



City of Santa Monica NEWS

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PREPARING TO MOVE THE THREE AMIGOS AND THEIR OTHER FRIENDS



Santa Monica — Site preparation work has started for Palisades Garden Walk, the new Civic Center park located on the block bounded by Ocean Avenue, the I-10, Main Street and the future Olympic Drive. To prepare the site for construction, site work is beginning including the removal of parking lot surfaces and fixtures that have been used for employee and event-related parking in recent years.

A tree relocation plan will also be implemented that was approved by the City Council when they approved Design Development Plans for the new park. 76 trees will be protected in their current location, including “Morty” a very large Moreton Bay Fig tree next to the I-10 freeway; 27 trees will be moved and replanted within the park; and 20 palm trees will be moved and replanted off-site out of the coastal zone. Only two trees will be removed and not relocated due to their poor condition. They are Ficus trees that are in a serious state of decline.

The most challenging and dramatic of the tree transplantations will involve the “Three Amigos,” as they have come to be known (see photograph above). The “Three Amigos” are a trio of gigantic Ficus rubiginosa trees that sit directly in the way of the future extension of Olympic Drive between Main and Ocean. Moving trees of this scale requires the contractor to work in two phases. In the first phase of the work, each of the “Three Amigos” will be carefully root pruned and boxed. The “Amigos” will then sit in place for 60 days while their roots adjust and the initial shock wears off. After the 60 days, each tree will be carefully lifted, using a pneumatic lifting system similar to how homes are moved and placed onto a truck bed. They will then be driven about 550 feet from their current location, lowered again using the pneumatic lifting system and planted based on the approved park design.

Other trees on-site will be either pruned and boxed, or pruned and wrapped in burlap, and moved to final planting locations. A group of 20 Washingtonia robusta palm trees will be transported to Woodlawn Cemetery and planted there as Coastal Commission policy prevents the City from replanting these anywhere within the coastal zone, including the park site. Construction updates and photographs will be posted on the project web site www.smciviccenterparks.com so members of the public can follow the progress of the park's construction.

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