

THE VENICE FLYING CAROUSEL

Venice Themed Public Art / Playground Equipment

A Proposal for Centennial Park



“fabulous... This is just so lovely and such a gift. It looks to me like an amazing contribution to the community and our park system.”

Robert Vinson, Commission President
LA Cultural Affairs Commission
Voluntary Conceptual Review
December 10, 2025



scan for Carousel
video clip

THE VENICE FLYING CAROUSEL



This “human-powered merry-go-round is interactive public art at its finest, serving up a children’s amusement-park attraction with a side of Venice history...”

Adam Tschorn, LA Times

Abbot Kinney’s creative vision of arts and amusement is recreated with the beautiful hand-carved old school charm, and ingenious new world sustainable technology of the Venice Flying Carousel. It’s a beacon of creativity and delight inviting all to enjoy Centennial Park.

Friends, neighbors and visitors to Venice meet at the Carousel. It’s a magical community gathering destination, an inspiring compliment to the Venice Public Library, and a uniquely delightful Venice of America attraction for Centennial Park.

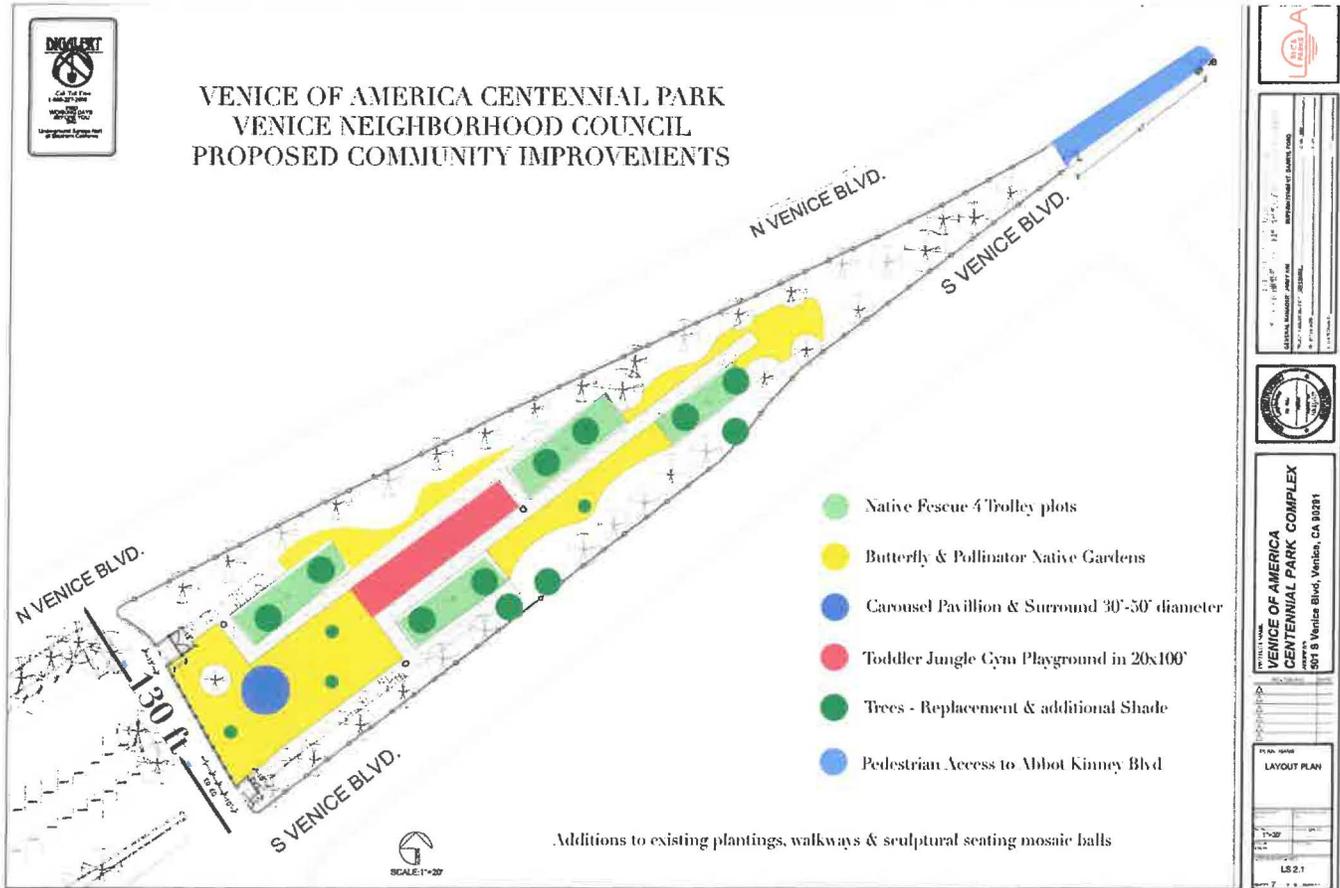
COMMUNITY BENEFITS:

- Activation of a prominent walkable green space with “magical” art, play and cultural history.
- Free: All rides are free and the Carousel is public art visible 24/7 guaranteed by the Carousel Corp 501c3 endowment.
- Educational Opportunities: It’s STEAM: Simple mechanics demonstrate science, technology, and engineering principles while artistic carvings animate stories of Venice’s cultural heritage.
- Special Needs / ADA / School: Centennial Park becomes a welcome destination for Special Needs individuals and organizations, schools, and neighborhood community groups.
- Financial Benefit: RAP & City funds are not required to provide this premier attraction for the community and visitors.

