

TONGVA PARK + KEN GENSER SQUARE

Sustainability | James Corner Field Operations

Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square embody a new type of urban landscape that is active, innovative, resource-conscious, and natural. The sustainability of the parks can be measured not only in terms of ecology, water, energy, and materials; but also in terms of social vibrancy as places that promote the health and wellbeing of the people who experience them.

Ecology

Transformed from a flat parking lot into a series of topographically dynamic meadows and gardens, the most dramatic aspect of the site has been the restoration of its ecosystem. Over three hundred carefully selected new trees, thousands of new plants, and hundreds of different California native and appropriately adapted species are part of the project's abundant and ambitious planting scheme. Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square are one of the first large scale contemporary urban projects to highlight California native plants as significant horticultural features.

Beyond just plants, the parks have been fundamentally modeled on healthy, native environments whose interconnected botanical, hydrologic, topographic, and agronomic systems work to provide restored ecosystem services to the site. New forest types and amended soils respond to micro-climates and showcase a diversity of species well-suited to different parts of the project. They include an Oak and Olive mix, a Western Sycamore mix and a Torrey Pine mix. In addition, new Figs and Palms strengthen the presence of these existing trees on site. Dramatic specimen trees punctuate the landscape by providing color and horticultural interest while hundreds of grasses, bulbs wildflowers, native shrubs, succulents and display gardens also respond to the sites varied microclimates to produce a diverse, lush, and striking understory.

Water

Plant, tree, and turf areas are irrigated using water from the nearby Santa Monica Urban Runoff Recycling Facility (SMURRF) water reclamation facility. Irrigated water and stormwater are maintained on site through the natural movement of water into bioswales at the base of almost every hill in the park. Daily water consumption for the irrigated park landscape and turf areas and the water features is less than the City average. Water features use potable water and biological filtration within closed recirculating systems which only consume water through evaporation. The water play area uses potable water which drains into a water reserve where it is treated for use, as needed, in the Ocean Avenue water feature.

Energy

Park lighting is the primary energy consumer within the park and square. Energy demands have been kept to an extreme minimum with LED and other efficient fixtures and technologies.

Materials

Materials for the Park and Square consist of non-tropical hardwoods that have been sustainably forested, local aggregates and stone, numerous products with recycled content, low VOC paints, sealants, and adhesives and soy-based anti-graffiti coatings.

Human Health

Apart from the physical aspects of the site, the social sustainability of the project is uniquely high. The Park and Square provides a range of social spaces, quiet contemplative spaces, and promotes human health through a series of walking trails and loops, bike parking areas, and inclusive play spaces for all ages and abilities.

