

**BOARD REPORT**

NO. 23-054

DATE: March 16, 2023

C.D. 9

**BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS**

SUBJECT: VERMONT SQUARE PARK – DONATION FROM THE UNION PACIFIC FOUNDATION THROUGH THE LOS ANGELES PARKS FOUNDATION CONSISTING OF THE INSTALLATION OF SIX (6) 24-INCH BOX TREES AND A TWO (2) YEAR FOREST MAINTENANCE PLAN; CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 1(8) [MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING LANDSCAPING, NATIVE GROWTH, WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS; AND BRUSH CLEARANCE FOR WEED ABATEMENT AND FIRE PROTECTION]; CLASS 4(3) [NEW GARDENING, TREE PLANTING, OR LANDSCAPING, BUT NOT INCLUDING TREE REMOVAL EXCEPT DEAD, DAMAGED OR DISEASED TREES OR LIMBS] AND CLASS 11(6) [CONSTRUCTION OR PLACEMENT OF MINOR STRUCTURES ACCESSORY TO (APPURTENANT TO) EXISTING COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL OR INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES] OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE 19, SECTIONS 15301(h), 15304(b) AND 15311 OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES

* B. Aguirre	<u>BA</u>	M. Rudnick	_____
		C. Santo Domingo	_____
B. Jackson	_____	N. Williams	_____

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

If Approved: Board President \_\_\_\_\_ Board Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Approve a proposed park improvement project at Vermont Square Park (Park), consisting of the installation of six (6) 24-inch Coast Live Oak box trees, fencing around each tree, and a two-year forest maintenance plan (Project), under the Los Angeles Parks Foundation’s (LAPF) Los Angeles Park Forest initiative, as a donation to the City of Los Angeles (City) and the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), as further described in this Report;
  
2. Authorize RAP’s Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch (PMC), upon the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners’ (Board) approval of the Project, to issue a Right

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of Entry Permit (ROE) to LAPF and their selected contractors and/or vendors, allowing access to Vermont Square Park for the installation and maintenance of the proposed Project improvements over a two-year term within certain areas of the Park as identified on Attachment 1 of this Report;

3. Accept the proposed Project improvements valued up to approximately Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), as a donation to the City from the Union Pacific Foundation through the LAPF, for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public, subject to a post-installation inspection and approval by RAP's PMC staff of the completed Project improvements;
4. Determine that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 1(8) [Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, water supply reservoirs; and brush clearance for weed abatement and fire protection]; Class 4(3) [New gardening, tree planting, or landscaping, but not including tree removal except dead, damaged or diseased trees or limbs] and Class 11(6) [Construction or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial or institutional facilities] of City CEQA Guidelines as well as to Article 19, Sections 15301(h), 15304(b) and 15311 of California CEQA Guidelines and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk;
5. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) for the purpose of filing an NOE; and
6. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections to carry out the intent of this Report.

### SUMMARY

LAPF has established a Park Forest Initiative that involves the solicitation of donations to support the planting of clusters of new trees within existing parks that act as micro-forests. The Board has previously approved several similar Park Forest projects initiated by the LAPF at other RAP parks throughout the City. These site-specific projects align with the goals of the City's Green New Deal by providing multiple environmental benefits, such as air quality improvements, increasing biodiversity and wildlife habitat areas, increasing tree canopy coverage and shade, mitigating urban heat island effects, and supporting groundwater recharge. The size of each forest and associated elements are tailored to the needs and conditions of the park in which they are planted. The specific species and size of the trees have been vetted by, and coordinated with, RAP's Planning, Construction & Maintenance Division and Forestry Division.

Through private funding received by the LAPF from the Union Pacific Foundation in the amount of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), the LAPF has offered to fund the installation of the proposed park forest Project described herein at Vermont Square Park, located at 1248 W. 47th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90037 (Park), at no cost to RAP. The proposed Park Forest installation, valued at approximately \$10,000.00, consists of park-forest improvements which include the planting of six (6) 24-inch Coast Live Oak box trees, with a temporary green plastic snow safety fence installed around each of the trees to provide protection for them until they are fully

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established. The trees will be planted in grassy areas of the park that do not interfere with irrigation or existing facilities, as indicated on the aerial Site Map attached to this Report (Attachment 1). The tree planting is scheduled to occur in the month of March 2023, which has been pre-approved by RAP's Forestry Division and will be performed by Brightview Landscaping (Brightview), LAPF's contractor. The Donation will fund the purchase and installation of the selected trees and a two-year maintenance plan implemented by the LAPF through Brightview, which will include monthly, as-needed maintenance including deep water irrigation, weeding and pest abatement, and tree replacement in the event of any tree loss.

