

THE Acorn

Agoura's first public park south of 101 gets underway

'Greenway' strip park next to Whizin market

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PITCHING IN—The Agoura Hills City Council and students from local schools gather for the Ladyface Greenway ground-breaking ceremony July 30 on Agoura Road. MICHAEL COONS/Acorn Newspapers

When she spotted work fencing along the runoff channel that parallels Agoura Road at Whizin Market Square, Mayor Illece Buckley Weber became emotional.

She's been working on the Agoura Hills Ladyface Greenway project in one way or another since she joined the City Council in 2012, and now a much-anticipated park at the location is officially under construction.

"All of a sudden, it seemed very real," Buckley Weber said during a groundbreaking ceremony on July 30. "This is what collaboration looks like, to all be together here today."

The city's first public park south of the 101 Freeway will cost \$17.6 million.

Construction will involve capping the open flood-control conduit to create more than one acre of new green space—from Cornell Road to the Whizin Market driveway—planted with native, drought-resistant vegetation and featuring trails for walking, cycling and horseback riding. There will also be butterfly gardens, public art, a kids' play area, and a system of bioswales—channels filled with soil, vegetation and stones that naturally clear out sediment and debris from stormwater.



ON THE DRAWING BOARD—Guests look at plans for the new park during the July 30 groundbreaking. MICHAEL COONS/Acorn Newspapers

Buckley Weber thanked a plethora of local leaders. Absent but acknowledged were former Los Angeles County S

upervisor Sheila Kuehl, who helped secure more than \$5 million in county grant money, and current chair of the Board of Supervisors Lindsey Horvath.

Former Assemblymember and current Superior Court Judge Richard Bloom got a shout-out for identifying an earmark that made possible a \$6 million state investment in the construction phase.

On hand and receiving recognition for their efforts were Terry Dipple, executive director of the Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments and an advocate for county funding, and David Pedersen, general manager of the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. The utility contributed \$200,000 in addition to allowing access to land it owns. (Most of the project is situated on L.A. County Flood Control District land.)

Buckley Weber also offered thanks to former Agoura Hills mayor Ed Corridori, who, she said, “was chirping about creeks to me” from the day she decided to run for office. “And we did the Medea Creek project, now we’re here. And sorry, Ed, you’re going to have to chirp in somebody else’s ear now.”

The project's original intention was to fully remediate the channel similar to the 2016 Medea Creek naturalization project, but this was found to be impractical. Buckley Weber recalled the moment when Assistant City Manager Ramiro Adeva first suggested to her the idea of covering the channel instead –with native landscaping and horse trails above and water flowing underneath. She said she loved the idea, but had to check first with “the creek gurus.” Once she got the blessing of environmental experts throughout L.A. County, Buckley Weber embraced the new concept: “The Ladyface Greenway represents a decade of vision, scoping, design, environmental work, permitting and funding,” she said.

Just before the hard hats and gold-bladed shovels came out, Whizin Market owner Bill Tucker took the microphone to add Buckley Weber's own name to the long list of those to be thanked, as the driving force behind the project.

“The city has been very forthcoming in trying to improve the area, not only for the Whizin Center but also for the community,” Tucker told *The Acorn*.

Buckley Weber said the park will contribute to what's now perceived as the next “downtown Agoura Hills.”

“It'll create a very relaxed, organic neighborhood,” Tucker said. “It takes away all the concrete edge that we have surrounding Whizin.”

“It's a really cool project,” said Rudy Flores of Westlake Village-based contractor GMZ Engineering, who will be the superintendent on site. The work will be challenging, he added, involving high-caliber drilling with a 160,000-pound rig, placing piles to support the cap while keeping the existing structure of the channel intact.

The \$17.6-million Ladyface Greenway is expected to be completed in spring 2026. The park, and its linkages to bike and bus routes, is part of a larger vision for the area, the Agoura Village specific plan, which will eventually include mixed-use development.