

QL3.3 – Enhance public space.

Level of Achievement:

RESTORATIVE

Summary:

The site was a maintenance yard for buses and trolleys that sprawled a full city block, covered by more than nine acres of asphalt and concrete, encircled by a rusted chain-link fence and razor wire in the center of a blighted part of South Los Angeles. Being surrounded by homes and schools, the site made an ideal locale for an urban park with restored natural features and green space.

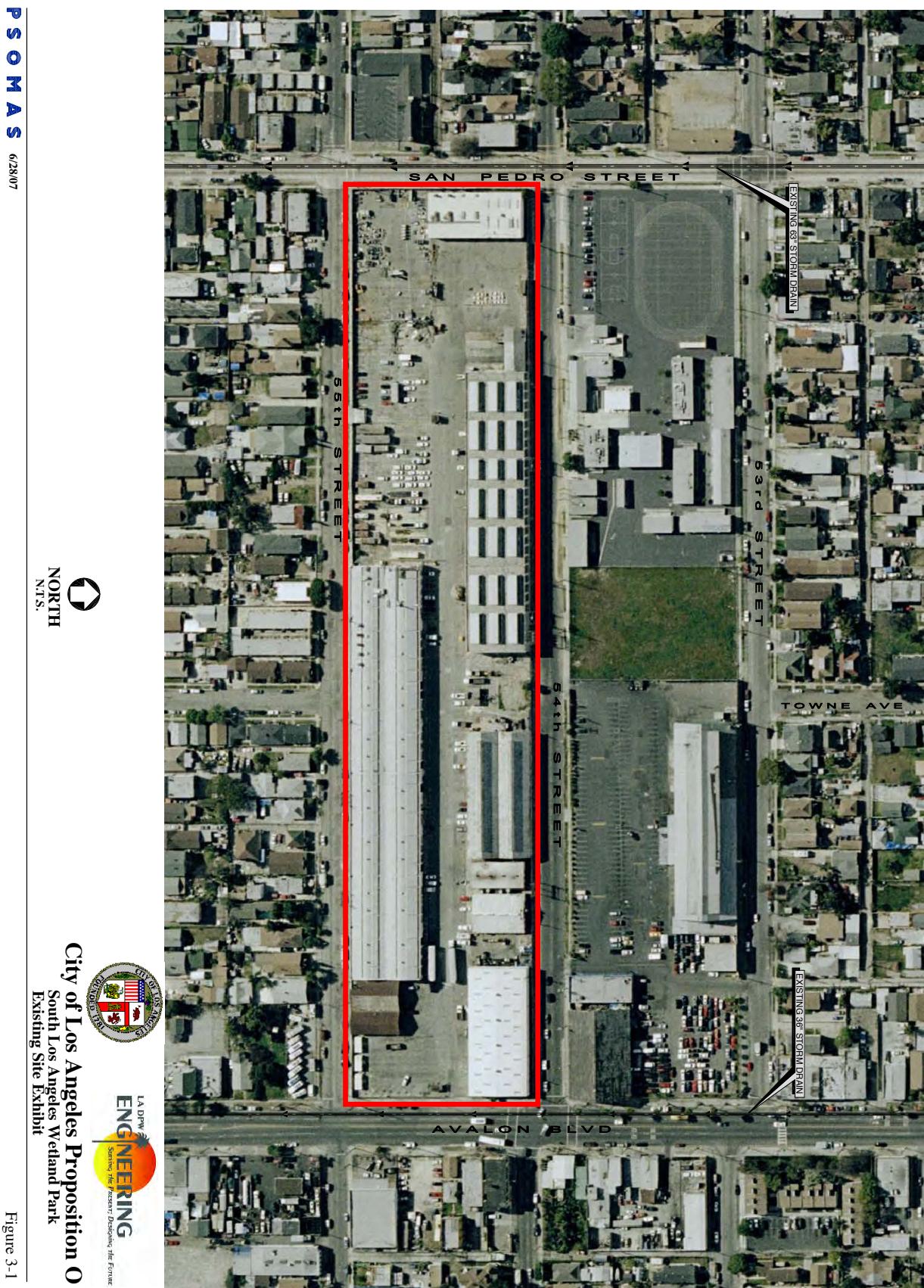
Primary goal of project is stormwater treatment by minimizing the discharge of pollutants from urban run-off to receiving waters. The project achieved this goal, while at the same time enhancing community livability by providing a number of community resources, including wetland and riparian habitat, trails, boardwalks, and educational and public use facilities.

