



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles**

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

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CONTACT: Joe Ramallo
213-978-0741
Elizabeth Kivowitz
P: (323) 526-3059
M: (310) 439-0005

**MAYOR BREAKS GROUND ON 140-ACRE PARK; LARGEST OPEN
SPACE ON LA'S EASTSIDE**

Los Angeles, CA (November 1, 2005) -- Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, CD14, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), and the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks today hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for Ascot Hills Park, the largest passive park and open space on LA's Eastside.

In February, then-Councilmember Villaraigosa announced a \$3 million state grant had been secured to convert Ascot Hills, located between El Sereno and Hillside Village, into a 140-acre passive park, offering hiking and nature trails, an outdoor learning center for children, as well as open grass areas with trees.

Partnering with the MRCA, a public entity dedicated to the preservation and management of local open space and the group that will manage the new park, Villaraigosa authored the \$3 million grant in January 2004 and coordinated a grassroots letter-writing campaign that sent thousands of letters to Governor Schwarzenegger. The grant was secured from Proposition 40, the "California Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002."

Villaraigosa and the MRCA pursued the grant in response to local residents', students', and environmentalists' efforts to block various proposals to develop the area for other uses.

"The groundbreaking of this 140-acre park is an historic moment for this community," said Mayor Villaraigosa. "The effort was a great example of what can be accomplished when the community and elected officials work together towards a common goal – in this case, preserving green, open space for the public to enjoy."

After holding a town hall meeting on the idea and submitting the grant application, the Councilmember's office, along with the Center for Law in the Public Interest, generated 6,000 letters from the public to the governor in support of the project that faced stiff competition from numerous other proposals. The Councilmember also met with the governor's Chief of Staff in September 2004 to further lobby for the funding.

Until recently, the site has been used by the DWP to train pole climbers and repairmen.

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