

Date: May 22, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Alison King, Director of Health and Human Services



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Long Beach AIDS Memorial Feasibility

On October 10, 2023, the City Council requested the City Manager to work with relevant departments on the feasibility of developing a plan and vision for a Long Beach AIDS Memorial dedicated to those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. Subsequently, this task was assigned to the Departments of Health and Human Services (Health Department) and Public Works. Parks, Recreation and Marine was also included in the work group as potential memorial locations could be located in City parks.

An inter-departmental work group was assembled that included:

- Alison King, Director of Health and Human Services
- Dr. Anissa Davis, Health and Human Services
- Dr. Jessica Schumer, Health and Human Services
- Dennis Keith, Health and Human Services
- Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works
- Marilyn Surakus, Public Works Project Manager
- Brent Dennis, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Marine

The vision for a Long Beach AIDS Memorial is to create a place of healing reflection and beauty that will promote learning, understanding, and remembrance of those we lost to the tragedy of AIDS.

Potential Memorial Types

- Virtual Community AIDS Quilt: A unique component inspired by the National AIDS Memorial Quilt, a technology-based memorial that could be a complement to any of the following memorials.
- Mural Art: Two-dimensional outdoor wall art that could consist of paint, mosaic tiles, or other multi-media artworks in keeping with Long Beach renown for creative, colorful public art murals.
- Walkway Art Inlays or Etched Reliefs: Cast bronze medallions, sandblasted imagery, cast-in-place hardscape, etc.
- Sculpture: Three-dimensional art that could be figurative, abstract, interactive, relief, mobile, landform, carved or cast materials, etc.

- **Memorial Garden or Grove of Trees:** A landscaped area featuring memorial tree or group of trees forming a grove or natural cathedral type space, typically in a park setting with accessible pathways.
- **Memorial Plaza:** An urban space traditionally defined by surrounding buildings in a prominent civic location that could include a variety of artistic memorial elements, individuals memorialized, water features, benches or seat walls, trees for shade, etc.

It should be noted that all of the above types of memorials should have appropriate night lighting and security considerations integral to the final design.

Precedent Projects

The following AIDS memorials located in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, and Columbus, Ohio, can serve as helpful examples of installations in U.S. cities.

- **National AIDS Memorial Grove in San Francisco, California:** The National AIDS Memorial Grove, or "The Grove", is located at the de Laveaga Dell in eastern Golden Gate Park, in San Francisco, California.

The Grove is a dedicated space and place in the national landscape where the millions of Americans touched directly or indirectly by AIDS can gather to heal, hope, and remember. The mission of the AIDS Memorial Grove is to provide a healing sanctuary and to promote learning and understanding of the tragedy of the AIDS pandemic.

The National AIDS Memorial Grove is a living tribute to all whose lives have been touched by AIDS and serves as a dedicated space where people can gather to heal, hope, and remember. Its purpose is to ensure that those who have suffered from the AIDS epidemic, both those who have died and those who have shared their struggle, are not forgotten. It is a place for quiet reflection among the rhododendrons and redwoods, where people can seek out solitude or gather in groups for memorial services, celebrations, and picnics. Near the eastern entry is the Circle of Friends, a circular stone plaza in which names of those who have been touched by AIDS are inscribed, and where many leave informal remembrances to loved ones. In the middle section of the grove is a sunny meadow; from there, trails wind up through the Fern Grotto and Circle of Peace to the western entry.

The idea for the grove was first proposed in 1988, and in 1991 renovation began on the chosen site, de Laveaga Dell. Architects and designers volunteered their services to create a landscaping plan for the neglected and overgrown site, and thousands of volunteers have now donated tens of thousands of hours to clearing, planting, and maintaining the grove. Native trees, shrubs, and other plants have been reintroduced, paths and benches installed, and boulders of Sierra granite placed. Site improvements are ongoing. Several pathways wind through groves of dogwood, redwood, oak, and pine trees, and at the western end, lush ferns tower overhead in the Fern Grotto. Much of the grove is wheelchair accessible. In 1996, the grove was designated an official national memorial by Congress and the President. The non-profit funds on Golden Gate Park funds a gardener position dedicated to the landscape maintenance of the Grove.

The grove is designed primarily for use by individuals and small groups, but larger groups may also use it for:

- Commitment ceremonies
- Memorial services
- Picnics
- Weddings
- Other celebrations.

All events require permission, and fees are charged for larger events. For more information, visit this [website](#).

- Los Angeles, CA: The Wall Las Memorias: Los Angeles will make history with the unveiling and rededication of The Wall Las Memorias AIDS Monument at Lincoln Park. As the only publicly funded AIDS monument in the country, this World AIDS Day event will reveal the expanded footprint of the surrounding landscape and exhibit new artwork and panels that carry an additional 1,000+ new names of loved ones lost to AIDS. The Wall Las Memorias Rededication Celebration presented by Gilead will include live musical performances, presentations by distinguished guests, a special candlelight presentation, and reception to celebrate the milestone!

