

**BOARD REPORT**

NO. 24-090

DATE May 02,2024

C.D. 11

**BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS**

SUBJECT: VENICE BEACH RECREATION CENTER – DONATION AND INSTALLATION OF A PARK BENCH ON OCEAN FRONT WALK FROM THE LOS ANGELES PARKS FOUNDATION THROUGH VARIOUS VENICE BEACH COMMUNITY DONATIONS – CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15303(e) [LOCATION OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF ACCESSORY (APPURTENANT) STRUCTURES INCLUDING GARAGES, CARPORTS, PATIOS, SWIMMING POOLS, AND FENCES] OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 11(6) OF CITY OF LOS ANGELES CEQA GUIDELINES

\* B. Aguirre BA M. Rudnick \_\_\_\_\_  
C. Stoneham \_\_\_\_\_ C. Santo Domingo \_\_\_\_\_  
B. Jones \_\_\_\_\_ N. Williams \_\_\_\_\_

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

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the proposed installation of a park bench along a pre-approved location of Ocean Front Walk at Venice Beach valued at approximately \$12,920.00, and honoring Mr. Jeffrey Solomon, a Venice Beach long-time resident and founder of the “Venice Beach Walking Tours” with a 10” x 8” bronze plaque, as illustrated by the rendering included with this Report as Attachment 1 and described further in the summary of this Report, as a donation from the Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) funded through multiple donations received from Ms. Fran Solomon and various community contributors in support of Mr. Solomon’s legacy and Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk (Project);
2. Approve the Department of Recreation and Parks’ (RAP) acceptance of a monetary donation in the amount of \$9,080.00, from the LAPF through donations received from Ms. Solomon and various community contributors, provided for the benefit of to-be-determined future Venice Beach Recreation Center (Center) amenity improvements and/or recreational programming conducted by RAP;
3. Authorize the RAP Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch (PMC), upon the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners’ (Board) acceptance of the funding and

## BOARD REPORT

PG. 2 NO. 24-090

approval of the bench installation (collectively, "Donation"), to issue a Right of Entry Permit (ROE) to the LAPF and its selected contractors and/or vendors, allowing access to the Center and the approved portion of Ocean Front Walk, as further described in this Report, to install the bench pursuant to plans and specifications approved by PMC staff and included with this Report as Attachment 2, subject to the approval of all applicable permits and authorizations that may be required, such as but not limited to California Coastal Commission clearance;

4. Determine that the Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15303(e) [Location of a limited number of accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences] of California CEQA Guidelines as well as Article III, Section 1, Class 11(6) of City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines and direct RAP staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the California Office of Planning and Research; and
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 NOE.

### SUMMARY

Venice Beach, located at 1800 Ocean Front Walk, is the busiest facility operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), and has been an iconic Los Angeles recreational destination point for Angelenos and visitors from around the United States and world for decades, hosting an estimated 28,000 to 30,000 visitors daily, second only to Disneyland. Known for its street vendors and performers, outdoor dining restaurants, and a variety of retail stores, the Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk beachfront stretches for approximately two miles from the City of Santa Monica border to Marina del Rey. RAP's Venice Beach Recreation Center is located at the heart of Ocean Front Walk, and consists of various recreational amenities ranging from the World-Famous Muscle Beach weight lifting pen, basketball courts, paddle tennis courts, gymnastics area, handball courts, skate park, children's playground, fishing pier, and outdoor stage to name a few.

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) mission is to enhance, expand, and promote public recreation, parks, and open space for the people of Los Angeles. LAPF invites local organizations to partner with them to fulfill donations that will meet identified needs that can directly benefit a City park. Through this program, the LAPF is presently working with Venice Beach businesses and community stakeholders to establish a fundraising campaign aimed at raising funds in support of recreational programming conducted by RAP, and various to-be-determined Recreation Center and Ocean Front Walk improvements, such as but not limited to, pathway repaving, relandscaping, and enhanced maintenance. The LAPF and the Venice community have proposed to launch this fundraising initiative with the installation of the proposed concrete bench and small bronze plaque (collectively "Bench") along Ocean Front Walk in honor of Mr. Jeffrey Solomon, a long-time resident who established the Venice Beach Walking Tours in 2008.

