



MacLaren Community Park Project
Community Workshop Six
Saturday, March 6, 2021

Background

Community Workshop Six for the MacLaren Community Park Project served as an opportunity to reengage El Monte residents on the updates and modifications to the site design for the proposed park at MacLaren Hall, which operated as a County facility housing foster-youth for short-term stays. Since its closure, much of the MacLaren property has been walled off and inaccessible to the community. Parts of the facility remain in use with administrative offices for County departments, a medical clinic and Alma Family Services.

In 2019, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and the City of El Monte initiated efforts to engage the community in shaping a new vision for an unused area of open space in the southeast corner of the MacLaren site, approximately four acres in size. This engagement included the formation of a Community Advisory Committee and hosting workshops to identify active and recreational opportunities as well as potential concerns.

Community Engagement and Community Advisory Committee

The first workshop for MacLaren Community Park was hosted on September 12th, 2019 at Zamora Park. This meeting introduced the community to the preliminary park concepts. Feedback was received on community priorities, needs and concerns. El Monte Chief of Police David Reynoso presented on safety issues and discussed police patrolling and surveillance cameras. The community provided input on the following issues: security, parking/access, recreational uses and the wall.

The second workshop for MacLaren Community Park was hosted on November 16th, 2019 at Mountain View Park. Over 30 local organizations, agencies and community groups were invited. The community reiterated safety and security concerns. With respect to recreational uses, at that time, a walking path or track were a preferred option. Walking was also expressed as the preferred means of getting to and from the park. There was support for a park that is locked up and closed overnight.

Another aspect of community engagement was the formation of the Community Advisory Committee for MacLaren Community Park. The advisory committee consisted of community leaders who provided the project team with advice and feedback on issues related to the park, with particular focus on the constituencies that they served. The Community Advisory Committee Members consisted of:

Name	Affiliation
Reaver Bingham	Los Angeles County Department of Probation
Jae Canas	Child Advocacy Consultant
Lourdes Caracosa	Alma Family Services
Adam Carranza	Mountain View High School District
Ernest Espinoza	El Monte Comprehensive Health Center

Jane Fall	Our Savior Center
Dr. Maribel Garcia	El Monte City School District
Dr. Lilian Maldonado-French	Mountain View High School District
Maria Morgan	Nativity Parish
Mayor Andre Quintero	City of El Monte
Jeff Seymour	Seymour Center
Elvia Torres	SPIRITT
Jose Vega	El Monte Soccer for Success
Council Member Jerry Velasco	City of El Monte
Amy Wong	Active SGV
Dr. Edward Zuniga	El Monte Union High School District

The Community Advisory Committee was convened on July 30, 2020 to reengage Members on the Maclaren Community Park Project. **Due to COVID-19, this meeting and all subsequent meetings and community workshops would be held virtually via Zoom.** Members were provided an overview of the project including the site, funding opportunities, the community engagement process and the workshop series scheduled for late August and early September.

The third community workshop would be hosted as series of meetings over the course of two days. Day one of the Community Workshop Three took place on August 27th, 2020. The meeting reintroduced the El Monte community to the Maclaren Community Park Project. Participants provided feedback on amenities and features during a listening session. Issues identified included safety, traffic & speeding, parking in the neighborhood, trash and potential homelessness, crime and drug use or distribution.

Day Two of Community Workshop Three was hosted on September 2nd, 2020. Day Two addressed issues raised during the small group discussions during Day One. Discussion and potential solutions were provided on safety, security, parking and access. Participants also provided feedback on active and passive features.

On September 24th, the Community Advisory Committee was reconvened to review Workshop Series Three, discuss the Community Survey and provide insight into Community Workshop Four.

Workshop Series Four was hosted over the course of two days on October 22nd, and October 26th, 2020. Both days of Workshop Series Four featured the same program. This was done to provide two different opportunities for residents to participate. Workshop Four provided participants a review of community engagement, results of the Community Survey and sought feedback from participants on site planning and design criteria. Participants provided feedback on different features via instant polling.

On November 12th, 2020 the Community Advisory Committee reconvened to discuss feedback from Workshop Four and to review the final site design, where a consensus recommendation on the site plan presented was reached.

The MacLaren Community Park Open House was hosted on Saturday, November 21, 2021. The Open House served as an opportunity for El Monte residents and other stakeholders to view the final site design for MacLaren Community Park, receive a virtual tour of the project site and view a conversation with Supervisor Hilda L. Solis to discuss the importance of MacLaren Community Park and the amenities that would be available to the public.

Update to MacLaren Community Park Site Plan

The MacLaren Community Site was adjusted in recent weeks due to new improvements that have been identified on the MacLaren Campus. The new enhancements allow for a larger park space and a regulation sized soccer field. It additionally adds greater accessibility to the community from Durfee Avenue and Gilman Road.

Community Workshop Six Outreach

Although COVID-19 limited the ability to host an in-person workshop, the project team was committed to informing the El Monte community about Community Workshop Six. A postcard for Community Workshop Six was mailed to all households within ½ mile radius of the MacLaren Hall site. Additionally, all households within ½ mile radius were canvassed to promote Community Workshop Six. Information was provided to these households in multiple languages.