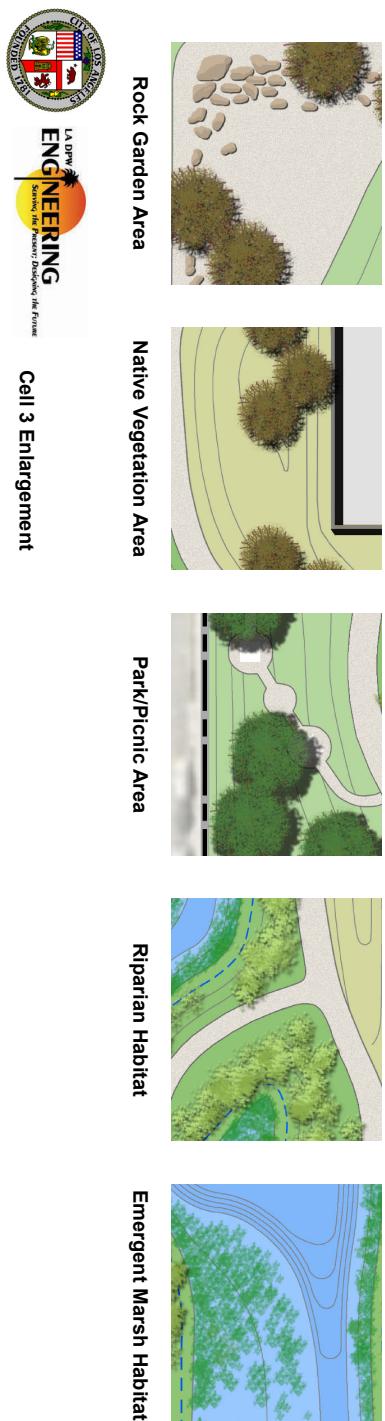
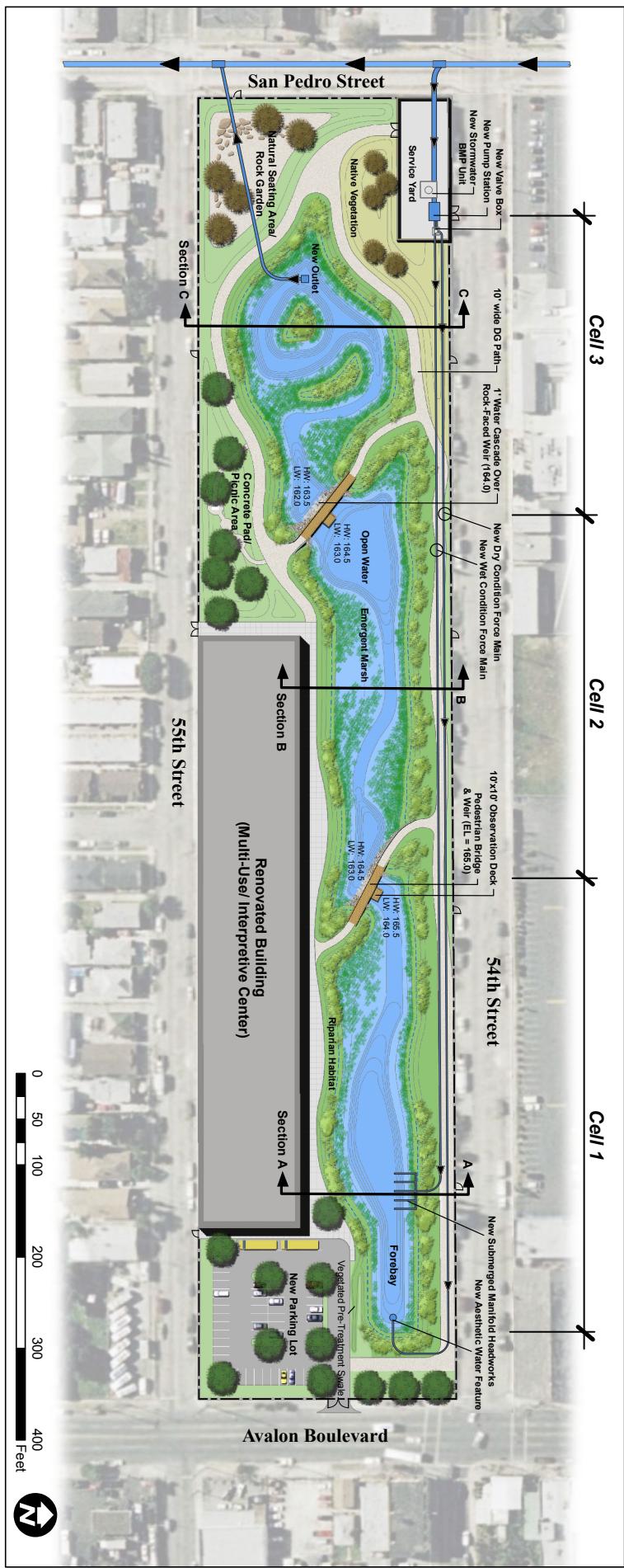
Transcript from public hearing for the Draft EIR, as well as published articles, document the support and satisfaction from public agencies which include the City Council Office, City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Recreation and Parks, and the community.