BOARD REPORT

PG. 3 NO. 24-090

Mr. Solomon, a forty-five (45) year resident of Venice, was born three miles south of Venice Beach in the community of Westchester and eventually moved to the Venice Beach area where he resided for many years before his passing on January 26, 2024. Jeffrey’s love for Venice Beach is well-known in the community, as many beach-goers can recall the days Jeffrey spent at the Beach shooting hoops at the Recreation Center basketball courts, roller skating along Ocean Front Walk (also known as “the Boardwalk”), and tanning on the sand while enjoying the waterfront view and company of others. His love for walking, along with his love for Venice, prompted Jeffrey to establish the Venice Beach Walking Tours, which allowed Jeffrey to meet and interact with locals and people from around the country and world on a daily basis. Unfortunately, approximately two years ago, Jeffrey had to leave the beach community and relocate to a memory care facility for Alzheimer’s patients. While there, Jeffrey missed Venice Beach and would still smile whenever he saw pictures of anything having to do with Venice.

Because of Mr. Solomon’s history and social contributions benefitting Ocean Front Walk and the Venice experience, RAP supports the LAPF, Ms. Fran Solomon, and members of the Venice community who raised enough funding to purchase and install the inaugural Bench in Jeffreys honor as a kick-off to the fundraising initiative which will eventually benefit the Recreation Center, Ocean Front Walk, the Venice community and its visitors. The LAPF initially raised \$25,000.00 (Project Funds) for the Bench, recreational youth programming, and/or possible Recreation Center/Ocean Front Walk improvements that will be determined in the future by RAP staff in coordination with the LAPF. The total value of the donation being offered to RAP is \$22,000.00, which consists of the total amount of monetary contributions raised by the Venice community (\$25,000.00), less the LAPF administrative fee of \$3,000.00.

The breakdown of costs to be funded by the Project Funds are as follows:

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| ● Bench Purchase                | \$ 2,920.00        |
| ● Bench Installation            | \$10,000.00        |
| ● Recreation Programming        | \$ 5,000.00        |
| ● To-Be-Determined Expenditures | \$ 4,080.00        |
| ● LAPF Administration           | <u>\$ 3,000.00</u> |
| Total:                          | \$25,000.00        |

The proposed bench project includes the installation of a 2000 pound concrete bench with a 10” x 8” bronze plaque, as described by Attachments 1 and 2. The location where the Bench will be installed on Ocean Front Walk in proximity to Navy Street (perpendicular to Ocean Front Walk), as illustrated by the site map attached hereto as Attachment 3, has been reviewed and approved by the RAP Real Estate and Asset Management Section, Planning Staff, West Region Operations Superintendent, and Recreation Center Director in Charge (DIC), and all have agreed that the proposed location is suitable for the Bench installation. The LAPF has committed to maintain the bronze plaque for as long as it is in place, responding to any vandalism as well as if it needs to be replaced. The Recreation Center DIC and West Region Superintendent will work with the LAPF and the Venice Beach community to identify current program and facility needs to determine the allocation of the remaining funds and any future fundraising funds in support of the Recreation Center. Any additional contributions from the LAPF to Venice Beach through such fundraising will be presented to the Board for acceptance at such time in the future.

## BOARD REPORT

PG. 4 NO. 24-090

The scope of the proposed Bench installation requires review by the California Coastal Commission, as the proposed project location is within the California Coastal Zone. The LAPF is responsible to apply for the coastal development review which may result in the issuance of a Coastal Development Permit or exemption. Once all necessary approvals are obtained, PMC staff will issue a Right of Entry Permit to the LAPF and its selected contractor(s).

Attached for the Board's reference are four (4) letters of support submitted by the Venice Chamber of Commerce (Attachment 4), Venice Neighborhood Council (Attachment 5), Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles (Attachment 6), and Councilwoman Traci Park (Attachment 7), all in favor of the Bench installation in Jeffrey Solomon's honor, as well as expressing support for the LAPF's fundraising initiative to benefit Ocean Front Walk and the Venice Beach Recreation Center.

Approving the proposed Bench installation and accepting the associated donation would provide an additional amenity for the public to enjoy at Venice Beach, and will provide an opportunity for enhanced recreational programming and possible future amenities and/or improvements for the benefit of the residents of Los Angeles.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.

