



Occidental Petroleum makes donation to fund \$7.95-million Chittick Field sports-park project in Long Beach , CA. !

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Park-goers can look forward to a better place to play sports thanks to a sizable donation from a local oil company and various public-funding sources.

Long Beach, CA city officials announced Monday, March 11 that Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) gave a \$1-million contribution to nonprofit Partners of Parks, which has handed the money over to the City of Long Beach. The donation helps fund a multi-phase project to upgrade facilities and build a new sports park at Chittick Field, which has been in the works in numerous forms for nearly two decades.

The private-sector support now puts the grand total of funding for phase 1 of the project at \$7.95 million, according to Jane Grobaty, spokesperson for the Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine Department. The major portion of the project includes adding two youth soccer fields, an adult soccer field, a regulation football field, a 400-meter all-weather track-and-field track, a 136-vehicle parking lot, new restrooms, a bike path connecting to the Pacific Electric Right of Way Bike Path, a low-flow drainage system and a new pump station with storm-water treatment features.

“Occidental Petroleum’s donation will go a long ways toward revitalizing Chittick Field and the community as well,” said 6th District Long Beach Councilmember Dee Andrews, who added that he hopes the project will someday be comparable to the Home Depot Center in the City of Carson. “You have to understand, we want the best, and that’s why we’re getting it.”

Construction at the 19-acre site, located near Signal Hill, just north of Pacific Coast Highway, between Walnut and Cherry avenues, is expected to start next month, kicking off one of “the largest park projects” in Long Beach in several years, city officials said. The project has been on hold since last October due to restrictions on development during the “rainy season.” The site currently serves as a Los Angeles County storm-water detention basin.

In addition to the \$1-million donation, the City has secured a \$4.3-million grant from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, \$50,000 from the City’s fiscal-year 2012 operating funds and \$700,000 from the City’s 2006 open-space bond for design, Grobaty stated. She added that a \$1.86-million grant from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District is still pending approval. Previous city staff reports state that the City had first applied for county grants in 1992. Grobaty added, however, that, “currently, no funding source has been identified for future phases of construction.”

First developed in the 1930s as a storm-water detention basin, the site, commonly referred to as Hamilton Bowl, has been used for baseball and soccer games during the summer months for close to 60 years. The field, however, has been left in disarray over the years and continues to deteriorate, according to city officials. “Even though it has fallen into dire straits, Chittick Field remains popular with our community,” Andrews said. “They’re still here. They’re still playing. They come every day and every weekend, but this community needs something more, and these 19 acres will soon be another jewel in the city.”





Occidental Petroleum makes donation

The project to build a sports park at **Chittick Field** was resurrected after a much grander proposal for a Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center, which was first proposed nearly eight years ago, was cancelled in 2010. That project, once estimated to cost nearly \$140 million, would have included a gymnasium and swimming pools. In addition, a larger sports park was proposed at a nearby vacant 47-acre property at Spring Street and Orange Avenue. Chittick Field, however, was deemed the most appropriate location after the community and city officials determined the other site, once called California Gardens and now called Willow Springs Park, would be better suited for passive and active uses of wetlands restoration, multi-use trails, a dog park and a BMX bike track. During the donation-announcement ceremony, Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster acknowledged Councilmember Andrews's "tenacity" to keep the project alive and applauded Oxy's interest in funding a project that would help improve park facilities in a neighborhood that lacks open space.

"Occidental Petroleum's act of great corporate citizenship will benefit families in our community for years to come," Foster said. "It's going to turn it into a world-class sporting facility right in the heart of the city that is desperate for open space."

Frank E. Komin, president and general manager of Thums Long Beach Company and Tidelands Oil Production Company, taken over by Oxy in 2000, said the project is consistent with the values of the City and the oil company. Oxy, which currently provides as many as 1,000 local jobs, operates offshore and onshore oil production in the Wilmington Oil Field.

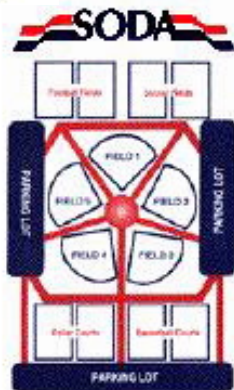
"We thought it was a good opportunity to fund what would be a really good cause," he said, adding that the oil operator has partnered with the City in oil production for more than a decade. "Here's a situation where you have a place that can advance education, advance youth, advance fitness and advance community development. Those are all things important to the City, and we're just happy to be a partner ... in contributing the money along with the County of Los Angeles."

In a prepared statement, Stephen I. Chazen, president and CEO of Oxy, said, "Oxy is proud to be a part of the Long Beach community. Our contribution to Partners of Parks for revitalizing Chittick Field is a reflection of our successful partnership with the City of Long Beach and our commitment to our neighbors in Long Beach."



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