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## **California City Solutions: Long Beach Turns Dust Bowl into Sports Facility with Chittick Field Renovation**

*This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2015 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). The city of Long Beach's Chittick Field Renovation was submitted in 2015 for the Planning and Environmental Quality award category.*

The city of Long Beach is home to nearly 460,000 residents and 3,125 acres of recreational open space within 51.4 square miles, which is unevenly distributed due to patterns of population growth over the last century. More than 6,000 youth participate bi-annually in sports leagues and 4,000 adults annually. In 2012, the city decided to embark on a year-long project to revitalize its Chittick Field resulting in the construction of a football field, a 400-meter all-weather track, three soccer fields as well as the installation of new restrooms, a bleacher area, sports lighting, irrigation and a 134-space parking lot. *For more, see Page 2.*



## **Top Policy Experts Address Key to California's Water Future during March 17 Water Foundation Briefing**

*League Executive Director Chris McKenzie Will Participate on Water Infrastructure Financing Panel*

The Water Foundation's Annual [Executive Briefing](#), March 17 in Sacramento, will tackle the toughest water-related issues facing California's with thought-provocative discussions examining the new normal. *For more, see Page 2.*



## **Assembly Passes New Sweeping Tobacco Control Laws; Senate Action Expected Next Week**

*Measures Include Authority to Regulate Electronic Cigarettes in Same Manner as Tobacco*

On Thursday, March 3, the Assembly approved six new tobacco control bills, including measures that would regulate electronic cigarettes as tobacco products, increase the legal smoking age to 21 from 18, and authorize counties to impose local tobacco taxes. *For more, see Page 3.*

Approximately 30 percent of the open space is located in west, central and north Long Beach where 70 percent of the population resides. The remaining 30 percent of residents live in the east and the southern areas of Long Beach enjoying 70 percent of the city's open space.

Developed in 1936 as a flood control detention basin, the 19-acre Chittick Field is located in central Long Beach. It is a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance site for the cities of Long Beach and Signal Hill to manage the discharge of collected water into surface waters.

In 1950, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District authorized Long Beach to improve the basin with five baseball diamonds and a soccer field. By 2000, the irrigation system was deteriorating and returning the fields to dirt, making league play undesirable. The Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine (LBPRM) began planning the next phase of Chittick Field as both an essential recreational asset and a facility to ensure the safety and environmental health of the community.

The Chittick Field renovation stemmed from LBPRM's 2003 Strategic Plan, developed with input from city advisory groups, the mayor, city council and focus groups. With a lack of open space in central Long Beach, the upgrading of dilapidated Chittick Field was prioritized as a project that would ease the demand for sports fields and provide a safe place to recreate.

To facilitate this significant upgrade of the park, the city of Long Beach and Los Angeles County negotiated the first 99-year lease in the county's history to make this facility available to the community into the next century.

LBPRM successfully applied for \$9.9 million from the Los Angeles County Park and Open Space District and received a \$1 million donation from Occidental Petroleum Corporation. The blend of public and private funds was the fundamental to renovating this critical component of the region's stormwater management system and addressing local recreational needs.

Beginning in September 2012, LBPRM began renovating the 62-year old site with two youth soccer fields and one adult soccer field, a regulation sized football field surrounded by a 400-meter all-weather track and field track, and areas for javelin, pole vault, long jump, and triple jump.

With Chittick Field being an active storm water management facility, construction was held outside of the rainy season. Unwanted structures on the site were demolished and all possible material was recycled. Contractors located bioswales to collect and slowly filter stormwater, which was pumped into a low flow pump house. Dewatering wells and debris were removed and improvements to drainage and stormwater facilities were made to meet trash and bacterial reductions regulations.

Through this project, the Chittick Field site was updated both as a park, as a flood control detention basin and as a NPDES compliance site. Native and drought tolerant landscaping with efficient irrigation were incorporated into the landscaping. Additionally, a bike path within the bowl will connect to the bike trail in the Pacific Electric right-of-way, which will continue to improve upon the city's network of bike trails, and a new lighting system was installed, featuring sports field lights and an energy saving MUSCO control panel.

The grand opening event for the new Chittick Field sports complex was held on April 23, 2014. The site provides the city's first public football field, track and field facility, as well as fills the demand for additional soccer fields. LBPRM plans to expand adult flag football leagues and add a rugby program.

Several teams now call the new facility home including the Long Beach Browns Pop Warner Football League and cheerleading squads, the Latin American Adult Soccer League, Independent and Long Beach Municipal Soccer Leagues for adults, the Greater Long Beach Youth Soccer League and the lacrosse team from the nearby Polytechnic High School.

Hundreds of residents come by every day and night to walk the track. In a population dense neighborhood with little open space and high crime rates, the Chittick Field track has become a well-lighted safe place to exercise while enjoying family, friends and neighbors. The field welcomes roughly 1,000 participants per night.

In addition to permitted sports leagues, LBPRM plans to add youth sports programs at Chittick Field. In August 2014 an "All City" track meet brought 165 youth, ages 9 to 14, from throughout the city to Chittick Field to participate in a daylong track and field meet. The events included the shot put, long jump, vertical jump, 100 meter dash, 800 meter run, mile run, 4 x 100 relay, and the team mile. Additional events in 2014 included: the Long Beach Junior Runners Fitness Challenge and the Youth Sports Flag Football Invitational.

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**'Water Panel' Continued from Page 1...**

The one-day event will feature the following sessions:

- Thriving During Climate and Water Change: Strategies for the 21st Century
- Living with the New Normal: El Niño, Water Supply Realities and Continued Conservation Mandates
- Investing in the Future: Breaking Ground on Funding Sources
- One Year Later: Implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
- State of the Delta: Tunnels, Habitat and More

League Executive Director Chris McKenzie will be part of the Investing in the Future: Breaking Ground on Funding Sources panel.

[Register online.](#)

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**'Tobacco Bills' Continued from Page 1...**

The League of California Cities<sup>®</sup> has long supported the effort to regulate electronic cigarettes in the same manner as traditional tobacco products. Until now, there has been an absence of meaningful regulation at the state or federal level. Over 140 cities and counties in California have filled this void with local ordinances that subject electronic cigarettes to the same regulations as tobacco products.

Lawmakers had heated debates over increasing the legal smoking age to 21 from 18. Many Republican lawmakers strongly objected to separating the legal smoking age from other rights of adulthood like serving on juries or voting.

Under the provisions of ABX 2 10 (Bloom), counties will have new authority to impose taxes on the distribution of tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and vapor devices. Per California constitutional requirements, however, to impose a new tobacco tax, counties must first obtain voter approval. If the funds are designated for a specific purpose, the tobacco tax would require a two-thirds vote.

All of these measures are headed to the Senate for a vote next week, and then will go to Gov. Jerry Brown for his expected signature.

Additional debates over tobacco are expected to occur in November given a proposed statewide ballot initiative sponsored by a coalition of doctors and anti-tobacco advocates seeking to increase the cigarette tax by \$2 per pack tax.