



**Metro**

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel  
metro.net

**JANUARY 10, 2020**

**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**THROUGH: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON** *PAW*  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**FROM: JIM DE LA LOZA** *[Signature]*  
**CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: PROP A GRANT FUNDS – FATHER SERRA PARK**

**ISSUE**

In 2015, Metro was awarded a \$1 million Proposition A Grant (Prop A grant) from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (OSD) for design and general improvements at Father Serra Park in the El Pueblo de Los Angeles campus.

Since then, staff has learned that the area surrounding Father Serra Park is highly archaeologically- and culturally-sensitive and that any improvements at Father Serra Park would require extensive environmental analysis and mitigations that far exceed the funding available to advance improvements on the park. Therefore, Metro will return the grant funds to the OSD.

**BACKGROUND**

Scope and Funding Overview

Father Serra Park is located on the corner of Alameda Street and Los Angeles Street on the El Pueblo de Los Angeles campus, west of Los Angeles Union Station (Attachment A). The Prop A grant, totaling \$1million, was awarded for design and construction of general improvements at Father Serra Park that included a new pedestrian pathway, landscaping, and per request from the El Pueblo Commission, a memorial to the Chinese Massacre of 1871.

Metro intended to advance the Father Serra Park design and improvements in coordination with the broader Metro [Los Angeles Union Station Forecourt and](#)

Esplanade Improvements, located on adjacent Alameda and Los Angeles streets and on the Union Station Forecourt.

Of the \$1 million grant, \$250,000 was eligible for non-capital expenses (design, permitting, environmental) and \$750,000 was allocated for construction costs. Additionally, the grant included a provision that \$20,000 of the total amount be dedicated for improvements to the existing Obregon Foundation Wall of Honor monument at Father Serra Park.

### Environmental Analysis

When the project was initiated, it was assumed that the project would be eligible for a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the improvements were minimal in nature. However, adjacent projects in the Los Angeles Union Station vicinity such as the Patsaouras Bus Plaza and the Bridge Housing development at El Pueblo brought new information to light that raised awareness about the potential presence of archaeological and cultural resources in the area.

Upon further evaluation of the proposed improvements at Father Serra Park, it became apparent that any construction activity at Father Serra Park would require extensive environmental testing, analysis, and mitigation that far exceeded available funding.

### Community Input

Through stakeholder engagement, Metro staff learned of the significance that Father Serra Park held for many groups that have deep, historic ties in the El Pueblo area. Given that any improvements at the park would require costly and extensive environmental testing, environmental analysis under CEQA and mitigation, it became clear that there would be insufficient funding to realize a project that appropriately commemorated the history of the site and what the site means to so many stakeholders.

Upon learning of the challenges of advancing improvements at Father Serra Park, Metro staff engaged with El Pueblo de Los Angeles National Monument staff, held a focus group meeting with the Chinese Historical Society and Chinese American Museum, discussed with other El Pueblo stakeholders, presented to the El Pueblo Commission and conducted a public workshop in May 2018.

Staff worked with the offices of Supervisor Solis, Mayor Garcetti and Councilmember Huizar; El Pueblo de Los Angeles staff and stakeholders; and the OSD to identify other eligible projects at El Pueblo that would align with the spirit of the original grant.

In December 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion to award the Proposition A funding to the Friends of the Chinese American Museum for improvements to the Chinese American Museum located at El Pueblo de Los Angeles. The funding will provide expanded gallery space that will allow multiple exhibitions to run concurrently. Additionally, the funding will maintain the improvements to the existing Obregon Foundation Wall of Honor monument at Father Serra Park.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Metro will formally relinquish Prop A grant funds to the OSD for the OSD to reallocate to the Friends of the Chinese American Museum. Returning the grant funds to the OSD will not harm Metro in its effort to secure competitive grants in the future.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Father Serra Park Map

