

GRADES of
green

**Manhattan Beach Earth Day
Tree Planting Event**

**Partnership Proposal
Grades of Green
Dr. Kelley Lê Ed.D.
Lisa Coppedge
December 24, 2025**

Proposed Partnership: Manhattan Beach Earth Day Community Tree Planting Event

Grades of Green would like to partner with the City of Manhattan Beach to establish a mutually beneficial collaboration through the implementation of the **Manhattan Beach Earth Day Community Tree Planting Event**, proposed for **Saturday, April 25th, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** This date aligns with both **Earth Day (April 22nd)** and **Arbor Day (April 24th)**.

The goal of this event is to plant **10–15 shade trees** along **Veteran’s Parkway** to enhance community beautification, expand urban tree canopy, and promote environmental stewardship. The event would engage the **MBUSD Green and Garden Teams** from all five elementary schools, Manhattan Beach Middle School, and Mira Costa High School, alongside members of the broader community.

The tree planting would be **open to the entire community** and would include participation from local organizations and nonprofits such as the Manhattan Beach Botanical Garden Team, Leadership Manhattan Beach, local garden clubs, senior citizens, the South Bay Parkland Conservancy, and other community partners.

This collaborative event would foster civic engagement, environmental education, and long-term sustainability while strengthening partnerships between the City, schools, and community organizations.

Estimated Budget

Final costs to be determined following a site visit and planning meeting with the City’s Urban Forester/Arborist. Budget will depend on tree species selection, availability of City-owned materials, and in-kind contributions from partner organizations.

Description	Supplier	Quantity	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Total
Trees (species TBD)	City of Manhattan Beach Urban Forester	10–15	(\$50-500)	TBD
Buckets, gloves, shovels, stakes, rubber ties, mulch, stake hammer, hammer, nails, sharpies	Urban Forester / Local Garden Clubs / Community Partners (borrowed or donated where possible)	~20 sets	(\$0-50)	TBD
Educational Signage	TBD	10	(\$50)	TBD

Project Milestones

Planning & Approvals

- Approval of the project concept, tree locations, species selection, project budget estimates for trees and supplies by the City Urban Forester/Arborist/Public Works
- City and Grades of Green prepared participation waiver and process finalized and approved

Outreach & Promotion

- Development of marketing and outreach content for the event

- Promotion of the Earth Day Tree Planting Event through MBUSD, City of Manhattan Beach, and Grades of Green newsletters, websites, and social media channels
- Grades of Green to invite the MBUSD Green Committee and individual school Green Teams
- Grades of Green to invite additional nonprofit and community partners to participate

Procurement & Preparation

- Purchase of trees by the City Urban Forester/Arborist
- Design and procure educational signage (includes logos for partners, including Grades of Green)
- Coordination between Grades of Green and the Urban Forester/Arborist to prepare and organize trees, tools and supplies

Event Day Execution

- Early event-day setup, including distribution and staging of the trees, gloves, water buckets, mulch buckets, shovels, hammers, nails, rubber ties, stakes, and markers
- Event program flow:
 - Participant check-in and waiver collection
 - Distribution of gloves
 - Group welcome and safety stretch
 - Demonstration of proper tree planting techniques using a model tree
 - Students and community members divided into teams to plant assigned trees
 - On-site assistants stationed at each tree to guide participants
 - Tree naming activity upon completion of each planting
 - Install educational signage

Post-Event & Maintenance

- Ongoing tree maintenance provided by the City Urban Forester/Arborist as part of routine care along Veteran's Parkway

Benefits of the Tree Planting Event

- 1. Environmental Education & Community Engagement**
Educates students and community members about the importance of trees, green spaces, and environmental stewardship through hands-on participation.
- 2. Reduction of the Urban Heat Island Effect**
Expanding tree canopy helps lower surface and ambient temperatures, improving comfort and climate resilience in the community.
- 3. Improved Air Quality & Public Health**
Trees improve air quality by intercepting airborne particulate matter and absorbing air pollutants through leaf stomata.

