



2450 LA Park Needs Assessment

Meeting Date: Mar 18, 2025
Meeting Time: 10am-12pm PST
Meeting Location: In-Person; In-Person; EXPO Center
 3980 Bill Robertson Ln, Los Angeles, CA 90037
Subject: LA Park Needs Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting #2

Project Team Attendees:

- City of Los Angeles, RAP
- Matthew Rudnick
 - Cathie Santo Domingo
 - Darryl Ford
 - Brenda Aguirre
 - Ryan Carpio
 - Chenyere Stoneham
 - Meghan Luera
 - Jeremy Silva

OLIN

- Jessica Henson
- Andrew Dobshinsky
- Sarah Swanseen

The Robert Group

- Christina Monzer

KDI

- Lauren Elachi

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

- Jonathan Rieke

Steering Committee Member/Organization	Committee Member		Present
	First Name	Last Name	
Trust for Public Land	Guillermo	Rodriguez	X
Resources Legacy Fund	Alfredo	Gonzalez	X
The Nature Conservancy	Kelsey	Jessup	
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	
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy	Lauren	Ahkiam	

Prevention Institute	Francisco	Romero	
	Rob	Baird	X
Friends of the LA River	Candice	Dickens-Russell	X
Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure, City of LA	Randall	Winston	
Deputy Mayor for Neighborhood Services, City of LA	Jacqueline	Hamilton	X
Office of the Mayor, City of LA	Estefany	Garcia	X
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Brian	Baldauf	X
Individual Expert	Deborah	Cohen	
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative	Veronica	Hahni	X
	Aleigh	Lewis	X
Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Tony	Budrovich	X
California Conservation Corps	Duane	Wilson	X
City of LA Recreation and Parks Commission Representative	Marie	Lloyd	

Meeting Objectives

- 1) Finalize draft list of criteria for determining park needs
- 2) Provide feedback on the criteria's weighting

AGENDA

Time	Agenda Items	Notes
10:00	1. Welcome	Cecilia Estolano (Estolano Advisors, Better World Group) called the meeting to order.
10:05-10:15	2. Updates: <i>Project schedule, engagement meetings, and Community Partner Program</i>	<p>Jessica Henson (OLIN) provided a project update. This included a review of the project schedule and the status of project launch and engagement activities since the time of the last Steering Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Following the project launch on February 18, the Park Needs Assessment (PNA) has been active in the press, on social media, via the project website (needs.parks.lacity.gov), and through various, ongoing, engagement meetings across the City.</p> <p>In phase 1 of engagement, the Consultant Team has conducted 7 in-person and 1 virtual traditional community meetings across the City. These meetings involved a presentation and an open house where attendees could visit informational and interactive boards.</p> <p>Additional meetings in Phase 1 have included Interest Group meetings, Council District Briefings, and Tribal Briefings, and there will be several up-coming community pop ups. Phase 2 engagement meetings are in the process of being scheduled and will include 11 in-person and 1 virtual traditional</p>

		<p>meetings, continued interest groups, tribal meetings, youth engagement, and pop-ups from April through July.</p> <p>The Consultant Team has also led one of the first four Equity Sessions of the project process. Additional Equity Sessions will be continuing throughout the end of March with the second Phase beginning in April.</p> <p>The Community Partners Program (CPP) application has closed and there were 13 applicants across various neighborhood and activist networks. The Consultant Team and the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) will be continuing to the next steps of this process including onboarding the selected groups and initiating the first outreach campaigns.</p> <p>RAP will be printing and hanging PNA banners at recreation centers across the City to boost awareness of the project and drive more community members to the project website and to take the first survey.</p>
<p>10:15-10:30</p>	<p>3. Survey and Engagement Responses: <i>Interim report & discussion</i></p>	<p>Andrew Dobshinsky (OLIN) gave the group an update of early survey findings. The online survey has been live since February 18 and at the timepoint where data was collected for this meeting (March 13) there were over 1,900 respondents. When reviewing online responses across the City, communities in the Northwest Valley, East LA, and parts of West LA had the highest survey responses.</p> <p>Additional survey responses were reviewed, comparing graphically the online survey responses next to the in-person meeting survey responses, collected via dot voting boards at the various open house events. Key findings from this sample included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less than half of respondents feel that there are enough parks and/or recreation centers within walking distance of their home. ● Less than half of respondents think parks are in excellent or good condition. ● Less than half of respondents think recreation centers are in excellent or good condition. ● Close to 2/3 of respondents are supportive of a bond, tax, or levy to fund parks and recreation facilities. ● When compared to the City overall, demographics of the online respondents trended towards more white or caucasian respondents and less Hispanic or Latino proportionally. This underscores the importance of the statistically valid surveying that is taking place concurrently to provide a representative sample of City residents. <p>In summary, it was noted that these survey results are an early snapshot in the process and with continued outreach by the team and the start of the Community Partners Program, there could be shifts in the findings over time. The next</p>

