

Inell Woods Park 2024 Update

Introduction

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. We use research, education, community action and advocacy to pursue our mission. Heal the Bay has over 12,000 members and 40+ full-time and part-time staff. We are a nonprofit, 501(c)3 with financial support from the public and private sector, including individual donors, foundations and businesses.

Background: Inell Woods Park

In 2008, Heal the Bay was working in the Compton Creek watershed. We understood that the health of our rivers and coastal ocean is connected to the health of our neighborhoods. Our Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Environments Initiative (HNHEI) focused on demonstrating the connection of communities, green space and health. Our goal was to invest in communities where parks were most needed: communities lacking greenspace, shade and clean waterways.

We worked with Councilmember Jan Perry from CD9, neighborhood and families from Wisdom Academy for Young Scientists (WAYS) and South Park elementary schools, the McKinley Place Park site was identified through a yearlong process in our Community Watershed Training Program. We were able to do small improvements to the site with grant funds from the City of Los Angeles. In preparation for the State Parks grant program neighbors came together with Heal the Bay in a series of workshops to further develop the project. Their desires for a safe place for small children to play together, and for adults to exercise or relax in a shady place, were incorporated into the park design. From 2012 to 2019 we had annual cleanups at the site during Coastal Cleanup Day and Earth Month along with the project update meetings.

The Neighborhood

The project site is a vacant parcel of land at 87th Street & McKinley Place in South Los Angeles. It is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, including a large public housing complex to the southwest called Avalon Gardens. Almost 40% of the neighborhood is currently living at or below the poverty level as identified by State Parks. In the State's CalEnviroScreen the neighborhood scored the highest-impacted ranking of 91-100%. This neighborhood is also designated a disadvantaged community by CalEPA for SB535.

The parcel's 16,000 square feet are paved with concrete or asphalt, with a few trees. On any given day, you can find broken down desks, sofas, or old clothes being left on the site. For many years, Heal the Bay worked in partnership with local schools, the neighborhood, and City Council District 9 to organize annual community cleanups of the site.

City Council	District 9: Curren D. Price Jr.
County Supervisor	District 2: Holly Mitchell
State Senate	District 33: Senator Lena A. Gonzalez

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State Assembly [District 59: Reggie Jones-Sawyer](#)
US Congress [District 43: Maxine Waters](#)

The Project

Heal the Bay is committed to improving water quality in Los Angeles County's watersheds through the creation of more green space. In addition to providing recreation areas and wildlife habitat, green spaces can function as essential multi-benefit stormwater solutions too. They improve local water quality, increase water reuse and supply, reduce carbon, and mitigate heat island effect.

The project was inspired and designed with the school and community input to serve as green space, fitness area, a meeting spot, an environmental education site, and a water quality improvement project for the watershed. With its exercise stations, tot lot, sitting areas, native gardens, and urban runoff treatment and re-use, the park represents an incredible recreational and educational asset for kids, young people, and seniors alike. The project creates multiple benefits and distinct open spaces designed for active and passive recreation.

Construction began on February 12, 2024 with a 6-month construction window. Once complete the Los Angeles Department of Rec & Parks will take over maintenance and operations of the park.

Water Smart Park

Inell Woods Park is a good example of how the Safe Clean Water Program aims to increase local water supply, improve water quality, and protect public health by focusing efforts on multi-benefit projects in communities that have been identified as severely disadvantaged with regards to access to green space and other socioeconomic factors. Multi-benefit projects are the most efficient and effective use of our taxpayer dollars because they are cost-conscious solutions that serve both community and environmental needs.

Heal the Bay has spent decades working on smart infrastructure policies and funding measure like Measure A and W to create community centered improvements.

The park is designed to capture water when it rains. This prevents runoff from reaching Compton Creek and the Los Angeles River. The stormwater treatment component is the Permavoid system and has been used in several other City of LA parks. Permavoid is a multi-functional stormwater management system engineered to create functional and appealing storm water capture. This system treats stormwater as a resource, rather than a waste product. The captured water will be filtered and used to irrigate the native plants and trees at the park.

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For LID ([low impact development](#)) compliance the requirement is to capture the 85th percentile storm, which is approximately 1 inch in 24 hours. Permanent water quality BMPs are required by the City of Los Angeles LID Ordinance to be implemented for the proposed Inell Woods Park project. The project will intercept stormwater from the 85th percentile storm event over approximately 40,000 square feet of tributary area. The proposed Permavoid Capture & Use Planter reduces the storm water discharge from the project and upstream offsite tributary area by intercepting the first flush runoff for reuse in irrigating the landscaping on the site. Intercepting the first flush stormwater runoff removes contaminants from the runoff that would otherwise enter the storm drain system and downstream waterways.

Water quality is improved by implementing this permanent BMP. The 85th percentile, 24-hour rain event was determined to be 0.98 inches and was used along with the tributary impermeable surfaces to size the proposed Permavoid Planter.

Based on the design calculations each storm event of 0.98 inches or more will yield approximately 20,800 gallons (0.0638 AF) of captured runoff for storage in the Permavoid Planter for eventual use by the plants above the surface. In addition, areas of permeable pavers will promote evapotranspiration of stored runoff outside of the planting areas. This will ensure that between storms the Permavoid will be emptied in anticipation of new stormwater capture in subsequent storms. This estimated rainfall includes storm events that are multi-day and may exceed the rainfall from the 85th percentile storm. We assume that 5 or 6 rain events will meet or exceed the 85th percentile storm in an average year. This would result in approximately 104,000 to 124,000 gallons of rainwater captured over the rainy season between October and April. The Estimated Total Water Use (ETWU) for the site, as estimated by the Project Landscape Architect, is 110,565 gallons per year.

The anticipated rainwater volume captured over an average year is consistent with the ETWU estimated by the Project Landscape Architect. It can also be concluded that stormwater runoff in a below average year would be similar to the estimated volume generated during the average year due to the likelihood of a similar number of rain events generating storms which produce up to 0.98 inches of rain.

Today

With the COVID-19 pandemic largely behind us, new funding identified from CDBG (the federal Community Development Block Grant), continued support from State Parks, full support of Council District 9, and commitment from LA Rec & Parks to support operations and maintenance of the completed park, Heal the Bay is excited to complete Inell Woods Park.

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