- According to the City of Manhattan Beach **Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), Section 4-14: Understanding Local Vulnerabilities to Climate Change**, the City experiences high levels of PM 2.5 pollution.
- Figure 4-5 of the CAAP shows that census tracts in the north and east portions of the City experience relatively higher diesel particulate matter (PM) pollution, increasing vulnerability to air-quality-related climate impacts.
- Areas with greater tree canopy experience improved air quality compared to areas with fewer trees, particularly park-poor neighborhoods. Increasing tree coverage helps address these disparities.

4. **Celebration of Manhattan Beach’s Environmental Leadership**

Manhattan Beach is a recognized leader in environmental policy and education, including:

- One of the first California cities to ban plastic bags
- One of the strongest polystyrene (Styrofoam) bans in the country
- Bans on plastic straws and utensils
- MBUSD’s removal of Styrofoam trays, single-use plastic bottles, and utensils from lunch service
- A City Tree Ordinance and Urban Forestry Program focused on tree preservation and expansion

5. **Improved Stormwater Management**

Trees reduce stormwater runoff, increase water infiltration, and help filter pollutants before they enter local waterways.

6. **Advancement of City Tree Canopy Goals**

Directly supports the City’s goal to **increase overall tree canopy by 5% by 2030**, as outlined in City planning documents.

7. **Beautification & Economic Benefits**

Urban trees enhance neighborhood aesthetics, increase property values, and contribute to a more walkable and vibrant public realm.

8. **Alignment with State & County Climate Goals**

Supports:

- The **California 2030 Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan**
- **Los Angeles County’s OurCounty 2035** target, which aims to increase countywide urban tree canopy cover by **15% over the 2016 baseline**

9. **Support for Biodiversity & Access to Nature**

Expands habitat for local wildlife and increases access to natural spaces, particularly trees, for residents of all ages.

10. **Strong Community Support for Tree Planting**

The CAAP **Appendix A: Community Engagement Summary** documents strong public support for tree planting:

- “As seen in previous workshops and focus groups, when given 12 potential options for future climate adaptation strategies for the City, participants gravitated towards green solutions. There was unanimous agreement in planting trees.”

11. Support for Returning to “Tree City USA” Status

- Appendix A of the CAAP (page A-13) notes: “Several participants voiced support to return Manhattan Beach to a ‘Tree City USA.’”
- Manhattan Beach currently meets all but one standard to regain [Tree City USA designation](#). The remaining requirement is hosting an annual education or tree planting event. The four standards are the following: A tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capital, and an Arbor Day Observance/Proclamation/Celebration.
- Neighboring cities such as **Torrance, Lomita, Culver City, and Beverly Hills** are Tree City USA communities, and this event would help Manhattan Beach rejoin them. See Appendix A

Tree Location & Species Selection

Final tree locations and species selection will be determined and approved by the City of Manhattan Beach **Urban Forester/Arborist** to ensure consistency with City standards, infrastructure constraints, and long-term maintenance considerations.

