



2450 LA Park Needs Assessment

Meeting Date: Feb 18, 2025

Meeting Time: 9am-12pm PST

Meeting Location: In-Person;
EXPO Center, 3980 Bill Robertson Ln, Los Angeles, CA 90037

Subject: LA Park Needs Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting #1

Project Team Attendees:

City of Los Angeles, RAP

- Jimmy Kim
- Cathie Santo Domingo
- Brenda Aguirre
- Chinyere Stoneham
- Darryl Ford
- Meghan Luera
- Jeremy Silva

OLIN

- Jessica Henson
- Andrew Dobshinsky
- Sarah Swanseen

The Robert Group

- Isaiah Ford

KDI

- Chelina Odbert
- Eric Riley

Agency: Artifact

- Chris Torres

Estolano Advisors

- Cecilia Estolano
- Thomson Dryjanski
- Sasha Ragland

Better World Group

- Kimberly Guo

Geosyntec Consultants

- Mark Hanna

UCLA/Luskin

- Jon Christensen

West of West

- Angela Lufkin

Green Info Network

- Maria Lamadrid

Steering Committee Member/Organization	Committee Member		Present
	First Name	Last Name	
Trust for Public Land	Guillermo	Rodriguez	X
Resources Legacy Fund	Alfredo	Gonzalez	
The Nature Conservancy	Kelsey	Jessup	X
LA Neighborhood Land Trust	Tori	Kjer	X
LA County Department of Parks and Recreation	Sean	Woods	
Community Partners	Yvette	Lopez-Ledesma	X
University of Southern California	Vanessa	Carter Fahnestock	X

LA Waterkeeper	Bruce	Reznik	X
Prevention Institute	Francisco	Romero	X
Friends of the LA River	Candice	Dickens-Russell	
Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure, City of LA	Randall	Winston	X
Deputy Mayor of Neighborhood Services, City of LA	Jacqueline	Hamilton	X
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Brian	Baldauf	X
Individual Expert (Parks and Public Health)	Deborah	Cohen	X
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative	Veronica	Hahni	X
Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Tony	Budrovich	X
California Conservation Corps	Nikki	Morales	X
City of LA Recreation and Parks Commission Representative	Marie	Lloyd	

Meeting Objectives

- 1) Articulate the roles and responsibilities for Steering Committee members
- 2) Define geographies, interest group targets, and organizational partners for community engagement activities
- 3) Review RAP's Park Condition Assessment's available data
- 4) Provide feedback on the project's initial technical criteria for evaluating park need

AGENDA

Time	Agenda Items	Notes
9:00	1. Welcome	Cecilia Estolano (Estolano Advisors, Better World Group) called the meeting to order.
9:00-9:05	2. Department of Recreation and Parks Introduction	Jimmy Kim, the General Manager of the City of LA Recreation and Parks (RAP) gave an introduction, welcoming and thanking Committee Members.
9:05-9:20	3. Introductions	Meeting attendees introduced themselves, providing their name, organization, and favorite RAP park or facility.
9:20-9:35	4. Project Intro and Overall Schedule	<p>Jessica Henson (OLIN) introduced the LA Park Needs Assessment (PNA) project including a high level summary of the process, its purpose, as well as the schedule including engagement. The project aims to understand current and future needs for the City of LA parks while using innovative high-level data and understanding the local geographies and lived realities of residents. There are four key steps to the project: Grounding, Evaluation, Draft PNA, and Final PNA. The Final PNA needs to be completed at the end of 2025 for presentation to the RAP Board.</p> <p>The Consultant Team presented preliminary baseline data compiled from the past 25 years including the RAP budget, total staff, and acres acquired. While RAP's budget has increased, this number now includes items</p>

		<p>that were historically in other areas of the City budget. Other considerations such as inflation will be taken into account as the Consultant Team continues evaluation. RAP staffing in the past 25 years peaked in 2008. Approximately 1,100 acres of new parkland has been acquired in the last 25 years.</p> <p>Tori Kjer (LANLT) asked how programming will relate to the PNA process. RAP noted that programming is included in relation to how facilities support programming but a focused study on programming isn't within the PNA process. RAP is eager to hear community feedback on the survey to understand how programming is referenced.</p> <p>Guillermo Rodriguez (TPL) asked if there is an opportunity to expand the scope of the PNA to appropriate dollars for deeper analysis after or if the first round of surveys reveal gaps. It was noted by RAP that there will be opportunities to use the PNA outcomes to identify these needs and funding gaps and advocate for further funding/studies.</p>
9:35-9:55	5. Steering Committee Overview	<p>Cecilia Estolano and Thomson Dryjanski (Estolano Advisors, Better World Group) explained the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Steering Committee (SC)..</p> <p>The SC is an advisory committee to help guide the PNA process. The SC will play an important role in helping RAP achieve its goals of measuring community members' satisfaction with their parks and improving park space for the future. The schedule and arc of the SC involvement in the project will occur across seven meetings throughout the PNA process.</p> <p>The objectives of the SC are to assist in developing the vision for the CoLA PNA by providing expert guidance to the project team on technical and strategic topics and uplifting community opinions.</p> <p>Meeting agreements were reviewed with the SC members including means of supporting healthy interactions at SC meetings, participating in constructive communication, and the expectation that SC members make good faith efforts to attend each meeting.</p>
9:55-10:40	6. Community Engagement Approach	<p>Isaiah Ford (The Robert Group) and Jessica Henson (OLIN) presented the engagement approach for the project that is spread across three phases. Over 100 meetings and events will occur throughout the PNA process. Discussion that followed is described below organized by theme.</p>

