members of the City Council,

I am writing about Item 7.2 on the May 5, 2026 agenda (File 26-518) — the Park Master Plans, Amended Turnkey Parkland Agreement, and naming of the two new Communications Hill parks ("Communications Hill Dog Park" for Phase III and "Azevedo Park" for Phase IV). I have read the April 13, 2026 memo from Director Cicirelli and Budget Director Shannon, and I appreciate the depth of the community process behind it.

I am not writing to oppose either of the staff-recommended names. I am writing because the memo itself surfaces a deeper question that I think the Council should take up — and I would like to propose that you take it up *now*, as part of, or alongside, this item.

**The memo already shows the gap.** The Parks and Recreation Commission, on December 4, 2024, voted to recommend "Coyote Spirit Dog Park" for the Phase III park specifically to address what the memo describes as "concern regarding the lack of ethnic and racial diversity" in park names. Staff then declined to forward that recommendation, in part because, under City Council Policy 7-5, a park name must reflect a geographic location, a geographic feature, an adjoining community, a historical event, an individual deceased at least five years, or a donor. A name honoring a community or a heritage that is not also a place or a named individual does not cleanly fit any of those buckets. The Commission's good-faith effort to broaden representation effectively ran into a policy ceiling.

**I would like to ask the Council to lift that ceiling.** Specifically, I am asking the Council to:

1. **Direct staff to return with proposed amendments to Council Policy 7-5** that explicitly add a new eligible naming category for *communities, populations, and movements* — not only ethnic or cultural groups, but also groups of San Joseans who are too often invisible in our public landscape.
2. **In future park-naming processes, include those community-based options on the public survey ballots** so residents can actually rank them, rather than them being ruled out before the survey is built.
3. **Apply this lens to upcoming naming opportunities** — the Village Center area on Communications Hill, future park dedications elsewhere in the city, and any naming decisions that emerge from the separate process now underway to review tributes to Cesar Chavez.

The kinds of names I have in mind are not abstract. They are the neighbors we walk past:

- **People experiencing homelessness** — our unhoused residents, who are constantly legislated *around* but almost never named *for*.
- **Elders and seniors on fixed incomes** — many of whom built this valley and now struggle to remain in it.
- **People with disabilities, including disabilities that are practically disenfranchising** — mobility, sensory, cognitive, and mental-health disabilities that affect access to civic life every day.
- **Caregivers, home health workers, farmworkers as a community (not as a single figure), immigrants and refugees, veterans facing housing insecurity, and youth aging out of foster care.**

Names like *Unhoused Neighbors Park*, *Elders' Commons*, *Disability Justice Plaza*, *Caregivers' Green*, or *Farmworkers' Field* would do three things at once. First, they would honor groups whose contributions are real and whose struggles are ongoing, exactly the diversity instinct the Commission was reaching for. Second, they would teach: every parent pushing a stroller, every kid on a field trip, every commuter walking past a sign would be reminded that these neighbors exist and matter. Third — and this matters for the city's long-term durability — names that honor *communities* are far more resistant to the kind of late-breaking reckoning we are currently navigating with the farmworker civil rights leader the city once held up as untouchable. A park named for a community cannot be undone by what later surfaces about any one person.

#### **A few notes on how this fits today's item, specifically:**

- I am not asking the Council to delay Item 7.2 or to substitute a community-based name for "Communications Hill Dog Park" or "Azevedo Park" tonight. The memo's process for those two names was thorough, the Commission's diversity recommendation was honored in part through "Azevedo Park," and staff's reasoning around the Phase III dog park is reasonable.
- I *am* asking that, when the Council takes its action on Item 7.2, a Councilmember add a referral or supplemental direction asking staff to bring back, within a defined timeframe, proposed amendments to Policy 7-5 that add a "communities and populations" naming category, along with a process for how those communities themselves would be engaged as co-authors of any such name.
- For each future park named in this way, I would also encourage staff to pair the name with a small interpretive plaque, accessible amenities (shade, accessible restrooms, senior-friendly walking loops, day-resource information where appropriate), and outreach in the languages already used in this very project's surveys (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese), so the honor is functional, not only symbolic.

The memo notes that "Azevedo Park" will become the third park in the city to reflect Portuguese American heritage, alongside Vieira and Moitozo. That is a good thing. I am asking the Council

to make it possible — through policy, not exception — for *Communications Hill Dog Park's* successors to similarly reflect the unhoused San Josean, the disabled San Josean, the elder San Josean, and the many other neighbors who, right now, can walk through every park in the city without ever seeing themselves named.

Thank you for your service, for the careful work documented in this memo, and for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Brian [REDACTED] in San Jose, CA