		<p>Steering Committee meeting will include an update on the survey results available at that time.</p> <p>Discussion around the project updates, engagement and outreach, and survey results followed these updates. This discussion is summarized by theme below.</p> <p>Survey Respondent Locations and Increasing Outreach for City-wide Representation</p> <p>Tori Kjer (LANLT) stated that the geographic distribution so far of survey responses is notable with neighborhoods like West Hills more represented with much less representation in downtown and Council District 1. She and Guillermo Rodriguez (TPL) asked how the team intends to increase engagement in other areas of the City. The group discussed upcoming planned actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Project Team briefings with Council Districts can help to boost awareness of the survey. A briefing with CD 1 had occurred the day before this meeting and it was noted that the CD office would do outreach.- Youth and Pop Up engagement across the City including CicLAVia and possible collaboration with CEACA should help to reach out to additional neighborhoods.- RAP will be posting banners at recreation centers within their system that include QR codes directing people to the website. In addition, recreation center staff are being directed to share the survey with park users and recreation center users to encourage people to take it.- Direct mailers will be going out to communities across the city with less broadband access.- The Community Partners Program campaign #1 is to share basic project information including the survey. <p>Additionally it was noted that the statistically valid survey will provide key data that will be a representative sample across the City demographically and geographically with breakdowns by Council District.</p> <p>Surprises within initial data and/or engagement discussions</p> <p>Guillermo Rodriguez (TPL) asked what were the most surprising responses and conversations so far in the survey data and at engagement meetings.</p> <p>Various members of the Consultant Team responded noting topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community members are very polarized when it comes to the level of awareness of Quimby fees and the process through which those funds are spent. Many community members are highly motivated by trying to understand where Quimby funds from their neighborhood are going.- There is a big disconnect for many residents between their day to day experiences and lived
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		<p>reality and the development process. Many times community members see change just as change, regardless of political or organizational context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parks are highly contested spaces. Conversations so far around activities in parks like street vending and low riding have been demonstrating this. - The first Equity Session, Access for All, underscored the complexity within parks and public spaces. An example is in competing priorities between groups at the same table like bike lanes in conflict with wheelchair accessibility. <p>Zip Codes Outside of the City and Further Data Comparisons</p> <p>Veronica Hahni (LANI) asked how the team is handling survey responses from zip codes outside of the City. The Consultant Team noted that, to date, there have not been many of these instances and they have the ability to show a delamination of survey responses (i.e. comparisons of in-the-city vs outside). Veronica noted that since LA is fluid, boundaries have less bearing on the experience of parks. Vanessa Carter Fahnestock (USC) noted that the team could consider a buffer for dealing with data coming far outside of LA.</p> <p>Jon Christensen noted that a 13 mile radius may be appropriate based on research into how far people travel for park uses.</p>
<p>10:30-10:35</p>	<p><i>Stretch Break</i></p>	
<p>10:35-11:50</p>	<p>4. Park Needs Criteria: <i>Draft list & weighting</i></p>	<p>Jessica Henson and Andrew Dobshinsky (OLIN) gave a brief overview of the advances in the technical process for prioritization. The Consultant Team plans to take a three step approach which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identifying sites for prioritization (including existing RAP park sites, and potential future site areas); 2. evaluating the sites based on criteria; and 3. identifying potential guidelines and best practices for future engagement, policy, and design for the parks system. <p>Tony Budrovich (LAPF) thanked the Consultant Team for providing the data package including advanced information on the prioritization datasets to be discussed at this meeting. He noted that in sharing this with colleagues at his organization, many of the datasets were aligned with best practice in assessing park needs and people were very excited to see this work happening.</p> <p>Thomson Dryjanski (EA) then framed the next portion of the meeting as an interactive activity around criteria for site evaluation. All of the prioritization datasets were assembled on easels for discussion and dot voting by meeting participants in three breakout groups. Steering Committee members were asked to provide any feedback on the</p>