PROJECT STATUS:

- Fully constructed, funded, permitted (Cal-OSHA), insured, and ADA-compliant. The Carousel has been operating for over 2-1/2 years. Its mobile mechanism enables easy installation in Centennial Park. Its park Pavilion and all ongoing costs are fully funded by the Carousel Corp.
- Design, engineering, operations, maintenance and staffing by the Carousel Corp Cal-OSHA Amusement Park Ride division approved standards, procedures, regulations and training.
- Supported by LA Cultural Affairs Commission, in addition to the Venice Neighborhood Council, the Venice Librarians, Venice Mom’s, the Chamber, and well over 1000 neighbors.
- **Adopt A Park Option:** the Carousel Corp offers to fund additional amenities in Centennial Park approved by the City, such as: a playground, butterfly garden and trees.
- **The Carousel 501(c)(3) seeks approval for its temporary installation in Centennial Park, within its secure pavilion.**

OPTION: ADOPT A PARK



The Carousel Corporation 501c3 offers to fund additional approved amenities in Centennial Park.

An outdoor playground (conceptually approved by RAP), butterfly garden, restored Trolley Car lawns, trees and access to Abbot Kinney Boulevard (conceptually approved by DOT) have been requested by the community and supported by the Venice Neighborhood Council.

Together with the Carousel, these amenities will bring the park to life for all residents and visitors to enjoy!

Art - Play - Cultural History - Nature - Connectivity



**FIRE RELIEF
POP-UP
EVENT**

If you are 60+ and were displaced by the LA fires, register to visit our Fire Relief Pop-Up and get FREE resources to help in the recovery process.



GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The actual grass may soon be greener after Council rejects turf fields

The Santa Monica City Council unanimously approved a 25-year Parks and Recreation Vision Plan but amended a key policy to re-evaluate existing artificial turf fields for potential replacement with natural grass alternatives at the end of their lifespan.

by **MAAZ ALIN**



Photo Credit: City of Santa Monica

Published: February 02, 2026, 3:00 am

↪ Last updated: February 02, 2026, 9:19 am

💬 5 comments | 📤 Share

The Santa Monica City Council unanimously approved a comprehensive 25-year Parks and Recreation Vision Plan early Wednesday, but not before amending a controversial policy on artificial turf fields that sparked passionate debate from students and environmental advocates.

The council voted 7-0 to adopt the plan with a key modification: existing artificial turf fields will be re-evaluated at the end of their natural life to determine if durable natural grass alternatives may feasibly replace them, rather than automatically being replaced with artificial turf as staff had originally proposed.

Council Member Jesse Zwick proposed the amendment after hearing from numerous Santa Monica High School students from "Team Marine," parents and the Commission on Sustainability who urged the council to ban artificial turf entirely due to concerns about heat islands, microplastics and chemical exposure.

"I sympathize with the kids as a person who played soccer, and the turf fields, I think are worse in most respects," Zwick said. "They do get hot. They do lead to more injuries. They do leave nasty burns when you slide."

The vision plan establishes a goal of achieving 5 park acres per 1,000 residents over the next 25 years. Santa Monica currently offers 144 park acres, equating to roughly 1.55 acres per 1,000 residents – below the Los Angeles County average of 3.3 acres and significantly below the National Recreation and Park Association's recommendation of 6 to 10 acres for cities with populations between 100,000 and 250,000.

Senior Park Planner Antonio Lopez told the council that 96% of survey respondents visit a park, arts or recreation facility in a typical year – 15% above the national average. Additionally, 49% participate in a city program or event annually, 13% above the national average.

The artificial turf debate dominated much of the discussion. Staff had proposed a compromise policy: no new artificial turf fields would be installed, existing grass fields would remain grass, but the two existing artificial turf fields at Airport Park and Belmar Park would be replaced with artificial turf when they reach the end of their lifespan.

City Architect Amelia Feichtner explained that staff's recommendations focused on maintaining adequate playable field access for youth sports programs while exploring more durable natural grass systems. She noted that artificial turf fields allow for consistent playability and significantly greater usage with fewer weather- and maintenance-related closures.

However, Council Member Zwick noted that the city's own Environmental Impact Report for Memorial Park found that using grass "would avoid the use of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAs and microplastics that have potential to degrade over time, resulting in potential contamination of water and soil and potential adverse effects on human health."

Council Member Dan Hall initially offered a substitute motion to keep staff's original recommendation, expressing concern that immediately transitioning Airport Park's artificial turf field to grass would reduce capacity for high-intensity adult sports like soccer, rugby and football. But he withdrew his motion after Zwick clarified that the amendment allows staff to determine what's feasible based on research results.

