

News Release

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West Sacramento City Council Approves Agreements with California State Parks for California Indian Heritage Center

SACRAMENTO – The West Sacramento City Council has approved an agreement with California State Parks for the development of the California Indian Heritage Center in West Sacramento.

At its meeting on June 18, the Council voted 4 – 0 for an agreement that places the new State Park museum and cultural heritage complex at the 43 acre “East Riverfront” property located along the Sacramento River. The property is currently owned by the city of West Sacramento and its Redevelopment Agency.

The property is located directly across from the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers, and will include the core facilities of the California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC), a cultural facility honoring the past, present and future of California Indian people and their culture. A key to achieving the vision of the CIHC will be the graceful integration of programming, facilities, and other improvements into the natural landscape that exists at the site.

“We are pleased by the twin opportunities of bringing safe public access to one of the most treasured natural places on the urban waterfront by honoring the culture and heritage of its first people,” said West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon. “With these key agreements in place, we bring together the city’s spectacular site with a significant investment in a statewide project by State Parks and the CIHC Task Force/Foundation. West Sacramento proudly welcomes the CIHC to our riverfront.”

California State Parks and the California Indian Heritage Center Task Force have been planning for a new facility for the past few years, with selection of the West Sacramento site being named the preferred site by the Task Force just late last summer.

“The West Sacramento site, at the confluence of two major rivers, is a place of significance to California Indian people. This beautiful and distinctive location along the river will honor our heritage by placing the CIHC within California’s state capital region. We are honored to partner with the City of West Sacramento, California State Parks and the California Indian community on this exciting opportunity to create a home befitting the important contribution of California Indian culture to our state,” explained Larry Myers, chairman of the California Indian Heritage Task Force and Foundation.

The Master Agreement, and associated agreements approved by the City Council outline a formal process for planning the project. This process will include extensive public participation through the development of a General Plan for the facility and park to define key aspects of the project. Of particular concern to the local community and the Council were issues related to visitation, traffic and transportation, safety and security, and design. All of these issues will be further refined through the public process to commence this summer and expected to conclude by the end of 2010. The completion and adoption of the General Plan is a prerequisite to formal donation and transfer of title to the land to State Parks.

The CIHC is a collaborative partnership among the CIHC Task Force, California State Parks, California Indian people, the City of West Sacramento, the City and County of Sacramento, and a new nonprofit foundation (CIHC Foundation) established to support the project. Following the completion of the General Plan, the project will move into specific design development and construction, with anticipated opening of phase one within five to ten years.

“State Parks is delighted to have the City of West Sacramento as its partner in developing the California Indian Heritage Center. West Sacramento’s generous donation of riverfront land will help bring this project to fruition allowing us to offer all Californians an opportunity to learn of the rich contributions of California Indian people. I am appreciative of the work of the California Indian Heritage Task Force and Foundation, the California Indian people and the community and City Council of West Sacramento in moving this project forward,” said California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman.

The West Sacramento site is planned to include a library, archives, tribal treasures exhibit space, resident artist space, offices, classrooms, a café, museum store, amphitheatre and event space, indigenous gardens, trails, public access to the Sacramento River, and parking. The CIHC will also make use of the Northgate property in the American River Parkway, within the City and County of Sacramento, for certain outdoor interpretive components of the project. The Northgate area is envisioned to be an outdoor interpretive center, with trails, native gardens, and demonstration areas.

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