		<p>proposed measurement of datasets and provide a dot vote for datasets that they think should be weighted heavily in the process. Notes from these discussions are summarized by respective group below.</p> <p>In addition to the group feedback, emailed feedback was provided by LA Waterkeeper and shared with the full group. This feedback noted that the shared data package was very comprehensive. The following note was provided via email and shared aloud: “In looking at the slides, my only comment is that it may make sense to break up climate vulnerability a bit. Flood risk, for example, is very different from extreme heat (in terms of identifying risk as well as ultimate solution – e.g., more tree canopy for extreme heat vs. floodplain reclamation through park creation adjacent to at-risk waterways for flood risk).”</p> <p>Group 1, Facilitated by Thomson Dryjanski (EA) and Sarah Swansen (OLIN)</p> <p>Overall Approach: Attendees, particularly LANLT and LANI, emphasized the “need to get people into the park.” With this concept in mind, they believe criteria related to park conditions, safety, and program usage should be the most heavily weighted.</p> <p>Park Pressure: LANLT indicated that “Park Pressure” using walking distances can produce some incomplete results. The project team may need to consider other criteria and/or ground truth the findings for this specific criteria.</p> <p>Biodiversity: CCC raised a question about how the criteria will understand the biodiversity values within individual parks.</p> <p>2016 County PNA: The group generally recommended that the County’s 2016 Park Needs Assessment not be weighted highly, due to its age. It should be used to double-check or compare with the LA PNA results, rather than drive outcomes for this analysis.</p> <p>On Safety: The group had a long discussion around “Perceived Park Safety,” “Criminalization Risk.” and “Neighborhood Safety + Crime” criteria. Multiple groups, including LANLT, LANI, CCC, and others, emphasized how parks must be safe and active with users. The group supported the “Criminalization Risk” criterion because it included factors beyond traditional policing statistics and takes a preventative approach to community safety.</p> <p>On Water-Related Criteria: The group emphasized that water-related criteria are useful for an approach to funding</p>
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		<p>improvements, but should be secondary to amenities and usage.</p> <p>On Usage Data: The group raised questions about the “Park Visitation” criterion. Specifically, the group wanted to understand how the criterion will assess actual usage of the park and how this will be combined with “Park Visitation” and “Recreation Center Enrollment” criteria.</p> <p>On Access: MRCA raised the opportunity to assess what modes park visitors are using to get to the park in the surveys.</p> <p>Group 2, Facilitated by Kimberly Guo (BWG) and Andrew Dobshinsky (OLIN)</p> <p>Points of Clarity: The group asked clarifying questions about the following datasets, indicating that greater clarity may be necessary before publicizing the criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Differentiating between:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- “Perceived Walkability” vs. “Walkability (Measured)”- “Parks Condition Assessment” vs. “Park Physical Condition”- “Water Quality Priority” vs. “Infiltration and Recharge Opportunities”- Understanding the “Criminalization Risk” dataset - the group recommended changing the label of this dataset to reflect that the dataset seeks to prevent incarceration through park and open space addition and enhancement. <p>Resiliency criteria prioritization: The group prioritized each of the Resiliency criteria relatively equally, as the datasets are closely related. For example, increasing native tree species helps address climate vulnerability.</p> <p>Thinking about funding: The group reviewed the criteria with a lens of funding. Prevention Institute encouraged the consideration of funding set-asides and funding minimums for high priority communities (as determined by the “PNA Equity Score” and “LA County Park Needs Assessment” criteria) as a tool to supplement the criteria prioritization activity. Deputy Mayor Jacqueline Hamilton wondered if the City/County initiatives, many of which have their own funding sources, can be used to accomplish the aims of the other prioritization criteria.</p> <p>Overlapping criteria: The group did not prioritize the “Recreation Center Enrollment” and “Park Visitation” criteria,</p>
