

CITY SEEKS FEEDBACK ABOUT PARKS NEXT TO OCEAN BOULEVARD



The Downtown Long Beach Alliance Strategic Plan, established in 2016, includes an action item to advocate for the redesign of Victory Park/Santa Cruz Park in a way that aligns with the desires of the Downtown Community.

Since 1889, when it was officially dedicated as parkland by the City of Long Beach, the green space along the south side of Ocean Boulevard in Downtown Long Beach has played an important role in the first impressions of countless visitors. Currently, the City is in the process of engaging the public's help in updating Victory Park/Santa Cruz Park

guidelines to make this space more appealing and useful for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

“We think it’s a good time to take a look at those guidelines and refresh them,” said Patricia Diefenderfer, Advance Planning Officer in the City of Long Beach Development Services Planning Bureau. “The current guidelines,” she added, “were established in 1989 and don’t include such issues as sustainability and new placemaking practices in general.”

Santa Cruz Park, which runs along Ocean Boulevard from Golden Avenue to Cedar Avenue, and Victory Park, which continues from Cedar all the way to Alamitos Avenue, reached their full potential in the early '20s when the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm applied its expertise (The company’s founder, Frederick, designed Central Park in the mid-nineteenth century and his sons Frederick Jr. and John continued building the company, creating the landscaping at the White House and 6000 other locations throughout the country).

This space continues to be of high significance, serving as a pedestrian bridge between the Waterfront and Downtown core. Various redevelopment projects over the decades put the squeeze on the linear park, which now constitutes a strip approximately 80 feet wide. Pleasantly green and well-maintained, it is easy to mistake it for the front yards of adjoining Ocean Boulevard buildings. The City seeks to make updates that affirm the identities of these parks as public spaces.

“The guideline redesign process presents a great placemaking opportunity to reimagine this open space and the public realm experience in a way that speaks to the history and values of our Downtown community,” said DLBA Placemaking Manager, Mariah Hoffman.

Last December, the City held a workshop in which Downtown residences and business owners were quizzed about what the park means to them, how they use it, and what improvements they would like to see. Those who missed the workshop can still provide input by clicking this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/victorysantacruzpark>. Here, visitors can scan the "Outreach Boards" to get background and context and then click the "I'm Ready" button to take the survey.

Your input is requested about such improvements as which drought-tolerant shrubs would work best, what sort of seating and gathering places you might like, and what can be included to pay tribute to the park's history.

"With the right guidelines," said Planning Bureau Landscape Specialist Alex Muldrow, "Victory/Santa Cruz park once again has the potential to become something iconic to Long Beach."

To learn more about the Victory/Santa Cruz Park project, please click [here](http://www.longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/victory-santa-cruz/):
<http://www.longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/victory-santa-cruz/>