- West Hollywood, CA: STORIES: The AIDS Memorial in West Hollywood “The Traces”: start with a very informal layout in the Celebrate and Educate section. As you move through the Traces in this section and toward the Remembrance section, the grid in which the Traces are located becomes more defined. This is a metaphor for what those affected by AIDS and HIV experienced in the 1980s and early 1990s. As you walk through the Traces in the Celebrate and Educate section, look up and you will notice that some Traces are engraved. Thirty of the Traces have words engraved on them—words representing what people were feeling and experiencing, and representing the types of audio stories you can hear if you click on the Word Wall that appears on its corresponding website (on your mobile device if you are visiting the Monument). The words are placed in an irregular way throughout the Celebrate and Educate section of the Monument so that there is a process of discovery in finding the words. The Monument offers a different experience depending on whether you visit during the day or at night. The location of the monument near the restaurants, bars, and shops of West Hollywood provides an opportunity for visitors from 6:00 a.m. until midnight. At night-time, the lights at the top of Traces are illuminated, resembling the candlelight vigils that happened for years and years and gave marchers a sense of emotional relief and community during a very difficult time.



The monument is comprised of 204 sculptural pillars called “Traces”, which are 15 feet tall and measure approximately 4 x 4 inches at the base. The Traces lightly touch the ground and pierce the sky. The bronze surface of the Traces has a variable, organic quality. Each Trace has a slightly different color. In that way, like a person, each Trace is unique, although the shape of each Trace is consistent.



- Hudson River Park, New York City: East of the esplanade and between Pier 46 and Pier 51 is the AIDS Memorial. Unveiled in 2008, the memorial is a 42-foot-long curved stone bench situated on a granite path cut into the lawn situated in a beautifully landscaped knoll near Bank Street. The path is complemented by a balcony that juts out over the river where Pier 49 once stood. The quote engraved into the black granite bench reads: “I can sail without wind, I can row without oars, but I cannot part from my friend without tears.”



Dedicated on the 20th Anniversary of World AIDS Day, November 30th, 2008, this permanent monument was built by the AIDS Monument Committee to commemorate those who have died from the disease, those who live with HIV, those who have cared for people with HIV/AIDS, and the educators and researchers who will one day eradicate it. The memorial is a place where people can reflect, mourn, or celebrate the memories of those who have been lost to this cruel disease.

- New York City AIDS Memorial Park: Craig's closet is a newly created artwork by Jim Hodges. On view beginning June 9, it is situated within New York City's AIDS Memorial Park, which lies in the shadow of the former St. Vincent's hospital and has proximity to many sites central to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This replica of a domestic bedroom closet in granite with additions of painted bronze invites viewers to forge personal connections between complex histories and individual and collective memories.



Craig's closet is a continuation of the New York City AIDS Memorial's public art program, which has included installations and events by Steven Evans, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Jenny Holzer, among others. The sculpture will be on view for one year and is exhibited as a part of NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program.

In conjunction with [Architectural Record](#) and [Architizer](#), the NYC AIDS Memorial launched an international design competition in November 2011, chaired by Michael Arad, the designer of the National September 11 Memorial, to generate ideas for the memorial park design. Nearly 500 architects from around the world submitted designs. [Studio a+i](#), led by Mateo Paiva, Lily Lim and Esteban Erlich, won the competition to become the park's architect. Their design features an 18-foot white



triangular steel canopy, central granite water fountain and benches, and serves as the dramatic gateway to the New York City AIDS Memorial Park at St. Vincent's Triangle in the West Village.

Renowned visual artist [Jenny Holzer](#) chose and arranged passages from "[Song of Myself](#)" (1855), poet Walt Whitman's transcendent celebration of hope, unity, and human dignity, which are engraved in the Memorial's granite pavement. The Memorial is a place of contemplation and provides a shelter for reflection and remembrance of the men, women, and children lost to AIDS. It also serves as a gathering place and reminder of the work that remains to defeat the disease.

- Chicago, IL: AIDS Garden Chicago is a 2.5-acre public garden along Lake Michigan in Chicago's Lincoln Park. It serves to memorialize the HIV epidemic in Chicago and to honor those who live with the disease today, and is managed alongside the Chicago Park District.

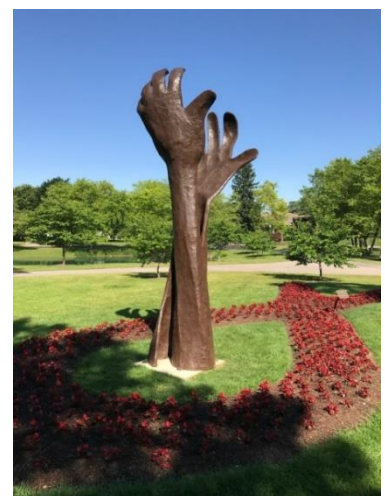


From the late 1960s to the 1990s, the Belmont Rocks served as an informal gathering space for the LGBT community in Chicago. During the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s, the Rocks also served as a memorial space for LGBT Chicagoans who died from the disease. The Rocks were removed in 2003 and replaced with a concrete retaining wall as part of a shoreline revetment project. After the site was demolished, plans were made to transform the space into a garden; however, the 2008 financial crisis led to the cancellation of the initial project.