According to the parcel profile report retrieved on March 22, 2024, the project area resides in methane and liquefaction zones within the coastal zone. But the proposed Project's size and characteristics are such that they will not affect coastal access, increase the risk of methane seepage or increase liquefaction risk, so 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 March 22, 2024, 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 (SWRCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) have not listed the Project site. SWRCB and DTSC listed RB Case # 904050252 near the Project area (within 1,000 feet). The case consists of a leaking underground storage tank found in an existing parking lot. SWRCB closed the case in 2017, after the tank was removed and 12 tons of soil were excavated and replaced with clean soil. This site is not listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Section 65962.5. 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 not located in proximity of known historical resources and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

Based in this information, staff recommends that the Board determine that the proposed Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15303(e) of California CEQA Guidelines as well as to Article III,

## BOARD REPORT

PG. 5 NO. 24-090

Section 1, Class 11(6) of City CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the California Office of Planning and Research upon Board's approval.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Accepting this donation, with a net value to RAP of approximately \$22,000.00, will result in no impact to RAP's General Fund, as all Project costs will be funded by the LAPF through the Venice Beach fundraising initiative.

### STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES AND GOALS

Approval of this Board Report advances RAP's Strategic Plan by supporting:

**Goal No 6:** Build Financial Strength through Innovative Partnerships

**Outcome No. 1:** In coordination with the Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF), expansion and development of new partnerships, sponsorships and donations

This Report was prepared by Joel Alvarez, Senior Management Analyst II, Partnership Section.

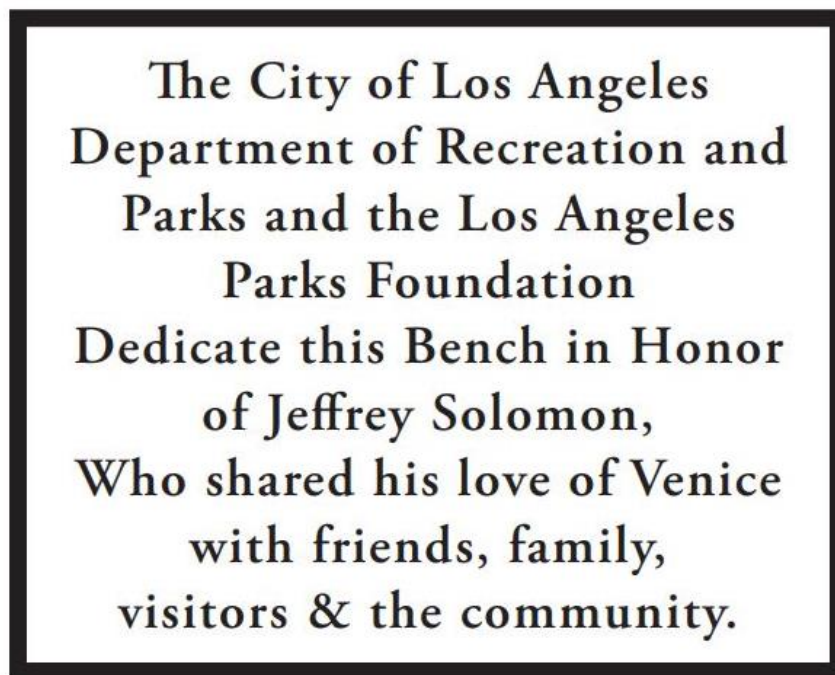
### LIST OF ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS

- 1) Bench Plaque Rendering
- 2) Bench Plans and Specifications
- 3) Bench Site Map
- 4) Venice Beach Chamber of Commerce Letter of Support
- 5) Venice Neighborhood Council Letter of Support
- 6) Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles Letter of Support
- 7) Councilwoman Traci Park Letter of Support

