

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

APPROVED
JAN 11 2012

NO. 12-023

DATE January 11, 2012

C.D. 9

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: EAST 49th STREET POCKET PARK – 670 EAST 49th STREET – ADOPTION OF INITIAL STUDY/NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION PARCEL AND APPROVAL OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

R. Adams _____
H. Fujita _____
V. Israel _____

K. Regan _____
*M. Shull _____
N. Williams _____

General Manager

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Review, consider, and adopt the Initial Study (IS) and Negative Declaration (ND), on file in the Board Office, for 49th Street Pocket Park, finding that on the basis of the whole record of proceedings in the project, including the IS/ND and any comments received, which are in the custody of the Department of Recreation and Parks' Superintendent of Planning, Construction and Maintenance located at 221 North Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, California 90012 and the City Clerk's Office located at 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, California 90012 that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, and that all potentially significant environmental effects of the project have been properly disclosed and evaluated in the IS/ND in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State and City CEQA Guidelines and reflects the Department of Recreation and Parks' (RAP) independent judgment and analysis;
2. Direct Staff to file a Notice of Determination for the adopted IS/ND with the Los Angeles City Clerk and the Los Angeles County Clerk within 5 days of the Board's approval;
3. Adopt a Resolution, substantially in the form on file in the Board Office, authorizing staff to request the assistance from the Department of General Services (GSD) and other entities, and per Charter Section 594 (a) and (b); to accept a parcel donation from the Non-Profit Restore Neighborhoods LA, Inc. (RNLA) via Grant Deed to a 0.19 acre or 8,250 square foot parcel (Assessor Parcel Number [APN] 5108-011-008), located on

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49th Street between Avalon Boulevard and McKinley Street in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area located at 670 East 49th Street, Los Angeles, California 90011 (Exhibit A);

4. Upon the completion of the preliminary acquisition activities, and satisfactory findings of all due diligence work including Title review and Phase I and any necessary environmental investigations, direct staff to proceed with escrow instructions and related documents to acquire the donation property;
5. Acknowledge Los Angeles Housing Department's (LAHD)'s, RNLA's, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) roles as facilitators on this donation;
6. Authorize the Board Secretary to execute the escrow instructions and accept the Grant Deed for the subject property, subject to approval by the City Attorney, which property shall be set apart and dedicated as park property in perpetuity;
7. Authorize the General Manager or his designee to review and approve development and construction design plans for the development of the East 49th Street Pocket Park, the donation parcel, provided the plans are consistent with the general designs conditionally approved by this action and with all land use permits and entitlements necessary for the project;
8. Authorize the Department's Chief Accounting Employee to make technical corrections as necessary to establish the necessary accounts to acquire the project site, and to accept and/or authorize transfer of the necessary monies to fund the acquisition to the appropriate City Department accounts or escrow company account in order to expeditiously effectuate the acquisition of the East 49th Street Pocket Park;
9. Authorize the Department's Chief Accounting Employee to transfer the necessary funds from the account for the development of the East 49th Street Pocket Park; and,
10. Approve the allocation of necessary funds for the East 49th Street Pocket Park - Park Development Improvements project, as described in the Summary of this Report.

SUMMARY:

The Fifty Parks Initiative

In recognition of the need to develop a coordinated long-term strategy to meet the recreation needs of current and future residents of the City, RAP has launched an initiative to acquire and

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develop at least fifty sites into new public parks -- The Fifty Parks Initiative. The primary goal of the initiative is to increase the number of park and facilities across the City of Los Angeles (CITY) with a specific focus on densely populated neighborhoods and communities that lack sufficient open space and recreational services.

The development of fifty (50) new public parks will provide innumerable physical, social, health, and environmental benefits for local communities. These new parks will help stabilize neighborhoods and property values by providing needed public infrastructure improvements, removing blight caused by abandoned buildings and empty lots, and beautifying underutilized public property.

The keys to the successful implementation of The Fifty Parks Initiative are (1) the establishment of local partnerships; (2) the use of a community driven design process; and, (3) the strict use of low maintenance design standards.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program Funds

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was established for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. NSP are funds that have been allocated to the LAHD by HUD. In 2009, LAHD initiated the NSP with HUD grant funds to acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed or abandoned residential properties, or to develop new community parks and/or open spaces, in order to stabilize neighborhoods in the CITY. LAHD or its grant sub-recipient will continue to acquire dilapidated or foreclosed homes to stem the decline of home values.