Supporting documentation:

- Existing and proposed site plan exhibits
- Section 1.1 – Project Location and Setting from Final EIR
- Articles from the Los Angeles Wave and the Los Angeles Times
- Transcript from public hearing for the Draft EIR, see page 5
- Article from Bureau of Engineering newsletter on the groundbreaking ceremony

Existing and proposed site plan exhibits





Preliminary Site Plan

City of Los Angeles Proposition O
South Los Angeles Wetlands Park

Section 1.1 – Project Location and Setting from Final EIR

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The proposed Project is comprised of two primary components, 1) the South Los Angeles Wetlands Park (Wetlands Park), which would be a constructed wetlands to provide water quality improvements to storm drain runoff, as well as passive recreational opportunities in South Los Angeles, and 2) a Sign Supplemental Use District (Sign SUD) for the placement of four billboard faces on two billboard structures just to the north of Interstate 10 in downtown Los Angeles. Both components of the proposed Project are located within Council District 9 (Figure 1-1).

1.1.1 Wetlands Park Component

The proposed Wetlands Park is located in an urbanized neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles, approximately five miles south of downtown Los Angeles and approximately 0.5 miles east of Interstate 110, within the Southeast Los Angeles Community Planning Area. The location of the 9-acre Wetlands Park is at 5413 South Avalon Boulevard, which is currently a bus maintenance yard owned and operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Figure 1-2 shows the boundaries of the proposed Wetlands Park at 5413 South Avalon Boulevard. The proposed Wetlands Park site is bordered by 54th Street to the north, 55th Street to the south, and between Avalon Boulevard and San Pedro Street to the east and west, respectively.

The proposed Wetlands Park site was historically the location of transportation facilities beginning in 1901 with operation by the Los Angeles Railway (LARy). Maintenance and storage facilities were constructed on the site to provide services for streetcars (trolley cars). The facility included a blacksmith shop, machine shop, carpenter shop, upholstery shop, electrical and motor repair shop, oil house, general repair shop, 36-track paint shop, and storage areas. As the region shifted away from light rail and began to increasingly utilize buses in the early 1960s, the Red and Yellow Rail Car Lines were discontinued. Although it has changed ownership several times, the site has remained a transportation facility. Other activities have been conducted on the site related to manufacturing, fabrication, and assembly of motors, truck parts, and other mechanical equipment. In February 1993, Metro obtained ownership of the property through a merger with its predecessor (Southern California Rapid Transit District). Metro currently uses the site for the maintenance of vehicles and equipment storage.

The 9-acre proposed Wetlands Park site currently includes 5.5 acres of asphalt concrete pavement. The remainder of the site is occupied by a variety of maintenance and storage buildings (five corrugated metal buildings, two concrete buildings and various sheds and fixtures) and asphalt-paved parking areas. The perimeter of the property is generally lined by a chain-link barbed wire fence and building fronts.