**Proposed Plaque in Honor of Mr. Jeffrey Solomon**

**Dimensions: 10 inches x 8 inches**

**Material: Bronze**



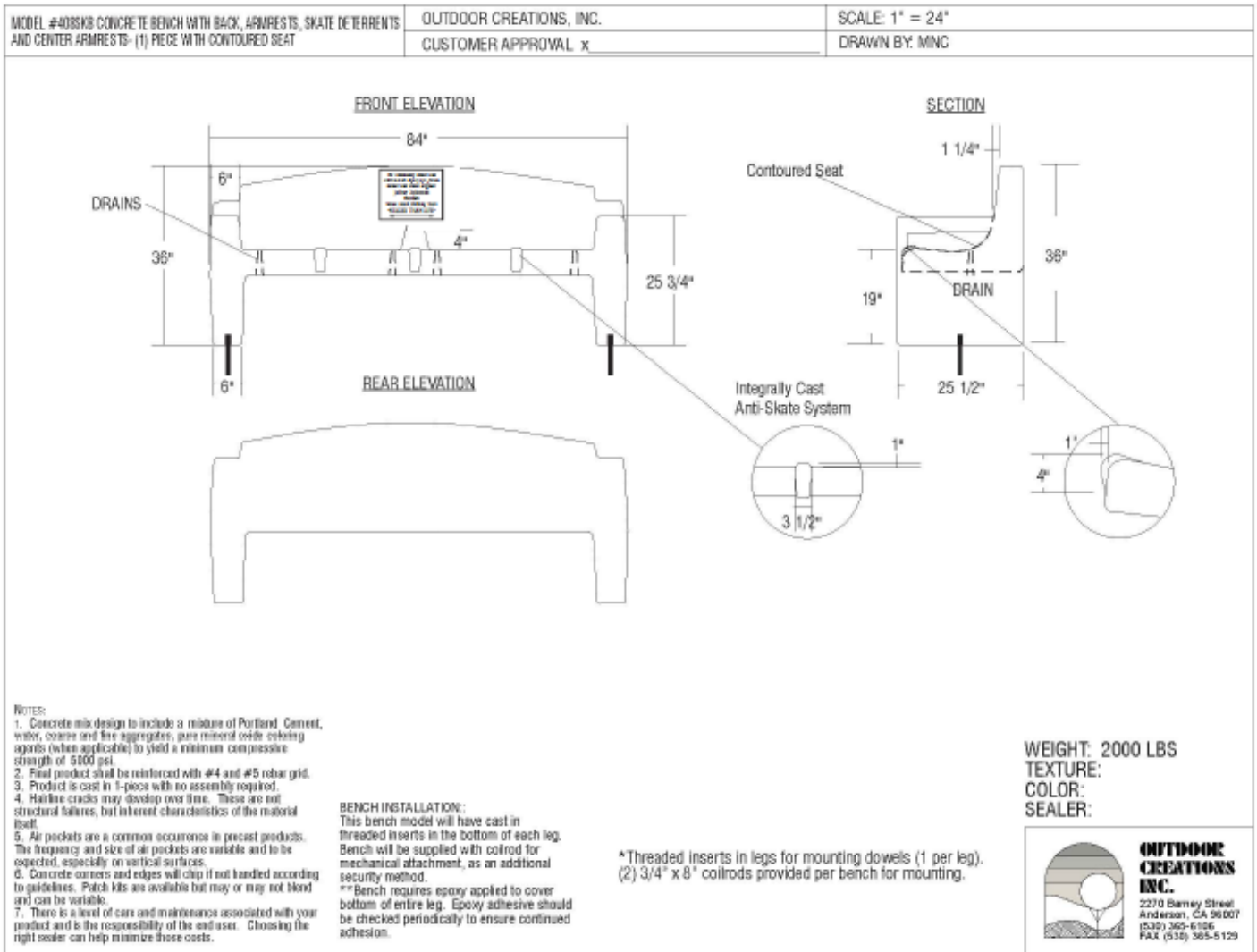
10" x 8" bronze plaque  
Plaque provided and installed by  
Outdoor Creations, Inc.