LAPF will select, purchase and install the trees described above, through a direct contract with Brightview, at no cost to RAP. LAPF coordinated the tree selection, planting location(s), and all other necessary approvals with PMC staff and the RAP Forestry Division. The Project, selected trees, and planting locations are supported by the Office of Council District 9, as mentioned in the attached Letter of Support (Attachment 2). LAPF will be responsible for implementing the Project through Brightview, including the maintenance of the planted trees for two (2) years.

### TREES AND SHADE

Six (6) Coast Live Oak 24-inch box trees will be installed under the proposed Project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of maintenance of existing landscaping; new gardening, and tree planting on City property and placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing institutional facilities.

According to the parcel profile report retrieved February 10, 2023, this site is not within a coastal or methane zone. This area resides in a liquefaction zone but the construction of this Project will not create conditions that could lead to liquefaction. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed Project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern or have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. No other known projects would involve cumulatively significant impacts, and no future projects would result from the proposed Project. As of February 10, 2023, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at [www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov)) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) have not listed the Project site or any contaminated sites near the Project area (within 500 feet). According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway Map there is no scenic highway located within the vicinity of the proposed Project or within its site. Furthermore, the proposed Project is located within and in proximity Vermont Square Library, a site listed in the National Register of Historic Places (#87001022), the first permanent branch library building in the Los Angeles Public Library System. The planting of new trees will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

Based in this information, RAP staff recommends that the Board of Recreation and Parks (Board) determines that it is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 1(8), Class 4(3) and Class 11(6) of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Section 15301(h), 15304(b) and 15311 of California CEQA Guidelines. RAP Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon

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Board's approval.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The installation of the improvements will not have any fiscal impact on RAP's General Fund, as associated costs will be funded entirely by LAPF. The first two years of tree maintenance will be funded and performed through the forest maintenance plan implemented by LAPF. Beyond that, future maintenance of the improvements will be addressed through Vermont Square Park's existing maintenance budget and the annual budget process.

This report was prepared by Priya Macwan, Management Analyst, Sustainability and Partnership Sections, and Joel Alvarez, Senior Management Analyst II, Partnership Section.

### LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Park Forest Site Map
- 2) Letter of Support

**Vermont Square Park  
Park Forest Tree Planting Site Plan**



Address: 1248 West 47<sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA 90037

Plan: Installation and two-year maintenance by Brightview Landscape of six 24-inch Box Coast Live Oak trees

Proposed tree locations are represented by the green clouds on above map

**Vermont Square Park  
Letter of Support**



**CURREN D. PRICE, Jr.**

January, 31st 2023

Jimmy Kim  
Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks  
3900 Chevy Chase Dr  
Los Angeles, CA 90039

Re: Vermont Square Park Forest

Dear Mr. Kim,

I am in support of the work the Los Angeles Parks Foundation is looking to complete at Vermont Square Park in City Council District 9. The Los Angeles Parks Foundation has worked closely with your department on the Park Forest Initiative and I would like to see you collaborate once more to bring climate appropriate trees that are heat and drought tolerant to the district.

Vermont Square park would be the first of hopefully many park forest installations in Council District 9 and strengthen the vitality of our community. The functionality, use of the park, and support of wildlife were all taken into consideration and the community would be able to benefit from the shade protection, wind resistance and low maintenance that the trees offer.

The Los Angeles Park Foundation has proposed the installation of six 24" box tall mature Coast Live Oaks. These trees, native to California, will help us fight climate change and promote social equity through the benefits they will provide to their new home.

I look forward to working together to enhance the built environment in Council District 9. If you have any questions please reach out to Sherilyn Correa, Director of Planning & Economic Development, Office of Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr. at [Sherilyn.correa@lacity.org](mailto:Sherilyn.correa@lacity.org) or (213) 473-7009.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Curren D. Price, Jr.' in a cursive style.

**CURREN D. PRICE, JR.**

Councilmember, 9<sup>th</sup> District