NSP funds are being used by RNLA, LAHD's grant sub-recipient, to purchase foreclosed and abandoned homes. RNLA was created to acquire and rehabilitate abandoned single-family and multi-unit properties for the benefit of low and moderate income families in the CITY. RNLA is focusing its efforts in the neighborhoods identified with the highest foreclosures. Those areas include Central, East and South Los Angeles and North and South San Fernando Valley.

In a concerted effort and an example of RAP's efforts to address and correct the park deficiencies in the CITY, RAP has been working with LAHD and RNLA to identify properties that have been acquired with NSP funds that will allow RAP to effectively and efficiently meet its goals of providing more parks in areas of the CITY where parks are most needed. In working with LAHD and RNLA, RAP hopes to acquire several properties that RAP will develop into parks. These potential sites are located in the San Fernando Valley and in South Los Angeles. RNLA will donate these sites to RAP for the purpose of developing pocket parks. The East 49th Street project is one of the first two project sites (potentially more to come) that RAP will acquire from RNLA and develop into parks.

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Donation Parcel

As part of the effort to increase parks in the CITY, RNLA will donate to RAP the property located at 670 East 49th Street, Los Angeles California 90011. The donation parcel is identified by APN: 5108-011-008 (Exhibit B). An independent appraisal of the 49th Street parcel was performed. As of October 26, 2009, the "AS IS" appraisal value is \$155,000. There will be no cost to RAP for the donation parcel itself, but RAP will incur closing escrow costs.

The donation of this parcel will result in the conveyance of Real Property to the (CITY), under the control and jurisdiction of RAP, to be dedicated as park property in perpetuity. The subject parcel is in the southeast part of Los Angeles and will be acquired for the purpose of developing a pocket park for the community. The surrounding area is a blighted low income area that lacks parks, and would tremendously benefit from the additional park space in the area. The property consists of an unoccupied single-family residence, which will be demolished by RNLA. Said parcel is a 0.19 acre or 8,250 square foot parcel.

The dedication/addition of this parcel to RAP will allow for an increase in recreational activities in the area. The goal is for RAP to acquire this prospective parcel and develop it into a pocket park as part of the City's 50 Park Initiative. Council District 9 has expressed its strong support for this park dedication.

Development of Acquisition Parcel

As of the writing of this Board Report, RAP has proceeded to prepare plans to develop the site into a pocket park. The existing house will be demolished by RNLA and in its place the following design elements are to be included in the development of this donation parcel/future park site: Playground equipment; park benches; a drinking fountain; seating areas; an area for outdoor classroom; water wise planting; smart irrigation system; concrete walks; security lighting and fencing; and security gates (Exhibit C). RAP is requesting approval of this development project as part of this acquisition.

Acquisition Cost and Funding

RAP will not incur a cost for the donation/acquisition of this parcel, but it will incur closing escrow costs as part of the proposed donation. RAP will use Planning, Construction and Maintenance Division's Account No. 88/302/006030 to pay for closing escrow costs. The escrow costs are not available at this time, but it is estimated that the costs will not exceed \$6,000. RAP will also incur development costs.

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Acceptance of Donation Parcel and Approval of Development

RAP staff is requesting that the Board authorize the acceptance of an approximately 0.19 acre or 8,250 square foot parcel of land that will be dedicated as park property in perpetuity and developed into a future new park. RAP staff has determined that the park development costs are estimated to be approximately \$250,000 which incorporates the design elements/improvements presented as part of this report. It should be noted that RAP has received a donation of playground equipment and site furnishings with an estimated value of \$19,000 from Gametime-Playcore. As previously mentioned, RNLA will complete the demolition of the existing home at no cost to RAP. All other development work for the proposed park development will be performed by in-house staff.

This acquisition is a rare opportunity to continue the progress in acquiring urban parkland in the southeast portion of Los Angeles which LAHD, RNLA, and RAP continue to work together on. The acquisition will add to the open space in the area and bring more recreational opportunities to the entire City through expanded availability of recreational activities and facilities. GSD will review title and other related documents as part of its due diligence as the agent for RAP and will ensure that the City receives the property and conveys jurisdiction to RAP. Upon acceptance, said property will be set apart and dedicated as park property in perpetuity.

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Negative Declaration (ND) was prepared based on an Initial Study, which determined that all potentially significant environmental effects would be less than significant. The ND was circulated to all interested parties and responsible agencies, for a 20-day review and comment period from October 27 to November 16, 2011. No substantive comments were received on environmental issues. However, all comments have been incorporated into the final ND, copies of which have been provided to the Board for its review and consideration, and are on file in the Board Office.