Plans for AIDS Garden Chicago were relaunched in 2018, and the park's anchor piece, a 30-foot tall Keith Haring sculpture titled 'Self-Portrait', was installed in late 2019. Although it was originally set to be complete in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted state funding away from the project, and it was delayed for a year. In June 2021, a groundbreaking ceremony was officially held at the site of the Belmont rocks. The park officially opened on June 2, 2022, and includes spaces for art installations, an educational walk which includes QR codes with information on how HIV has impacted the LGBT community in Chicago, a grove of ginkgo trees, and a perennial garden.



- Columbus, OH: AIDS Hands Sculpture: A cast bronze pair of uplifted hands rise from the center of a red floral planting in the shape of the AIDS ribbon. Prominently located on the south side of the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Garden, the memorial offers a contemplative space of gardenesque beauty, surrounded by mature park trees. The sculpture is singularly symbolic of the hands of hope and healing, cradled by the red ribbon associated with the memory of those lost to the disease. The sculpture was a commissioned work with the artist selected from solicited proposals from local artists. Funding was provided by grants from the Arts Council, Stonewall Columbus, the Central Ohio LGBT community organizations, and other philanthropic donations from the community. Overall budget back in 1992



was approximately \$100,000. The garden’s maintenance is the responsibility of botanical garden horticultural staff. Regular annual events are scheduled, usually aligned with World AIDS Day or Pride week. The space is accessible by a pathway.

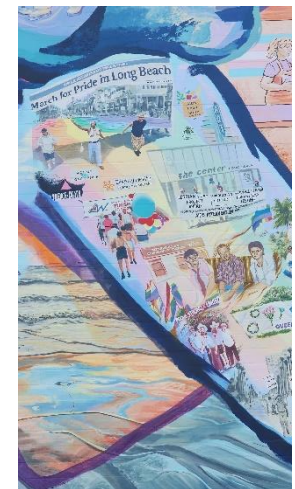
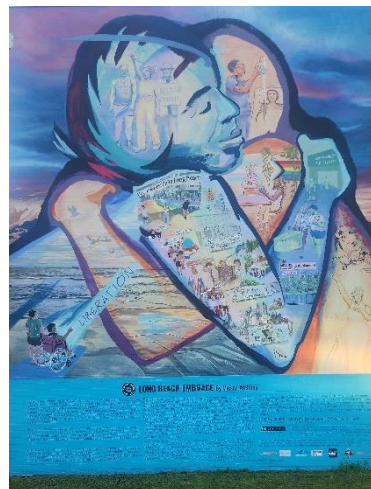
- Other Precedent Sculpture Examples:

This bronze sculpture depicts a 5’2” woman holding an unfurled quilt emblazoned with inspirational panels and the seal of the AIDS Benefit Foundation of South Carolina. The piece was installed at the Koger Center for the Arts in 2003 as a tribute to the University of South Carolina’s commitment to AIDS research and education.



Location Considerations

At this preliminary phase, a range of memorial options are being suggested. In general, the AIDS Memorial, regardless of its ultimate form, should be in a highly visible and accessible location. Any memorial of an artform nature should be comprised of durable materials, relatively easy to maintain, properly illuminated for nighttime display prominence and security considerations. In terms of potential locations, a site or facility closely associated with the LGBTQ+ Cultural District corridor on Broadway would be a reasonable consideration. The property where the LGBTQ Center is located at 2017 E. 4th Street could be another candidate site. Bixby Park has long been a host site for special events and meetings associated with the LGBTQ+ community and already has a significant mural that artistically highlights history, diversity, struggles, and celebrations. The Civic Center has numerous opportunity locations.



Process Considerations

The City of Long Beach could consider a Request for Proposals from local, regional, or national memorial designers, artists, landscape architects, architects, engineers, and/or multi-discipline teams.

Budget/Funding Strategies

The formation of a Friends of the AIDS Memorial could be considered that serves the purpose of capital project fundraising, ongoing memorial maintenance expenses, organization of annual events, coordination of volunteer-based projects, etc. Partners of Parks has historically been instrumental in assisting with the formation of “Friends” groups that can operate under the non-profit umbrella of Partners, and establish restricted fund accounts, for Memorial fundraising and expenses.

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Depending on the final design and site selection, the budget could range from \$100,000 for the most basic of memorial forms like a mural or pavement etching, upwards of \$1 million or more should a sculpture commission and urban style display plaza be envisioned. An annual maintenance budget should be considered, with a range of necessary funding dependent upon the final memorial form, materials selected, and if landscape elements are a part of the final memorial design and development.

This memorandum addresses the feasibility study requested by City Council on October 10, 2023. Council has not set aside any funding at this point for design and construction, and funding would need to be allocated via the FY 25 budget process in order to advance a specific design, site location, and ultimately construct a memorial.

For more information, please contact Alison King, Director of Health and Human Services, at alison.king@longbeach.gov or (562) 570-4016.

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