		<p>Community Partner Program</p> <p>The Community Partner Program (CPP) is a PNA outreach component to raise awareness of the project, encourage public participation, and collect input that will help inform the Park Needs Assessment.</p> <p>It was noted that the application for the CPP and additional information and the application is live and available on the project website (needs.parks.lacity.gov/community-partner-program).</p> <p>It was asked if there are opportunities to expand the number of CBOs or have collaborative involvement between multiple groups of CBOs to increase the number. The Project Team noted that there is flexibility in the composition of the program and agreements will be evaluated on a rolling basis with onboarding of groups occurring in late March, early April.</p> <p>Neighborhood Council Involvement</p> <p>It was asked how neighborhood councils will be involved in the PNA and if there is any specific engagement focused on the input of the Neighborhood Councils. It was noted that there are several meetings where Neighborhood Councils can get involved. On February 27th there will be a virtual interest group meeting where CBOs, Parks Nonprofits, Park Advisory Boards, and Neighborhood councils can attend to provide input.</p> <p>Equity Group Sessions</p> <p>Chris Torres (Agency Artifact) presented the Project Team strategy for equity focused engagement. This includes meetings focused on four different collections of groups that represent underrepresented groups in park usership, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Social Services: Understanding the role of LA parks in supporting health and safety, and as key infrastructure for unhoused and highly vulnerable members of the community.• Parks in Place: Exploring how LA parks work to support local economies, and envision a future where parks maintain community in place. Topics covered: street vending and informal economies, informal or non-RAP programming, park-induced displacement or green gentrification, and children's needs.• Access for All: Recognizing the barriers people of different genders, abilities, ages, and linguistic backgrounds face when accessing LA parks, and potential ways to develop co- beneficial opportunities.• The Public Stage: Exploring how LA parks can foster inclusion and belonging by telling a more expansive story of our City, employing nontraditional commemoration and reflecting community identity.
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10:40-10:45	<i>Stretch Break</i>	
10:45-11:00	7. Integrating the Parks Condition Assessment	<p>The Consultant Team described the RAP Parks Conditions Assessment (PCA) process as well as the PNA dashboard that is being developed for public access to the PCA data. This dashboard displays park amenities within individual parks as well as their conditions on a scale from poor to good.</p> <p>Deborah Cohen (Kaiser Permanente) has been studying park usage and health and data and would like to share that with the SC to integrate into the PNA. She is willing to present her data in April.</p> <p>It was noted that the PNA must also manage community expectations specifically related to RAPs decline of staffing in program and maintenance if no new funding mechanisms are available to replace those that are going away. Tori Kjer (LANLT) noted that the framework for a funding measure must reflect needs, which is why this study is useful. This is an opportunity to do groundwork for a consistent form of funding to operate in a high quality way that is separate from the City budget. Cathie Santo Domingo (RAP) noted that the PNA needs to be a solid framing for any future funding requests.</p>
11:00-11:55	8. Needs Criteria Visioning Activity	<p>The Consultant Team described the draft datasets and criteria for the needs analysis. The data to use and the level of prioritization is not set. The Steering Committee will be asked to help weight criteria in the March, April, and May meetings. The datasets could be organized into four main categories and include datasets such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PNA Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilities Condition Assessment ○ Park Pressure ○ Park Access ○ Recreation Facilities ○ Arts & Culture Facilities ○ Community Priorities ● Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SB535 Disadvantaged Communities ○ Capital Investments since 2000 ○ Population Projections