"As long as feasibility includes we are heavily weighing loss in adult sports time as well for high intensity sports, then I'm fine with that," Hall said.

Council members also directed staff to study how streets and even the Interstate 10 freeway could potentially be utilized for public recreational purposes. Council Member Ellis Raskin advocated for "reusing the freeway land for a public good, for public parks."

"Let's not cap it. Let's get rid of it," Raskin said, noting the idea has worked in other cities.

The plan, which updates the city's 1997 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, establishes eight principles including nourishing existing parks, expanding new parkland, connecting open space and supporting funding partnerships. It proposes a vision of "City as Habitat" – reinforcing the city's parks and open spaces as nourishing habitat for people, plants, animals and programming.

Santa Monica sustainability commission votes to favor natural replacements over turf; directs staff to seek durable grass alternatives

Commission on Sustainability, Environmental Justice, and the Environment · November 20, 2025



Office of Sustainability, Environmental Justice & the Environment

Commission Meeting November 17th, 2025

[View Full Meeting](#)

[Share](#)

AI-Generated Content: All content on this page was generated by AI to highlight key points from the meeting. For complete details and context, we recommend watching the full video. [Please report any errors](#) so we can fix them.

[Article](#) 

Summary

After extensive public comment about health and environmental risks of synthetic turf, the commission unanimously approved a motion: no new artificial turf on city-owned sports fields, maintain existing grass



fields as grass, and, when turf fields reach end of life, seek bids for durable natural alternatives rather than automatically replacing with turf.

The commission debated city staff's proposed policy on artificial turf and natural grass for city-owned sports fields and, after extended public comment and staff briefing, passed a motion directing staff to change the replacement approach for existing turf.

Public speakers—including Diane Wolke of Safe Healthy Playlands, neighborhood coalition leaders and sports advocates—urged the commission to ban synthetic turf on environmental and health grounds. Wolke told commissioners that regulators and environmental groups have raised concerns about microplastics, PFAS and other potential chemical contaminants, and she cited recent moves by outside agencies (including a reference to a California Coastal Commission precaution regarding synthetic turf permits) and Los Angeles Unified School District consideration of transitions away from turf.

Amelia Feichner, city architect and lead staff on the proposal, described the staff analysis and policy approach focused on city-owned sports fields: staff recommended no new artificial turf installations on city fields, maintaining existing grass fields as grass, pursuing natural-field pilots to improve playability, and retaining artificial turf for high-intensity rectangular fields if replacement is required but only with strong safeguards (batch testing for chemical thresholds, drainage control, walk-off mats and long-term monitoring). Feichner said staff's lifecycle cost analysis showed grass and turf can be roughly comparable over the field lifetime when installation, maintenance and replacement are considered.

Commission Chair Dean Koubani proposed an edited motion that removed the staff's fallback of replacing end-of-life turf with new artificial turf and instead directed that, when existing turf fields reach the end of their useful life, the city should solicit bids for durable natural alternatives and commit to phasing turf out where practicable. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

In discussion, commissioners pressed staff on whether local testing of runoff or outgassing had been done (staff said they had reviewed the literature but had not conducted local testing), pilot-testing opportunities for higher-performance natural grass blends, and filtration and mitigation measures for any existing turf replacements. Staff said the internal task force will reconvene to review public comment and bring an information item to City Council; the commission also discussed outreach to ensure the commission's position is communicated to council.

Action taken: the commission voted to (1) support no new artificial turf on city-owned sports fields; (2) keep existing grass fields as grass; and (3) require that when artificial turf fields reach end of life the city pursue durable natural alternatives in replacement bids. Commissioners recorded the motion and it passed unanimously.

City Architect Amelia Feichtner explained that staff's recommendations focused on maintaining adequate playable field access for youth sports programs while exploring more durable natural grass systems. She noted that artificial turf fields allow for consistent playability and significantly greater usage with fewer weather- and maintenance-related closures.

However, Council Member Zwick noted that the city's own Environmental Impact Report for Memorial Park found that using grass "would avoid the use of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAs and microplastics that have potential to degrade over time, resulting in potential contamination of water and soil and potential adverse effects on human health."

Council Member Dan Hall initially offered a substitute motion to keep staff's original recommendation, expressing concern that immediately transitioning Airport Park's artificial turf field to grass would reduce capacity for high-intensity adult sports like soccer, rugby and football. But he withdrew his motion after Zwick clarified that the amendment allows staff to determine what's feasible based on research results.

"As long as feasibility includes we are heavily weighing loss in adult sports time as well for high intensity sports, then I'm fine with that," Hall said.

Council members also directed staff to study how streets and even the Interstate 10 freeway could potentially be utilized for public recreational purposes. Council Member Ellis Raskin advocated for "reusing the freeway land for a public good, for public parks."

"Let's not cap it. Let's get rid of it," Raskin said, noting the idea has worked in other cities.

The plan, which updates the city's 1997 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, establishes eight principles including nourishing existing parks, expanding new parkland, connecting open space and supporting funding partnerships. It proposes a vision of "City as Habitat" – reinforcing the city's parks and open spaces as nourishing habitat for people, plants, animals and programming.

