



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 17, 2011

**Contact:** Lisa Richardson, 213-361-6980

**Email:** [lrichardson@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:lrichardson@bos.lacounty.gov)

**or**

**Contact:** Sharita Moon, 213-974-2222

**Email:** [smoon@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:smoon@bos.lacounty.gov)

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Fitness Garden: Lean and Green**

A new fitness garden is soon to blossom on the quarter-acre site surrounding the South Health Center Replacement Project. The pocket-sized parkland will offer space for clients of the center to put the principles of exercise and healthy living that are taught inside the facility, into immediate practice outside its front door.

At its Tuesday meeting, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors authorized \$765,000 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Fitness Garden Project, enabling the contractor to begin design and construction of the site. In addition to including a path for running and jogging, exercise equipment and benches, the fitness garden's landscape will be environmentally efficient. It will be designed to minimize water usage and reduce storm-water runoff by incorporating an irrigation system with native plants, drought-tolerant shade trees and shrubs.

The Board also authorized a youth employment component to the project. Upon completion, the Department of Parks and Recreation will recruit and employ at-risk youth to maintain the site.

"The South Health facility, which opens this summer, promises to be a wonderful resource for the community," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who authored the motion funding the fitness garden. "The surrounding community has urgent health care needs, with a significant number of residents who struggle with chronic diseases and conditions such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure and cholesterol."

The Supervisor continued: "I am committed to seeing that the County addresses these needs in a way that is comprehensive, and the South Health facility is prime example. On one site we are locating cutting-edge healthcare, fitness resources an greenery that incorporates the best environmental practices."

###