Two community meetings were held at the site. The community was unanimous in its support of this project. This project has the support from Council District 9. In addition, the Assistant General Manager of Operations Branch and the Superintendent for the Metro Region have been consulted and concur with staff's recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The costs identified below will impact RAP's General Fund which will be paid from Planning, Construction and Maintenance Division's Account 88/302/006030. There is an approximate cost of up to \$6,000 in closing escrow costs. After the demolition of the home, it is estimated that another \$250,000 will be needed for the development of the proposed park. As indicated above, RAP has received a donation of playground equipment and site furnishings with an estimated

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value of \$19,600 from Gametime-Playcore. All other development work will be performed by RAP staff within available budgets already allocated. The RAP is requesting \$19,050 a year to maintain this facility. The estimated amount will cover the cost for staffing, materials and supplies. This will also provide at least two hours of maintenance per day, seven days a week, throughout the year. If the funding is not granted, this park will be included in the existing Metro Region routes resulting in reduction of core functions on existing routes.

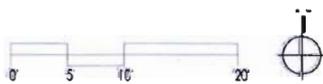
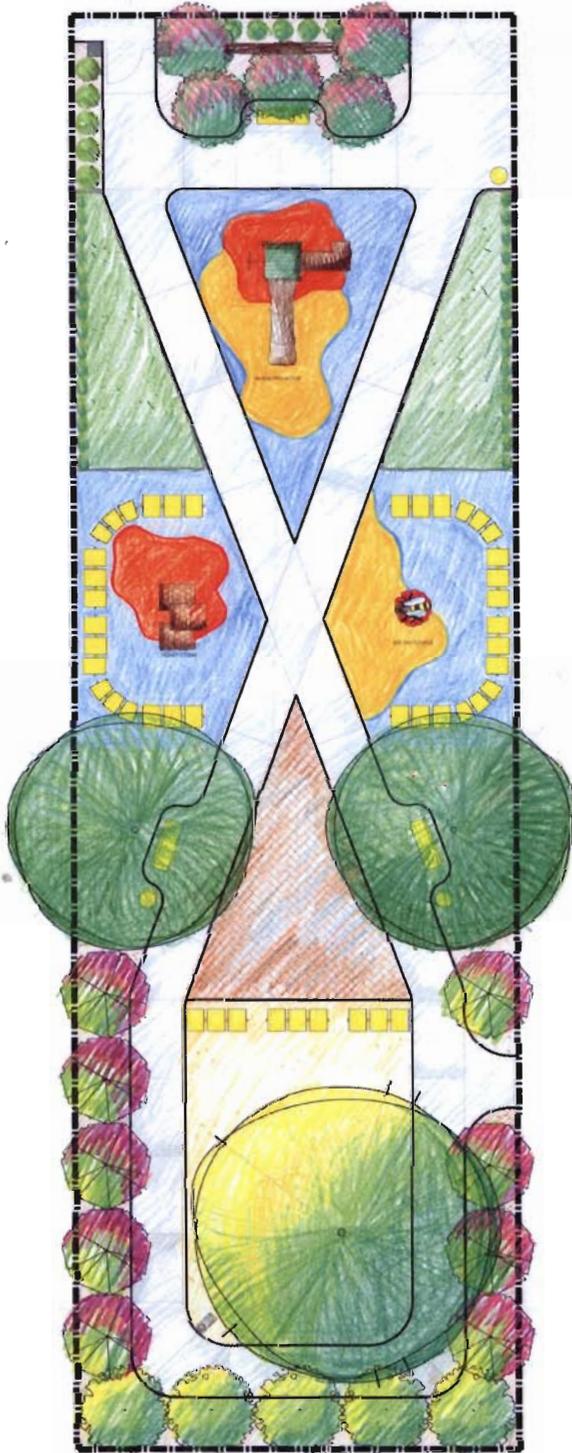
This report was prepared by John Barraza, Management Analyst II, Real Estate and Asset Management Section, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Division.



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS NEW PARKS INITIATIVE



EXPLORATION PARK 670 E. 49TH STREET 8250 SQ.FT.



FLAME TREE

SMART IRRIGATION



CHILOPSIS LINEARIS



LOW WATER USE PLANTS

CONCRETE SEAT WALL

TUBULAR STEEL FENCE



REMOTE CONTROLLED ELECTRONIC LOCKING GATES+ SECURITY CAMERAS