

Frequently Asked Questions: Heritage County Park Improvement Project

County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation

Last update: July 28, 2025

Park information

Where is the park?

Heritage County Park is a 7.8 acre urban park located at 2454 Heritage Park Road just off of Juan Street in the heart of Old Town San Diego.

What is the history of the park?

In 1971, the County purchased the site at the corner of Juan and Harney Streets for the purpose of creating an 1880s-style Victorian Preserve. The buildings here were moved from the Bankers Hill area in the 1970s and early 1980s. Heritage County Park highlights and serves as a monument to the transition between the Spanish-Mexican-early American periods and the modern City of San Diego. It features six Victorian homes and San Diego's first synagogue, Temple Beth Israel.

Are the buildings protected under historic preservation?

The exteriors of the Sherman Gilbert and McConaughy Houses and the Temple Beth Israel are protected under the city's Register of Historic Resources.

What amenities were added during the recent construction project?

The upper lawn project, which is now open, includes a new wedding gazebo, an outdoor classroom seating area, and ADA accessible walkways with safety lighting.

Project Scope

What is the scope of the proposed project?

The project will renovate the interiors of Sherman-Gilbert House, Bushyhead House, Christian House, and Burton House to provide overnight accommodations, including 22 guest rooms, a lounge and a parlor. Furnishings and finishes will be Victorian-inspired to compliment the architecture of the houses and also will be stylish, comfortable, durable, and easy to maintain. The exhibit space and public restrooms in the Senlis Cottage also will be improved, and the existing landscape will be refreshed. The project will upgrade ADA parking spaces and ADA access to public areas. All upgrades will meet modern building codes, and enhance fire safety systems, electrical, and plumbing.

The County does not intend to make significant changes to the exteriors of the buildings other than changes required by code.

Will any new buildings be added to the park?

No new buildings will be added to the park.

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What is the construction schedule?

We anticipate construction of the interior renovations to begin at the end of 2025 and to take approximately one year to complete, with opening in early 2027.

Park Programming and Use

Will we have to pay to use the park?

DPR does not charge day-use fees at this park. All outdoor spaces, Temple Beth Israel, and the public restrooms in Senlis Cottage will remain open to the public as they are today.

Those who wish to book an event at Temple Beth Israel, the outdoor classroom, or the wedding gazebo can contact Supervising Ranger Hannah Shipley at Hannah.shipley@sdcounty.ca.gov for prices and information.

Guests who wish to book overnight accommodations (once available) will be able to do so for a reservation fee. Details will be posted to sdparks.org when the venue opens to the public.

The Coral Tree Teahouse has a lease with the County for the McConaughy House, so this building is operated as a separate business.

Where will guests of the overnight accommodations park?

Guests of the overnight accommodations will make use of the park's existing 64 spaces.

Is the County intending to increase the number of events or bring new types of events to the park?

The County has expanded features in the park to support a broader range of events. As part of the garden enhancement project, new amenities like an outdoor classroom and a wedding gazebo were added to the upper lawn areas, replacing the old wooden gazebo. These improvements, guided by public feedback from 2021 and 2022, allow for more diverse event opportunities. The spaces are available for public rental within the park's existing rules on noise, use, and event hours.

Will education and outreach programs will be offered?

The park will continue to host regular public events, such as historical walking tours, Summer Movies in the Park events, and new events such as Pages in the Park.

Will events increase noise in the park?

Park staff monitor and meter noise during events and actively enforce the city's noise restrictions.

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Project Background

Why is the County doing this project?

On June 29, 2021, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors directed the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to launch a project to add overnight accommodations to Heritage County Park by restoring the interiors of the historic homes, and to explore other recreational enhancements for public use.

DPR has been working on designing the project since then. The first phase, garden enhancements at the upper lawn area, is now complete, and the building renovations phase will begin permitting later in 2025.

Public Outreach

What have you done for public outreach in this process?

The County held public meetings, both virtually and in-person, at the beginning of design process in 2021 and 2022 to introduce the project and gather feedback. An online survey was posted to gather additional feedback.

Can I donate to the project?

Donations can be made to the San Diego County Parks Society at www.sdcps.org with a note specifying what the donation is for.

Where can I get more information on the park and the project?

The best way to stay informed is to regularly check our website, sdparks.org/heritage.

Comments and questions about the upcoming project may be sent via email to the project manager, Amy Hoffman, at amy.hoffman1@sdcounty.ca.gov.

For lawn or Temple reservations or information about events in the park, contact Supervising Ranger Hannah Shipley at Hannah.shipley@sdcounty.ca.gov.