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health Atlas ○ LA Equity Index ○ CalEnviroScreen ● Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CA Climate Adaptation Strategy ○ CAL-Adapt ○ Climate Vulnerability Assessment ● Other City Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transit Oriented Communities ○ Community Safety <p>Jon Christensen (GreenInfo Network) described the work of GreenInfo Network and himself on the Per Square Mile Tool and its applicability to the City of LA. This analysis focused on closing access gaps by locating areas within the City that do not have a park within a square mile. It was noted that a key finding of the research is that acquisition of new parkland follows a rule of diminishing returns on park access impact. (i.e. approximately 20 new parks would close the gap in access by 25% whereas the City would need over 500 new parks to reach 100%).</p> <p>Cecilia then led the group in an interactive activity to solicit feedback on datasets and priorities for the Needs Assessment process.</p> <p>When asked to select the most critical factors to assess park needs the items were ranked below by total number of votes (from most to least):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conditions of Park Facilities (12) ● Priorities Identified during Community Engagement (12) ● Pollution Burdens and Disadvantaged Communities (10) ● RAP Capital Improvements since 2000 (10) ● CA Climate Adaptation Strategy (10) ● Community Safety (10) ● LA Equity Index (9) ● Transit Oriented Communities (7) ● Park Access (6) ● Park Pressure (6) ● Climate Vulnerability Assessment (6) ● CAL-Adapt (4) ● Population Growth Projections (4) ● Presence of Recreation Facilities (4) ● Presence of Arts and Culture Facilities (3) ● Health Atlas (3) <p>When asked which items were missed under the Resilience and Other City Priorities categories, the following items were listed and voted on with additional dots shown in parentheses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted survey for environmental groups RE: the role parks can play in resiliency (2) ● Other City Priorities
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Biodiversity○ Opportunities<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. LAUSDii. Other funding measures○ Schools/Community School Parks (7)○ Housing + Parks○ Stormwater/Water Quality○ Size + Scale, Park Opportunities (Pocket, Neighborhood, Regional)○ Community Driven Solutions for Safety (5) <p>When asked “What other data layers or equity considerations would you recommend we incorporate?” The following items were noted with dots shown in parentheses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Renter Density Overlay + Data○ Adding and expanding existing habitat○ Stream Daylighting Opportunities○ Quiet parks/quiet spaces (1)○ Marketing○ Programming○ Park Use is very important○ Make any questions around climate very easy for people to understand. i.e. is there enough shade at your home○ Parks as safety net<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Seniorsii. Working Families○ Parks as jobs creation/economic development○ Physical barriers “gates, fences, etc.”, in some parks and not in others <p>When asked “What needs do you think are important to measure but may be difficult to find data on?” The following items were noted with additional dot votes shown in parentheses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● How park usage has fluctuated throughout the years● Poll the wildlife● Safe routes to parks● Workforce and early retirement impacts on maintenance● Where parks used to be? Parks that have shrunk? <p>The group then reflected on the results of the activity. This discussion is organized by theme below.</p> <p>Data Aging It was noted that the age of datasets should be tracked to make sure the most current and relevant data available are being used for analyses. Additionally, data cannot yet reflect some recent impacts in the region i.e. habitat data in light of the recent fires.</p>
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		<p>Park Pressure It was noted there is nuance to how park pressure is defined. Pressure based on distance is important but also quality is important and plays a role in how well a space serves the community. Often programming overwhelms the quality making the volume of events/programming an indicator of Park Pressure, not always distance to an amenity as a single factor. It was noted that people deserve quality parks; Just because people are using a park at a high volume, if the amenities are of a high quality and maintained, that park wouldn't be in most need of improvement.</p> <p>Workforce and Retirement It was noted that approximately 50% of RAP construction and maintenance staff will be qualified to retire in the next five years. Additionally, in recent years six out of seven Senior supervisors on the planning side have retired. Training will need to occur to replace the workforce and fill needs. There will be additional needs for operations and maintenance (O&M) for emerging needs (i.e. native vegetation management and social/programming needs). Nikki Morales (California Conservation Corps - CCC) noted that they are training 18-25 year olds in native plant/restoration work. Many CCC trainees go to work for City agencies. They currently have eight crews between Pomona and LA.</p> <p>Renters and Housing It was noted that renter and housing burden is a significant factor of equity. There should be green gentrification awareness in the PNA process. In light of informal housing and multi-family or multi-generational households, data can only capture so much.</p> <p>Safety Considerations It was noted that parks are the City safety net. Camps at parks are a social service and a safe place for kids while parents are working. Parks provide services for seniors as well as serve as resilience centers to help combat the impacts of climate change. It was also noted that safety for staff in addition to community members should be considered.</p>
11:55-12:00	9. Next Steps and Upcoming Dates 10. Traditional Engagement Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tuesday, March 4, 2025: Ramona Hall (CD1) from 6-8pm b. Wednesday, March 5, 2025: Wilmington RC (CD15) from 6-8pm 	<p>The Consultant Team reviewed upcoming engagement and ways to spread information on the project. They will share the presentation slides as well as the link to the website with the Committee Members.</p> <p>The next meeting for the Steering Committee is scheduled for the same location on March 18, 2025, at 10am.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c. Thursday, March 6, 2025: Algin Sutton RC (CD8) from 6-8pmd. Saturday, March 8, 2025: Victory Vineland RC (CD2) from 10am-12pme. Tuesday, March 11 2025: Tarzana Child Care Building (CD3) from 6-8pmf. Thursday, March 13, 2025: Westchester RC (CD11) from 6-8pmg. Saturday, March 15, 2025: Lincoln Park SCC (CD14) from 10am-12pmh. Virtual Engagement Meeting March 18 6-8 PM (Zoom) <p>11. Interest Group Worksession, February 27, 2025 1:30-3pm Virtual (Zoom)</p>	
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These Meeting Notes represent the Landscape Architect's summation of the proceedings of the meeting and are not a transcript. Unless the Landscape Architect receives written notice of any corrections, additions, or clarifications within ten (10) days of the issue, this report shall be considered factually correct and become part of the official project record.