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## **SANTA MONICA’S TONGVA PARK AND KEN GENSER SQUARE SELECTED AS “FRONTLINE PARKS” BY CITY PARKS ALLIANCE**

Washington, D.C. – Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square located in Santa Monica, CA, have been named “Frontline Parks” by the national urban park advocacy organization City Parks Alliance.

Each month, City Parks Alliance recognizes a “Frontline Park” to promote and highlight inspiring examples of urban park excellence, innovation, and stewardship across the country. The program also seeks to highlight examples of the challenges facing our cities’ parks as a result of shrinking municipal budgets, land use pressures, and urban neighborhood decay.

“We selected Santa Monica’s Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square for recognition because they exemplify the power of urban parks to build community and make our cities sustainable and vibrant,” said Catherine Nagel, Executive Director, City Parks Alliance. “We hope that, by shining the spotlight on these parks, we can raise awareness about both the necessity and the promise of public open space to spur investment in our nation’s urban parks.”

Built on a site previously occupied by the RAND Corporation’s headquarters and more recently a surface parking lot, Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square encompass seven acres in Santa Monica’s centrally-located civic center. The completion of these parks represents a key step toward completing a plan that re-envisioned the 67-acre civic center area as a vibrant new neighborhood. The parks provide critical links between this area and the iconic Santa Monica Pier, Palisades Park, downtown, and Santa Monica State Beach.

Tongva Park, named for the indigenous people who have lived in the Los Angeles area for thousands of years, boasts hundreds of trees, a playground, public art, water features, and observation decks that offer views of the Pacific Ocean. The park is very open, with seven different entrances, integrating seamlessly into the fabric of the surrounding area. Designed by James Corner’s Field Operations landscape architecture firm, known for their work on the elevated High Line in New York City, the design is meant to recall the Southern California arroyo landscape of washes and ravines. With dramatic rising and falling topography, the park is

organized into four thematic hills, providing different experiences for visitors. The natural feel of the park even extends to the restrooms, which are tucked into a large hill and feature an open layout with generous entrances and a large open skylight providing natural ventilation.

The arroyo theme continues through the one-acre Ken Genser Square, located in front of the landmark City Hall and named in honor of a long-serving Councilmember and Mayor of Santa Monica. Though much smaller and more formal than its neighbor, the new plaza is more than just a space to pass through when going to City Hall for permits and business licenses; seating areas and a water feature make it a great place to sit and have lunch or to enjoy the sunshine.

Although the parks have only been open for a few months, they have already enriched the community significantly and become a magnet for visitors from outside the neighborhood who come to enjoy the quiet spaces, walking trails, and inclusive play areas.

“We are honored that Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square have received national recognition by the City Parks Alliance as Frontline Parks,” said Santa Monica Mayor Pam O’Connor.

“Through creative use of space, the parks have transformed a flat asphalt lot into a magical oasis amid our urban environment. Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square provide welcome respite and enhance the wellbeing of people of all ages – residents, visitors, and area workers alike.”

Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square are being featured on CPA’s website, [www.cityparksalliance.org](http://www.cityparksalliance.org), during the month of January.

The “Frontline Parks” program is made possible with generous support from DuMor, Inc. ([www.dumor.com](http://www.dumor.com)) and PlayCore ([www.playcore.com](http://www.playcore.com)).

### **About City Parks Alliance**

*City Parks Alliance is the only independent, nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks. It leads and serves a community of diverse organizations, championing high quality urban parks throughout the nation. CPA’s vision is that everyone in urban America will have access to parks and green spaces that are clean, safe and vibrant.*

[www.cityparksalliance.org](http://www.cityparksalliance.org)

### **About the City of Santa Monica**

*Santa Monica, California is located on eight square miles along Santa Monica Bay in Southern California. The City of Santa Monica’s open space system includes 26 parks located in neighborhoods throughout the city, award-winning public facilities like the Annenberg Community Beach House and the Santa Monica Swim Center, as well as Santa Monica State Beach – an iconic destination that draws visitors from around the globe.*

[www.smgov.net/parks](http://www.smgov.net/parks)