Targeted audiences for Community Workshop Six included: residents within ½ mile of the MacLaren site, the Community Advisory Committee, past workshop attendees, survey participants, El Monte community-based organizations, Mountain View School District, El Monte City School District and El Monte Union High School District.

The Community Workshop Six postcard was also posted to the MacLaren Community Park Project website. This postcard was also utilized for digital distribution and shared with the Project Team for promotion amongst various stakeholders.

Additionally, Lee Andrews Group employed an assertive social media campaign to build awareness of Community Workshop Six, including several posts and Instagram advertisements in the lead up to the event.

The project team also met with several members of the Community Advisory Committee to provide them an update on the site plan and necessity for further community engagement on MacLaren Community Park. Several members of the Community Advisory Committee participated in workshop 6 and shared excitement for the refinements.

Community Workshop Six Meeting Format and Structure

Due to COVID-19 and public health guidelines, Community Workshop Six was hosted virtually on Zoom. Community Workshop Six took place on Saturday, March 6th from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Translation in multiple languages was provided for workshop participants.

The overall project team consisting of the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, Los Angeles County Public Works, the City of El Monte, Lee Andrews Group, Deborah Murphy and Tony Torres collaborated to develop the agenda for Community Workshop Six (Appendix Item A).

The program for Community Workshop Six featured the following opportunities for participants: review of the project timeline and outreach, feedback from Community Advisory Committee members Amy Wong and Adam Carranza, a review of the site plan by Ryan Kristan of Los Angeles County Public Works, discussion of public safety by El Monte Police Chief David Reynoso and an opportunity for discussion and to field participant questions. The program also featured messages from Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and El Monte City Manager Alma Martinez. This meeting was facilitated by Rick Garcia of Lee Andrews Group.

Project Timeline

Rick Garcia provided an overview of the project timeline and outreach. This outreach included a total of eight public meetings and a community survey

Community Advisory Committee Member Amy Wong

Amy Wong discussed the role of the Community Advisory Committee to provide input and feedback on community outreach for the MacLaren Community Park Project. She emphasized that it was important to understand the concerns and needs from the community regarding MacLaren Community Park, and also to communicate the amenities that the project would bring to the City of El Monte.

Site Design (Ryan Kristan, Los Angeles County Public Works and David Reynoso, El Monte Police Chief)

Ryan Kristan, Project Manager for the MacLaren Community Park Project provided attendees with a review of the features and amenities of the existing site plan that was presented at the November 2020 Open House. Mr. Kristan then discussed the key park elements of the updated site plan. This included additional amenities that were not included in the site plan presented in November 2020. Mr. Kristan discussed the new location of the park on the MacLaren Hall site, and features of the proposed park including the promenade, a pavilion, sustainability features, a full-sized soccer field with bleacher seating, walking path surrounding the soccer field, stormwater capture features of the soccer field, the family gathering area with a tennis court, basketball court, children's play area, exercise areas and a water feature. Mr. Kristan also discussed the new placement of parking for the park.

El Monte Police Chief David Reynoso discussed enhanced safety features of the park including cameras that would be linked to the El Monte Police Department. Chief Reynoso also welcomed the opportunity to meet with the community to address any public safety concerns.

Community Advisory Committee Member Adam Carranza

Adam Carranza discussed the updates to the park design and concerns over prior park design including placement of parking impact of traffic on the local community. Mr. Carranza also discussed the benefit of the full-sized soccer field and potential uses of the park from local schools. Additionally, Mr. Carranza spoke about the enhancements to visibility as it relates to the safety for the new park design.

El Monte Mayor Jessica Ancona to thank Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and discussed the repurposing of the Maclaren Hall space, she also extolled the much-needed amenities such as the soccer field, basketball court and tennis court for a park poor community.

Question and Answer

The workshop also featured an opportunity for participants to ask questions regarding the project. Over 30 questions were asked. The following topics were asked about during Q&A:

- The updated soccer field
- Homelessness
- The potential for other uses of the soccer field, such as football
- The use of staging for concerts
- The organization of athletic leagues
- The date for opening of the park
- Traffic and speeding in the immediate community
- The increase in park space
- The use of barriers and landscaping for the park
- The importance of park space in El Monte
- The role of community feedback and engagement in the development of the park

Responses to questions were provided by:

- Guadalupe Duran Medina from the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
- Kelly Quinn from the Los Angeles County CEO's Office
- Betty Donovanik, Alma Martinez and David Reynoso from the City of El Monte.

Over 45 members of the El Monte community participated in Community Workshop Six.

Next Steps

Community Workshop Six for the Maclaren Community Park Project was the last community meeting for the project. The focus now turns towards securing funding for the project through

submitted funding applications with the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the State Park Program.

The project does maintain a website which will include up to date information on the project as well as provides an opportunity for the public to provide comments. Additionally, the project maintains social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These channels can also serve as mediums to connect with the community on project updates.

