

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Division of Boating and Waterways | Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | Office of Historic Preservation

For Immediate Release

Sept. 24, 2018

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California State Parks Begins Construction of New Outdoor Space at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park *Space Coming to Old Town Fall 2019*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – After over 20 years of visioning and planning, California State Parks, Senator President pro Tempore Toni Atkins and partners today announced the transformation of a Caltrans District 11 Office Complex (Complex) in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park (Old Town) into a new public open space. The new open space is expected to open fall 2019. Visitors will have the opportunity to connect with nature, family and friends, and learn about Old Town’s residents and the Kumeyaay people and their relationship to the San Diego River.

Located within California’s second largest city, Old Town pays tribute to the cultural influences that make San Diego and California special. Restored and reconstructed buildings include museums, shops and restaurants that capture the energy of the community between 1821 and 1872. History comes to life through period demonstrations, entertainment and other activities, allowing visitors to discover the lives of those who came before them and to better understand California’s beginnings, including the way of life of the Kumeyaay, who were here for thousands of years before Old Town was established and still continue many of their cultural traditions today. More than 10,000 students visit the state historic park annually for educational tours. The park visitation is over 3.5 million annually.

“We are finally going to witness the fall of an old building that has outlived its use and the rise of a magnificent park that respects and reflects San Diego’s rich history,” said Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins. “I am grateful to the tireless work of California State Parks, Caltrans, the Old Town community and everyone who wouldn’t let this dream die.”

Beginning next month, California State Parks will begin demolition of the former Complex built in 1952. The building is located at 2829 Juan Street within the Old Town community of San Diego. The structures will be removed from this approximately 2.5-acre area to create a new public open space.



(From left to right: John Elliott from Manzanita Band/Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy, CalTrans District 11 Director Cory Binns, San Diego City Councilmember Chris Ward, Del Sur Sector State Park Superintendent Richard Dennison, Tina Meza from Jamul Band and Board member for Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy, Senator President pro Tempore Toni Atkins, Kumeyaay elder Kenneth Meza from Jamul Band, San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Ernest "Chuka" Pingleton from Viejas Band and KDLC Board Secretary, Assemblymember Todd Gloria, former Senator Christine Kehoe, and Vice Chair of Old Town San Diego Chamber of Commerce Chuck Ross)

With a budget of nearly \$5.9 million, the new outdoor space will include:

- Interpretive elements such as a Native American interpretive public gathering area, displays and art features, lighting, and benches.
- Basic landscaping such as native trees, shrubs and ground covering, and bio-swale.
- Enhanced pedestrian circulation system with stabilized accessible pathways,
- Shade ramadas.
- Parking, including accessible spaces.

“We are thrilled to begin this project, which is the result of many community partners and local and state officials having a vision for this area,” said Richard Dennison, Del Sur Sector Superintendent at San Diego Coast District. “What makes this project so unique is that it is a rare opportunity to expand the boundaries of an urban park that provides a connection to the history of early San Diego.”

Significant work is needed for demolition of the over 100,000 square feet of the former Complex, which will include the removal of hazardous material from inside the buildings. The project will include numerous mitigation measures in compliance with the final CEQA documents including but, not limited to, dust control and monitoring of all ground-disturbing activities by a qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor.

California State Parks is working with the Kumeyaay Nation who developed the Old Town Working Group with representatives from the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy, Kumeyaay Heritage Preservation Committee, Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee, and tribal members from the Barona, Campo, Jamul, Manzanita, Mesa Grande, San Pasqual, Sycuan, and Viejas bands of the Kumeyaay Nation. The Old Town Working Group is

instrumental in providing an opportunity for the Kumeyaay Nation to interpret their culture and their connections to the San Diego River and Old Town San Diego.

For more information on the new open space and the construction project, visit www.parks.ca.gov/CaltransComplex. For information about Old Town, please visit www.parks.ca.gov/OldTownSanDiego.

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Old Town San Diego State Historic Park presents the opportunity to experience the history of early San Diego by providing a connection to the past.

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