



MacLaren Community Park Project  
Open House  
Saturday, November 21, 2020

## Background

The MacLaren Community Park Open House served as an opportunity for the residents of El Monte to preview the final 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, and October 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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.

## Open House Outreach

COVID-19 limited the ability to conduct outreach in-person, thus the focus of outreach pivoted to digital engagement and mail. Targeted audiences for the Open House 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 Open House postcard was distributed to all households within ½ mile of the MacLaren site. This postcard was also utilized for digital distribution and translated into multiple languages. The postcard highlighted the opportunity for the community to view the final site design for MacLaren Community Park.

The postcard was distributed electronically to each of the target audiences and posted on the MacLaren Community Park website. Additionally, the project team employed the use of social media to build awareness of the Open House, including Facebook and Instagram advertisements. Lee Andrews Group coordinated with the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis to produce a video for social media advertisement.

## Open House Meeting Format and Structure

As indicated, due to COVID-19, meetings were hosted virtually on Zoom. The Open House took place on Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup> from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The overall project team consisting of the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, Los Angeles County Public Works, Raw International, Lee Andrews Group, Ed Reyes and Tony Torres collaborated to develop the agenda for the Open House (Appendix Item A). The agenda featured the following opportunities for participants: review of the project timeline, feedback from Community Advisory Committee members on the process and project, a virtual tour of the site, a review of the final site design and an opportunity for discussion and to field participant questions.

The program also featured messages from Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, El Monte City Mayor Andre Quintero, El Monte City Manager Alma Martinez, and Bobby Cagle, Director for the Department Of Children and Family Services for the County of Los Angeles. Additionally, Supervisor Hilda L. Solis participated in a conversation on MacLaren Community Park with meeting facilitator Rick Garcia.

### *Community Advisory Committee Perspectives*

The following Community Advisory Committee Members provided their perspective at the MacLaren Community Park Open House:

- Adam Carranza discussed the community engagement process and the importance of hearing from the community, and the incorporation of community input into the final site design
- Amy Wong spoke of how the final site design took community feedback to heart and how the space would serve individuals and families of all ages and backgrounds

- Lilian Maldonado – French spoke about the importance of reaching out to community partners and the importance of the proposed MacLaren Community Park.
- Randall Pineda addressed the enhancements of services for community members

#### *Virtual Tour of MacLaren Community Park Project Site*

Open House participants were provided a virtual tour of the proposed MacLaren Community Park site with the proposed amenities for each of the park zones.

#### *Conversation with Supervisor Hilda L. Solis*

Rick Garcia moderated a conversation with Supervisor Hilda L. Solis to discuss the importance of MacLaren Community Park and the amenities that could serve the community. Supervisor Solis emphasized the need for active participation from the community and how it impacted community engagement and the workshops. Supervisor Solis invited project detractors to engage with the project team to discuss a path forward for not only MacLaren Community Park but for the overall MacLaren Hall site.

#### *Final Site Design*

Branka Olson of Raw International presented the Final Site Design. Ms. Olson discussed the project goals, community topics, features, functions and design factors and their impact on park design. Branka unveiled the park design for MacLaren Community Park. During Branka’s presentation, there were breaks to allow for Community Feedback via the Zoom chat and raise hands features. Additionally, instant polls were used to engage the participants.

- The East Pocket of MacLaren Community Park would feature short term and handicapped accessible parking, a basketball court and a tennis court.
- The Courtyard and West Pocket would feature a play area lot for toddlers, seating, an informational kiosk, barbecue area, sensory garden with native plants, library kiosk, seating areas and a jungle gym.
- The Open Green Zone would feature two soccer fields, walking path, exercise areas, additional seating areas (benches).

Branka also highlighted the ecological features, educational features, and healthy community features of the park. Her presentation concluded with showing the concept site plan.

#### **Next Steps**

The MacLaren Community Park Open House was the last community meeting for the project. Yet, it does not represent the final opportunity for community engagement. The project maintains a website which will include up to date information on the project as well as opportunity to receive comments from the public. 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.

The next phase of activity will focus on completion of the funding applications for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the State Park Program.

Appendix  
Open House Agenda

MaLaren Community Park Project  
Open House  
Saturday, November 21, 2020  
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

AGENDA

To access the meeting please click on the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88309943253>

Meeting ID: 883 0994 3253

To participate via phone call please dial in to the following number:

(669) 900-6833

Meeting ID: 883 0994 3253

1. Welcome – Rick Garcia, Lee Andrews Group
2. Message from Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
3. Message from City of El Monte – Alma Martinez, City Manager
4. Overview of Project Timeline – Rick Garcia, Lee Andrews Group
5. Community Advisory Committee Perspectives – Ricardo Mendoza, Lee Andrews Group
6. Message from the Department of Children and Family Services - Bobby Cagle, Director
7. Virtual Tour of MaLaren Community Park Project Site
8. Conversation with Supervisor Hilda L Solis – Rick Garcia, Lee Andrews Group
9. Final Site Design – Branka Olson, Raw International
10. Questions & Answers – Joey Legaspi, Lee Andrews Group
11. Conclusion – Rick Garcia, Lee Andrews Group