## Proposed Bench Specifications

**Dimensions: 84 inches x 36 inches**

**Material: Concrete**

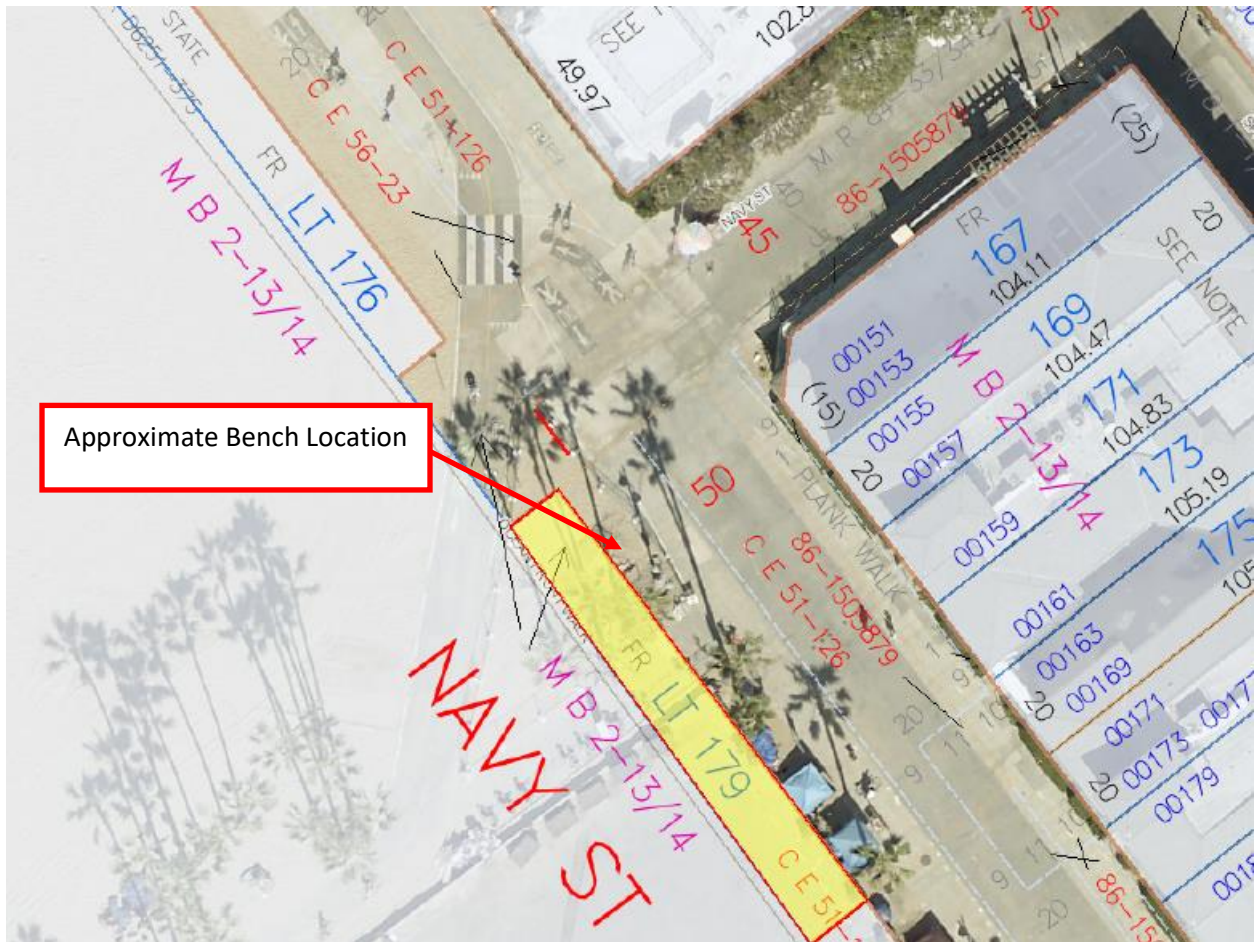
**Weight: 2000 LBS**



## Site Plan

### Proposed Approximate Location for Bench Installation

Approximate Bench Location: Illustrated by Red Arrow







October 6, 2023

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks  
221 Figueroa Street, Suite 350  
Los Angeles, Ca 90012

ATTN : General Manager Jimmy Kim and Board of Commissioners

RE: Venice Chamber of Commerce Support for the Venice Beach Adoption (Adopt-a-Park) Program

Dear Mr. Kim and Commissioners:

The Venice Chamber of Commerce extends its unwavering support for the Venice Beach Adoption program, a transformative initiative designed to enhance the Venice Beach experience for residents, visitors, and park staff alike. We believe this endeavor perfectly aligns with our shared vision of revitalizing our beloved Ocean Front Walk and fostering a stronger sense of community through our joint efforts.

Venice Beach ranks as the second most visited tourist attraction in Southern California, welcoming over 10 million visitors annually. At the heart of this adoption program is the installation of a bench along Ocean Front Walk, a symbol of community unity and a tribute to Jeffrey Solomon, an iconic Venice figure and a longtime/lifetime member of our Chamber. This bench project marks the first step in a comprehensive plan to rejuvenate Ocean Front Walk. We envision a future where this renowned stretch is not only visually appealing, but also equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community. The funds generated from the adoption program will be allocated strategically to support various initiatives, ensuring that we maximize their positive impact.

A significant portion of these funds will be directed toward youth programming at the Venice Beach Recreational Center, empowering the next generation with valuable opportunities and resources. Additionally, the adoption program will facilitate smaller projects and ongoing maintenance efforts along Ocean Front Walk, building upon the success of past projects such as resurfacing basketball courts, funding sports equipment, providing youth scholarships and enhancing park amenities.