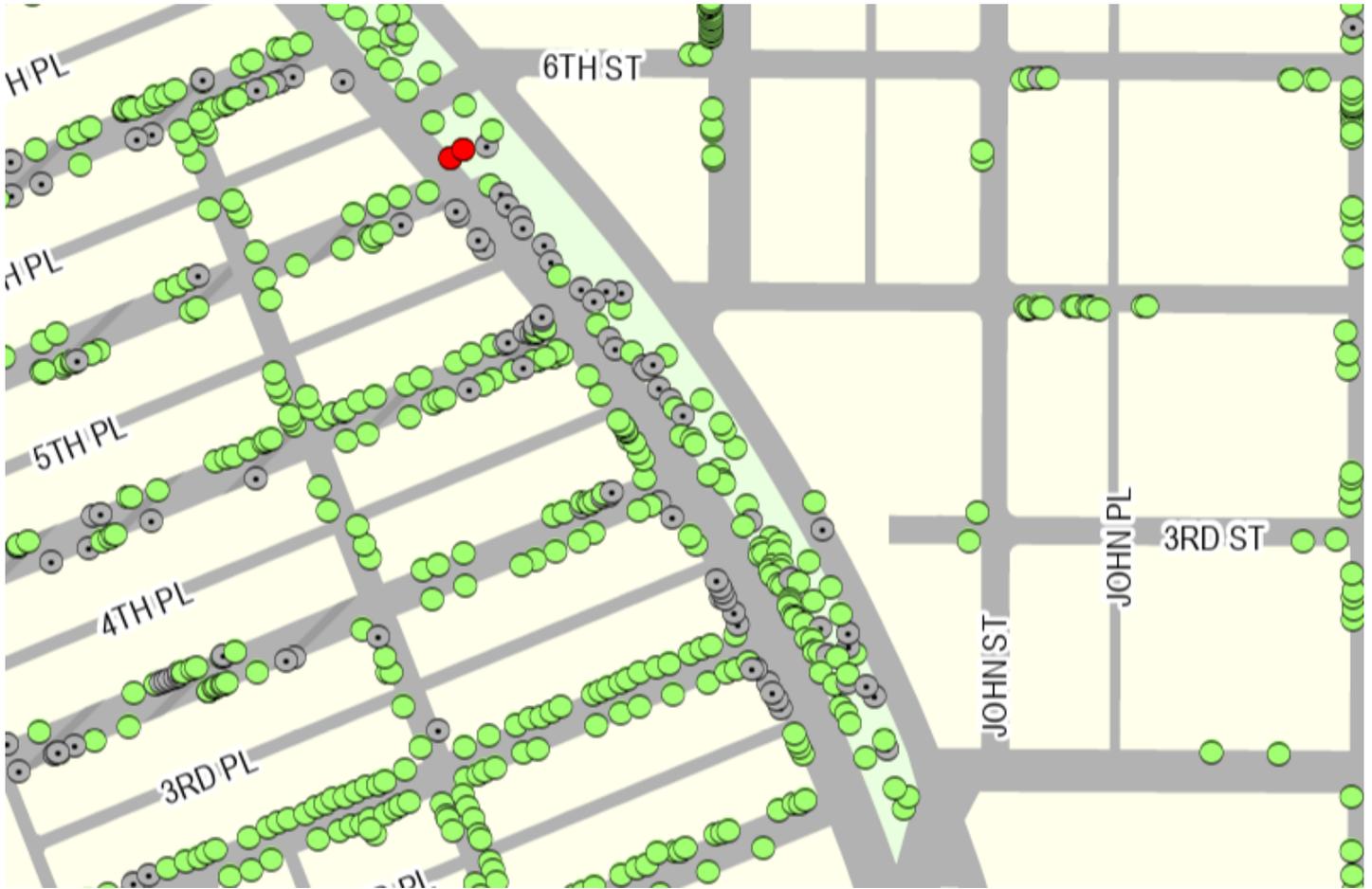
Based on the **Veteran’s Parkway Plan** and the City’s **Tree Map (GIS Map Gallery)**, the two recommended preliminary planting areas include:

- **Veteran’s Parkway: 6th Street to 2nd Street**
- **Veteran’s Parkway: 21st Street to 15th Street**

These locations are identified as suitable starting areas for tree planting, subject to final confirmation by the Urban Forester/Arborist. Refer to the diagrams below for visual reference.

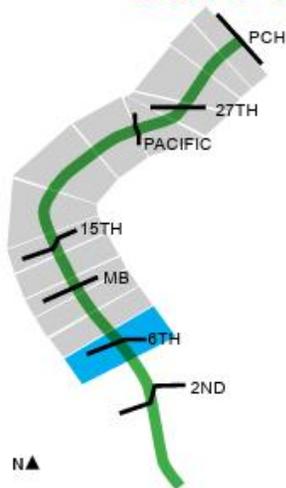
Reference:

City of Manhattan Beach Website – [GIS Map Gallery](#) – Tree Map

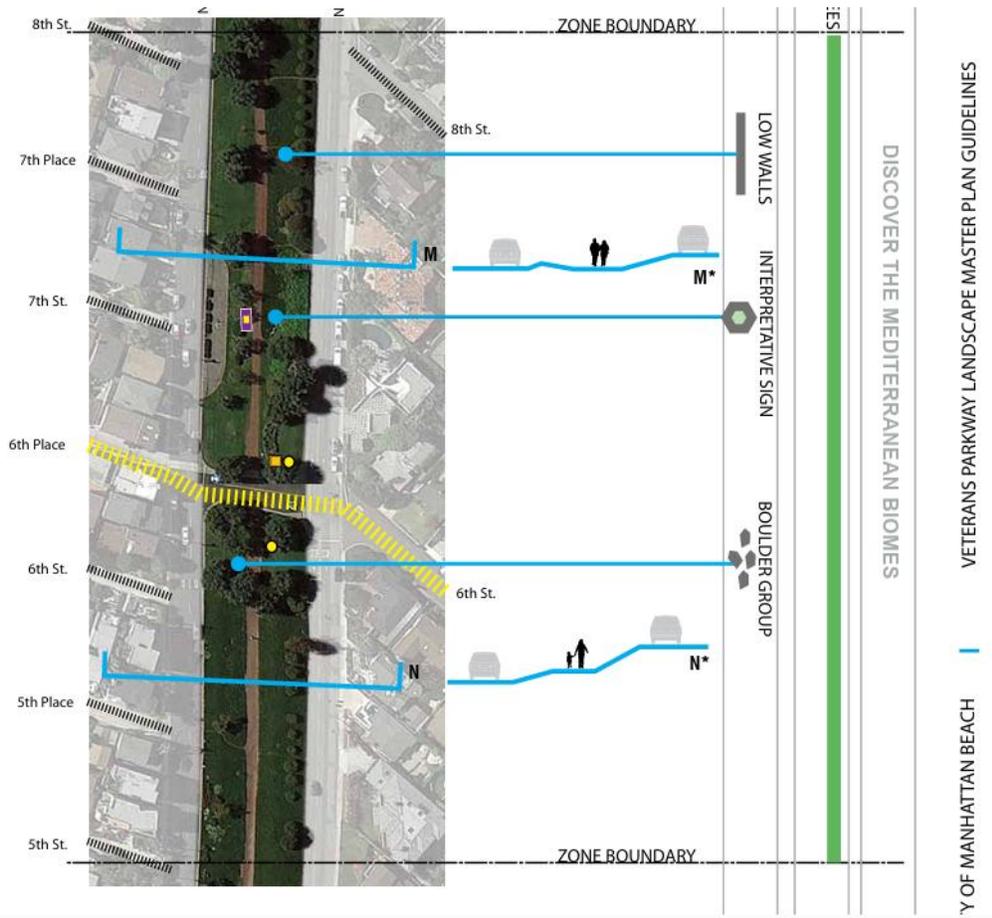


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14: The Olive Grove & 6th Place Intersection



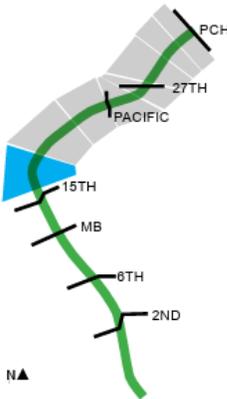
Beautiful specimen Olive trees and a gentle slope on the eastern edge mark this zone. There are opportunities for seating in the shade and the developing this area into a Learning Garden based on the Mediterranean plant palette.



