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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CITY OF ANGELS JOINS THAI “APSONSI” ANGEL AT HOLLYWOOD INAUGURATION
City Officials, Dignitaries and Hundreds Celebrate Community Beautification Project**

LOS ANGELES (June 15, 2007) – At the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue in Hollywood, the City of Los Angeles joined the Thai Town Gateway inauguration that celebrated the first of four installments of a Thai angel known as the “Apsonsi.” The beautification project symbolizes the cultural and economic ties between Los Angeles’ Thai American community and the City of Bangkok, Thailand, which are both internationally known as the City of Angels.

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa applauded the “Apsonsi” Thai Angel with Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti, Royal Thai Consul General of Los Angeles Jurk Boon-Long, Board of Public Works President Cynthia M. Ruiz and Executive Director Chancee Martorell of the Thai Community Development Center. An estimated crowd of more than 200 gathered for the Thai Town Gateway inauguration, which included traditional Thai performances and a ribbon cutting ceremony.

“The city takes great pride in supporting the Thai American community’s culture and heritage as symbolized by the sculpture of a mythical angel that will now serve as the gateway to Thai Town,” said Cynthia M. Ruiz, president of the Board of Public Works. “We are so pleased to support those community leaders and volunteers that do their utmost to enrich the character of Los Angeles through community beautification projects and provide inspiration among the city’s diverse tapestry of cultures and people.”

The “Apsonsi” symbolizes the Thai community’s significant cultural and economic presence

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in Hollywood and represents the collective efforts and strength of the area’s multicultural residents to join in a community improvement project. The project, led by the Thai Community Development Center together with the Thai Town Formation Committee, is funded in part through a City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works Neighborhood Matching Grant now known as the Community Beautification Grant.

“The beautification of Thai Town through the embrace of Thai art that complements the other ethnic art projects already on display in Hollywood works together to improve the quality of life for all residents and supports the ongoing economic development of the area,” said Chancee Martorell, executive director of the Thai Community Development Center. “The Thai Town Gateway makes known our presence and vital role in contributing to the social fabric and economy of this country.”

The “Apsonsi” Thai angel is a mythical half-human, half-lion creature that protects and brings good fortune to those around it. The angel and three others, that are planned for installation, will welcome visitors to Thai Town in Hollywood with hands clasped in front of their chests near the chin in the traditional Thai greeting. The sculpture, created by a group of Thai artisans in Thailand, is made of cement, gold and black brass. Each sculpture stands six feet tall and on its pedestal will reach a height of sixteen feet.

Since 1998, the Office of Community Beautification has completed 775 community beautification grant projects throughout the City of Los Angeles. Approaching its tenth year, the next cycle of the Community Beautification Grant application process will open July 1, 2007. Applications can be received by calling 3-1-1 or online at www.laocb.org.

City Council offices and their field offices will also have hardcopies of the application as well as selected libraries throughout the city. Proposals accepted from community-based organizations, a group of five or more individuals, must reside, work or take interest in beautifying a community in the city.

For more information on the City of Los Angeles, Board of Public Works Office of Community Beautification and Community Beautification Grants, please visit the office website at www.laocb.org.

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About Thai Community Development Center

The Thai Community Development Center was founded in April 1994 on the idea that all peoples have a basic right to a decent standard of living and quality of life. Our mission is "to advance the social and economic well-being of low and moderate income Thais and other ethnic communities in the greater Los Angeles area through a comprehensive community development strategy including affordable housing, access to healthcare, promotion of small businesses, neighborhood empowerment, and social enterprises." For more information, visit www.thaicdc.org.

About Board of Public Works

The five-commissioner Board of Public Works manages the Department of Public Works, the City's third largest municipal division. The department oversees the construction, renovation, and operation of public projects such as municipal buildings, streets, bridges, street lights, water treatment plants, sewers and sidewalks, and provides essential public services like recycling and solid waste management. For more information, visit www.lacity.org/bpw/.

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