Our vision is a revitalized Ocean Front Walk that reflects the vibrancy and inclusivity of our community. Just as Jeffrey Solomon welcomed all with open arms, we aim to make this iconic destination more inviting and accessible. We hope you share our enthusiasm for this project and will consider lending your full support to the Venice Beach Adoption program. By doing so, we can collectively work toward a brighter and more promising future for Venice Beach, our residents, valued visitors, and wonderful businesses. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna Lasman  
CEO

Cc: Estefany Salas, Program and Project Manager/Los Angeles Parks Foundation - [estefany@laparksfoundation.org](mailto:estefany@laparksfoundation.org)



# Venice Neighborhood Council

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294  
venicenc.org



**Attachment 5**

November 17, 2023

General Manager Kim and the Board of Commissioners,

On November 14, 2023, the Venice Neighborhood Council Board of Officers unanimously approved a letter of support for the Ocean Front Walk Bench Project honoring beloved longtime Venice resident Jeffery Solomon.

Mr. Solomon has undeniably touched countless lives here in Venice and his love for this community has had a positive and inspiring effect on both residents and visitors alike for decades.

The proposed location at Venice's northern border is a perfect spot to welcome people to a revitalized Ocean Front Walk and it will also offer a convenient place for seniors at the nearby BAR center to relax and enjoy the beach.

The project has our full and enthusiastic support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Averill".

Brian Averill  
President  
Venice Neighborhood Council

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# JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE LA

Jona Goldrich  
Multipurpose Center

October 11, 2023

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks  
221 Figueroa Street, Suite 350  
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

ATTN: General Manager Jimmy Kim and the Board of Commissioners

RE: Jewish Family Service LA Support for the Venice Beach Adoption (Adopt-a-Park) Program

Dear Mr. Kim and Commissioners:

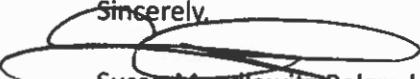
Jewish Family Service LA is writing to fully support the Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk Entry Bench Project honoring 50+ year resident Jeffrey Solomon. The bench is part of a larger initiative that we also fully support- The Venice Beach Adoption Program, which will revitalize Ocean Front Walk and help foster a stronger sense of community through the efforts of various local organizations. A significant portion of the raised funds will support youth programming at the Venice Beach Recreational Center and help maintain new landscaping and reimagined amenities on Ocean Front Walk. The bench will be located within steps of the front entrance to the BAR Center (formerly known as the Israel Levin Senior Center). It will be a welcome resting spot for neighborhood seniors and area visitors.

Jeffrey was a passionate supporter of Jewish Family Service LA and our site at 201 Ocean Front Walk - steps from the entry point to Venice Beach from Santa Monica. He recognized that we all face challenges and transitions in our lives, and when we do, we must count on the strength of community support. He helped others face those challenges and felt strongly about reaching out his hand and heart over decades. When he began to face his challenges, JFSLA and the Center were there for him and his wife, Fran, a 35-year public service professional and continuing resident and advocate for the Venice Beach community.

We share the community's vision for a revitalized Ocean Front Walk that reflects our inclusive community. Jeffrey Solomon welcomed all with open arms. We plan to continue to be a part of this inviting and accessible community that welcomes over 10 million visitors yearly and welcomes everyone - as he did.

We hope you will give this overarching initiative and first bench project your full support.

Sincerely,

  
Susan Mendlowitz-Belgrade, LCSW  
Senior Director of Senior and Multipurpose Centers



# TRACI PARK

LOS ANGELES COUNCILWOMAN ★ 11TH DISTRICT

March 28, 2024

Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department  
Office of Board of Commissioners  
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Office of Councilwoman Traci Park, 11th District Letter of Support for the Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk Bench Project in Memory of Jeffrey Solomon**

General Manager Kim and Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the Ocean Front Walk Bench Project in the memory of longtime community figure Jeffrey Solomon. Jeffrey was a Venice institution, showing the world the famous Venice Beach Boardwalk for decades, one walking tour at a time.

The installation of the bench as a result of the approval of this project would be a significant asset to Ocean Front Walk and would enhance the experience for residents and visitors alike.

Most importantly, I believe the project would be a fitting homage to Jeffrey Solomon — a community figure whose work is known to all — through the installation of the bench and the provision of youth programming at the Venice Beach Recreation Center.

Therefore, I join the Venice Neighborhood Council, the Venice Chamber of Commerce, and the Jewish Family Service LA in offering my full support for the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

**TRACI PARK**  
Councilwoman, 11th District  
City of Los Angeles