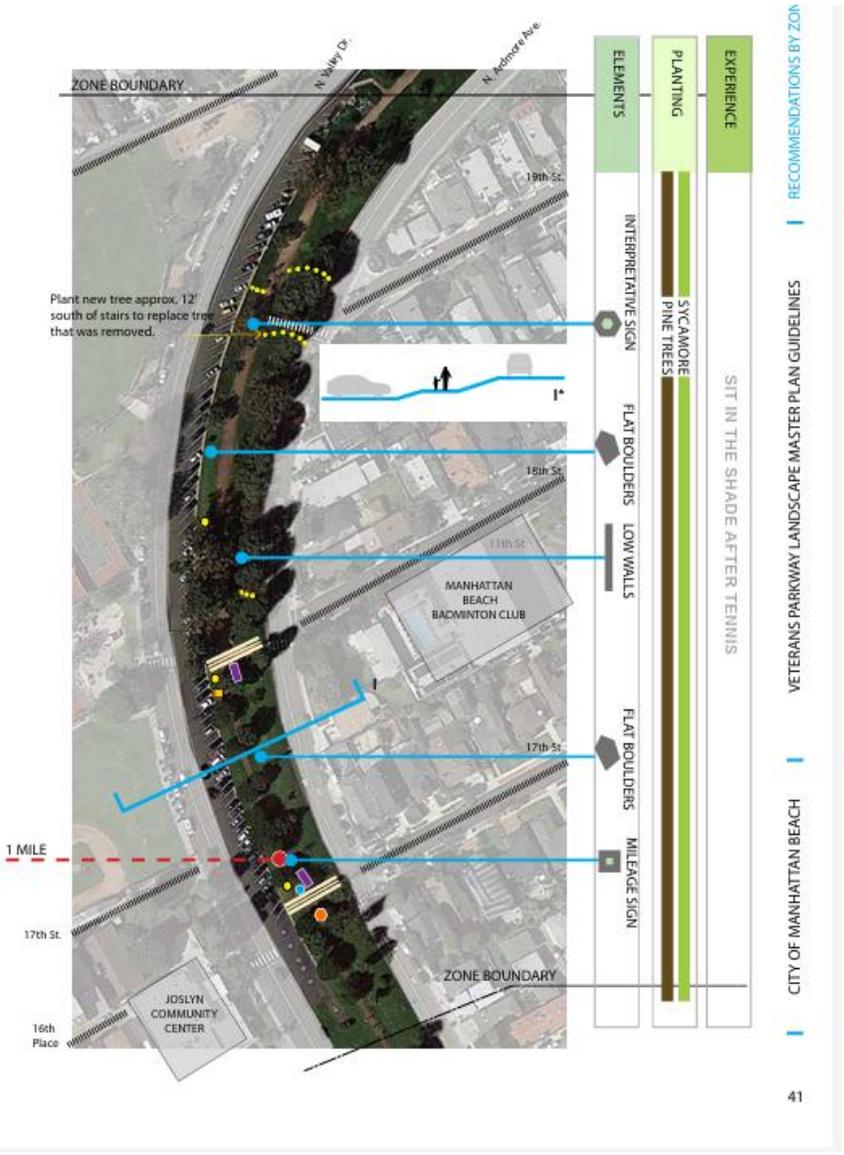


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8: Park View



This area faces Live Oak Park, which is a transition area from the more natural Parkway to the Civic Core: "nature-to-city." While it is important to keep and enhance the connection to the north with a natural landscape, the approach to the Gateway intersection and Civic Core new Joslyn Community Center is an area that could be more urbanized. This is a complex zone that would benefit from professional design services.



Summary

This collaborative **Manhattan Beach Earth Day Community Tree Planting Event**, proposed for **Saturday, April 25th**, would foster community engagement, hands-on environmental education, and long-term sustainability in support of the CAAP while strengthening partnerships between the City of Manhattan Beach, MBUSD schools, and community organizations. Thank you for your consideration and ongoing continued support of Grades of Green.

Fondly,

Lisa Coppedge

Founder and Board of Director Grades of Green

Grades of Green Overview

The next generation has the power to make a meaningful difference in the health of our planet. Schools increasingly recognize the importance of environmental education paired with real-world action. Research shows that greening schools and surrounding communities can reduce operational costs, decrease student absences, and improve academic outcomes.

Grades of Green responds to this need by providing **fun, hands-on environmental programs** that teach students the importance of caring for the environment while inspiring lifelong stewardship. Through experiential learning, students gain a deeper understanding of sustainability, climate resilience, and community responsibility.

With the continued support of the **City of Manhattan Beach**, Grades of Green seeks to bring the **Community Tree Planting Program** to MBUSD schools, creating meaningful opportunities for students to participate in local environmental action. This partnership represents a long-term commitment to environmental education, allowing children to experience the lasting benefits of healthier green spaces, stronger communities, and a more sustainable future.

Appendix A -The Tree City USA Map of current neighboring Southern California awarded Tree City USA cities.