CDM



City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering
South Los Angeles Wetlands Park

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Feet

Site Vicinity Map

Figure 1-1

Articles from the Los Angeles Wave
and the Los Angeles Times



Naturally, green dream is realized in South L.A.

By BETTY PLEASANT, Contributing Editor 17.APR.08

Wetland park will be created where blighted urban industrial facility now stands.

More than four years of hard work and bare-knuckle negotiations resulted in South Los Angeles taking a major step toward becoming the home of a green haven in an urban community full of broken cement, when the L.A. City Council overwhelmingly approved construction of a natural oasis there on April 6.

Under the leadership of Councilwoman Jan Perry, the council voted 13-1 to approve a series of land-use actions that will create a nine-acre wetlands park at 5413 S. Avalon Blvd., a blighted site owned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and currently used as an unsightly maintenance yard.

The wetland park is widely regarded as an ideal fixture for Perry's 9th Council District, which, despite its population density, is sorely lacking in green space. The 9th District is deemed the second most "park poor" of the city's 15 council districts. The district occupies a mere 14 square miles of city territory, but houses more than 250,000 people, Perry said.

"The need for green, recreational space is present and immediate," Perry said. "Parcels of land this size are rare and expensive to acquire and this is a unique opportunity to bring a one-of-a-kind nature center to the heart of the 9th District," Perry told her council colleagues before they voted their approval.

According to the city specs, the South Los Angeles Wetlands Park will be constructed in two phases. Phase one will combine numerous elements for passive recreational activities, such as walking, cycling, bird watching and photo taking. Phase two of the construction will include a rail museum and a community center.

The park is expected to be festooned with a combination of native trees, shrubs, marsh plants and a myriad of flora and fauna in a wetlands setting. The park is also expected to serve as an outdoor classroom by providing educational signage along the wetlands paths. Perry said the park's wetlands feature will assist the city's efforts to turn troublesome storm water runoff into clean, healthy water for multiple uses in the community.

The South Los Angeles Wetlands Park project was shepherded by Perry through four years of labyrinthine negotiations with the MTA for the acquisition of the land, with the community stakeholders about the innovative use of the land, with a billboard company about the removal and/or repositioning of billboards in other parts of the city, and with city officials about amassing the \$19 million to actually pay for the park. Perry's fourth activity was not that difficult because in 2006 the council approved \$8.1 million in Proposition O general bond money to finance the wetlands project.

Perry said the city already has the money to pay for the park and has submitted acceptable environmental reports and other paperwork associated with an undertaking of

this size. She said she expects the city to take possession of the land by the end of the year, with park construction commencing forthwith.

“The time is now and we must seize this opportunity to develop green space as there are no other locations to put this important community resource that will serve families and seniors who call South Los Angeles home,” Perry said. “It is wonderful to see this vision one step further to becoming a reality.”

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Urban wetlands park to be developed in South L.A.



PASTORAL: This wet, lush landscape will replace what was long a transit hub and once housed a train barn for streetcars.

City Council approves project at former MTA yard.

By Jill Leovy, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
April 24, 2008

The City Council this week unanimously approved construction of an unusual urban wetland park on an old Metropolitan Transportation Authority maintenance yard in South Los Angeles.

The South Los Angeles Wetlands Park project will cost \$19 million in proceeds from bond issues for parks and clean water and will take up to two years to build, city officials said. It will include a small lake, marshes with native plants, footpaths, a community center and a winding waterway.

The nine-acre MTA yard, which stretches from Avalon Boulevard to San Pedro Street in an industrial area on 54th Street, had been used as a transit hub for more than 100 years and was once a train barn for streetcars. The lot is paved and encircled by rusted chain-link fencing and razor wire, "a barren, underutilized concrete pad," Councilwoman Jan Perry said.

Surrounded by homes and schools, the site will make "an ideal locale for green space," Perry said.

Under the city's agreement with the MTA, the lot will be cleaned of toxics, then handed over to be developed as a wetland.

"There is a scarcity of green space here, a lack of places to go and get in touch with nature," said the Rev. John Deron Johnson, pastor of Phillips Temple CME Church, a supporter of the wetland project.

"It's got to be a plus for us," said Clark Coe, 46, a neighbor of the site. "It's a good start." Groundbreaking is slated for 2010.

