

Ribbon Cutting Reopens Norman O. Houston Park with Major Improvements

On September 19, 2014, Councilmember Bernard Parks led the dedication ceremony to reopen Norman O. Houston Park, 4900 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles. Speakers included California Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, District 54; Sylvia Patsouras, Board of Recreation and Park President; Ramon Barajas, Assistant General Manager, Recreation and Parks; **Deborah Weintraub**, Chief Deputy City Engineer, Bureau of Engineering; and David McNeill, Executive Officer, Baldwin Hills Conservancy

The following improvements are made at the 9.7-acre park as part of the Phase-II scope, which addressed many of the community's wants and needs:

A new 4-stall ADA-compliant restroom facility with complete electrical, water (running hot water) and sewer connections. The park has relied on portable restrooms for sanitary needs. The permanent restroom building



Councilmember Bernard Parks, State Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, and representatives from the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, performing the ceremonial ribbon cutting.

Photos by Gary Florin, Rec & Parks Dept.



Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer, spoke at the event.

represents a much needed upgrade to ensure public health.

The heavily used walking/jogging trail loop around the park has been converted from decomposed granite paving to rubberized surface. This addresses a major complaint from park patrons as D.G. becomes slippery and muddy when wet, causing safety hazards.

The unsightly concrete drainage v-ditch has been converted to a vegetated, fully landscaped bio-swale. This will effectively slow down storm water runoffs to aid on-site infiltration.

The parking lot has been expanded and re-aligned to add 18 parking spaces for a total of 54, with additional security lights. The re-alignment of drive aisle and parking stalls will ensure easier and safer maneuver. The additional solar-powered lights will provide enhanced security at night. The parking lot also received much needed shade trees and landscaping islands.

Two large shade structures added over the picnic areas next to the children's playground.

Three ADA-compliant exercise equipment/stations added to the existing 9 regular exercise equipment/stations, for a total of 12 exercise equipment/stations (25% of which are ADA compliant).

The Phase-II park improvements also addressed the importance of being environmentally responsible by incorporating design elements such as water-saving irrigation system, drought-tolerant plants, lawn reduction, storm water BMPs, and solar-powered lighting. Bio-swales will maximum site retention of storm water runoffs and thereby reducing the amount and improving the water quality of water runoffs that discharge into the storm drain system and nearby water ways.

The majority of funding was provided by the Baldwin Hills Conservancy (Proposition

40) Grant, along with funds from Quimby and Proposition K.

Congratulations go to **Mahmood Karimzadeh**, head of the Architectural Division; **Reza Bagherzadeh**, Senior Environmental Engineer; **Paul Tseng**, Project Manager; **Nishith Dhandha**, Landscape Architect of Record; **Anagh Mamdapurkar**, Construction Manager; Design Support: **Nasser Razeppoor**, **Saro Dersarioian**, **Shawn Farzan**, **Sahar Mehrzad**; **Curtis Gee**, Civil Engineering Associate III, GEO; **Claudia Haskett**, Civil Engineering Associate III, WCED; **Markos Legesse**, Civil Engineering Associate I, WCED; **Matt Masuda**, Civil Engineer, SSD; **Chih-Yang Han**, Civil Engineering Associate III, SSD; **Henry Sisomvang**, Civil Engineering Associate II, SSD; and everyone who contributed to making the project a success.



l to r: Markos Legesse, WCE; Anagh Mamdapurkar, CMD; Sylvia Patsouras, RAP Board President; Matt Masuda, SSD; Councilmember Bernard Parks; Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer; Ramon Barajas, RAP AGM; Nishith Dhandha, ARC; Paul Tseng, ARC; Sonny Cruz, BCA; and Ted Galsim, BCA.

Find this article online by clicking [here](#)