

WEST VALLEY AREA HISTORY

On May 1st, 1957, West Valley Division entered service as the 13th geographical area. The division was temporarily housed at a storefront location at 7137 Reseda Boulevard. The division would remain there until another station was built and opened at 19020 Vanowen Street on August 17th, 1960. The new station had 19,000 square feet of working space, a motor garage, parking spaces for 200 cars, and a jail. 156 Police personnel were assigned to the station at the time. After having received a remodel and reopening in 2005, West Valley Station remains on Vanowen Street to this day.

On February 7th, 2008, Officer Randy Simmons became the first Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Officer killed in the line of duty in what was then West Valley Area. After Topanga Area opened, the location became a part of its area of responsibility. A memorial sign is installed in his memory on the north side of Vanowen Street, between Oakdale Street and Hatillo Street. Randall Simmons Park was named in honor of Officer Simmons and is located just east of West Valley Station.

West Valley area is home to the Sepulveda Dam, Woodley Park, Lake Balboa Park, and the Balboa Recreation Center. During rainy seasons, when the Sepulveda Dam has a potential to flood, officers assigned to West Valley Area are tasked with patrolling the area to ensure nobody is trapped in floodwaters or other hazards. An additional location of interest in West Valley Area is the Reseda Trailhead on the southernmost end of Reseda Boulevard.

During various mobilizations throughout the history of the LAPD, officers assigned to West Valley Area were redeployed to other locations within Los Angeles and surrounding cities to assist safeguarding lives and property during times of disaster such as earthquakes and brush fires, civil unrest, and high-profile events like the 1984 Summer Olympics and 2001 Democratic National Convention.

West Valley Area has been the area of assignment for numerous recipients of the Medal of Valor, including Officers Edwin Marron and Mark Mireles, who in January 2006 rescued a suicidal woman suspended from a sixth-floor balcony. The 200-pound woman, a psychiatric patient, struggled violently as the two officers labored furiously to keep her from making the fatal plunge.