Transcript from public hearing for the Draft EIR

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

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PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE)
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT)
REPORT, SOUTH LOS ANGELES)
WETLANDS PARK PROJECT)
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken at
South Park Gymnasium, 345 East 51st Street,
Los Angeles, California, commencing at 6:15 p.m.,
Wednesday, September 12, 2007, reported by
ANABELE M. MONTGOMERY, CSR No. 13231,
a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for
the State of California.

1 Los Angeles, California, Wednesday, September 12, 2007

2 6:15 p.m.

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5 MS. PERRY: Thanks everybody for coming out, and I
6 appreciate you taking time out of your personal time to
7 come on over here. I also want to thank our Commissioner,
8 Valerie Shaw -- the Commissioner for the Department of
9 Public Works, and the two engineering companies, Psomas
10 and CDM.

11 These are the folks that have been working hard
12 on this project to ensure the South Los Angeles Wetlands
13 Project moves forward with milestones such as proper
14 environmental documentation and communicating directly
15 with the community.

16 The reason that we're pursuing this is we want
17 to get rid of as much blight as possible and to turn
18 blighted property into positive opportunity for the
19 community. What is before you tonight is a proposal to
20 construct a 4 1/2-acre wetland within a 9-acre park on a
21 former MTA bus repair yard. So it's going to be making
22 green out of concrete and asphalt, and a place for folks
23 to take their families and children, and to learn more
24 about nature, and just basically enjoy yourselves and be
25 outside.

Article from Bureau of Engineering newsletter
on the groundbreaking ceremony

Newsletter

South LA Wetlands Park Groundbreaking Former MTA Rail Yard to be Transformed into Open Green Space

On June 11, 2009, the groundbreaking ceremony was held for the South Los Angeles Wetlands Park, 5413 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, 90011, site of a former MTA bus yard. The master of ceremonies was City Engineer **Gary Lee Moore**. Among the speakers at the event were Councilmember Jan Perry, Public Works Commissioner Valerie Lynne Shaw, Bureau of Sanitation Director Enrique Zaldivar, Recreation & Parks General Manager Jon Kirk Mukri, Regional Water Quality Control Board Vice Chair Madelyn Glickfield, and community representative Carol Black.

The project will build a 9-acre park, containing a 4.5 acre treatment wetland, riparian habitat, open park space, boardwalks, trails, and educational signage. The treatment wetlands will be supplied by stormwater runoff from a 525-acre watershed upstream of this site. Treated stormwater will flow to the Los Angeles River. The project will transform the historic MTA rail yard into open green park space.

The newest wetland park is expected to provide residents with a "green haven" adorned with native trees, shrubs, plants, a small lake, a community center, and other features. Nestled in the middle of a residential community with two schools - Dorothy Johnson High School and the Los Angeles Academy Middle School - the park will also include signage describing various plants and wildlife that will serve as an outdoor classroom.



1 to r: Jeff Catalano (CD9) Sean Vargas (Psomas), Shahram Kharaghani (BOS), Cynthia Ruiz (DPW), Enrique Zaldivar (BOS), Adel Hagekhalil (BOS), Traci Minamide (BOS), John Saldin (BOE), Francine Diamond (Prop O COAC), Charlene Coney (RAP), Charles Modica (CLA), Councilmember Jan Perry, Gary Lee Moore (BOE), Valerie Lynne Shaw (DPW), Kendrick Okuda (BOE), Katherine Clark (BOE), Chris Cox (BCA), Julie Allen (BOE), Mike Mullin (Mayor's Office), Frank Miller (BOE)

"The Ninth District represents a mere 14-square miles of the City yet houses over 250,000 people," said Councilmember Jan Perry at the groundbreaking. "It is one of the most densely populated communities in Los Angeles and the need for green, recreational space is present and immediate. Parcels of land this size is rare and expensive to ac-

quire; this is a unique opportunity to bring a one-of-kind nature center to the heart of the Ninth District."

Major funding for this project comes from Proposition O, the City's Clean Water Bond, approved by voters in 2004, to build improvements to clean up the City's rivers,

continued on page 2



Rendering of a portion of the future South L.A. Wetlands Park.



City Engineer Gary Lee Moore speaking at the event.