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		<p>stating that these criteria seemed more like consequences of the other existing criteria (i.e. improving the physical condition of parks and recreation centers would likely lead to increased visitation). In addition, the group did not prioritize the “Capital Improvement Project history” criterion in part because they expected a correlation between previous capital improvements and the physical conditions of recreation centers and parks. As this may or may not be accurate, reviewing the data before making a decision is key.</p> <p>Park safety & crime: The group discussed the “Perceived Park Safety” and “Neighborhood Safety + Crime” criteria, wondering if these datasets could be replaced by other datasets, such as location of park lighting, that focus more on how RAP can address perceived park safety and crime. However, there was no consensus among the group about the best datasets to use to measure park safety. Jacqueline noted the example of MacArthur Park, stating that the park is in a high park need area but is not used because visitors do not feel safe.</p> <p>Group 3, Facilitated by Sasha Ragland (EA) and Jessica Henson (OLIN)</p> <p>City Initiatives Overlay: The group discussed making the criteria under the “City Initiatives” category an overlay to the other groups of criteria. The group noted that these criteria provide added value and represent “nice to have” features. Some city initiatives like Measure W pay for stormwater projects which often take place at parks, providing multiple benefits to the community. The group also suggested moving the “LA County Parks Needs Assessment” and “Criminalization Risk” criteria to the City Initiatives category and out of the equity category.</p> <p>Grouping Resiliency Measures: The group ranked a number of the resiliency measures very highly and Aleigh Lewis (LANI) highlighted how biodiversity helps to reduce drought and fire risk. While some members felt the overlap in some of the resilience categories were high, the LANI member felt very strongly that the qualities shown as “Biodiversity + Habitat Conservation”, “Tree Species Composition” and “Habitat Connectivity” measures should not be grouped together since they measure different qualities of resilience. The group did suggest considering moving the “Climate Vulnerability” and “Shade Availability” criteria to the equity category.</p> <p>On Climate Vulnerability: The group suggested renaming this criterion “Climate Resilience” and rating places that have</p>
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		<p>fewer climate resilient elements as higher priority for investment, rather than focusing on hazards.</p> <p>On PNA Equity Score: The group discussed CalEnviroScreen’s focus on measuring pollution. A SC member from USC suggested creating a more precise measure that specifically looks at income, race, ethnicity, language spoken at home, overcrowded households, immigration status, and car ownership rather than relying on some of the listed measures which have overlap. However, there was a recognition that CalEnviroScreen’s ties to funding might be beneficial. She also noted that several of the criteria around income, etc. will start to demonstrate similar areas of need at a certain point. Jon Christensen noted that the team could do a principal factors correlation to highlight data from multiple datasets to overcome issues.</p> <p>On Recreation Center Criteria: The group noted that the project team may want to consider how to use the “Recreation Center Enrollment” criteria measure. A lower enrollment may not mean a facility is unpopular and should be deprioritized, it may mean that the right programs are not being offered for that community or the facility is in poor condition. The group suggested cross referencing this criterion with the “Park Physical Condition” criterion to get a fuller picture. This may require looking closely at the data and if this phenomenon is occurring before ascribing too much weight to this criteria</p> <p>Activity Summary Following the breakout groups, each group provided a summary report out of their group’s discussions. A full record of the dots from each group is shown in the table below.</p>
<p>11:50-12:00</p>	<p>5. Next Steps</p>	<p>It was noted that the Consultant Team would provide the meeting slides to the Steering Committee following the meeting.</p> <p>Prior to the next meeting the Consultant Team will plan to send an advance package of the updated survey data to the Steering Committee so the group does not need to spend significant meeting time reviewing these items during the meeting and can focus on the new content items.</p>

Table of Dot Voting (Breakout Group Activity)

Criteria	Group #1	Group #2	Group #3	Total
● Park Physical Condition	6	10	3	19
● Shade Availability	6	8	5	19
● Perceived Park Safety	9	7	2	18
● Park Pressure	9	5	3	17
● Perceived Walkability	7	5	2	14
● PNA Equity Score	7	4	2	13
● Criminalization Risk	6	6	1	13
● Climate Vulnerability	6	5	2	13
● Neighborhood Safety + Crime	5	6	2	13
● Walkability (Measured)	8	1	3	12
● Biodiversity + Habitat Conservation	6	2	4	12
● Capital Improvement Project History	4	4	3	11
● Habitat Connectivity	7	0	3	10
● Infiltration and Recharge Opportunities	5	2	3	10
● Community Priority Amenities	5	2	3	10
● Recreation Center Physical Condition	6	1	3	10
● LA County Park Needs Assessment	6	3	0	9
● Parks Condition Assessment	4	1	3	8
● Tree Species Composition	3	2	2	7
● Water Quality Priority	6	0	1	7
● Metro Corridors	3	1	2	6

Criteria	Group #1	Group #2	Group #3	Total
● Access to Rec Amenities	1	2	2	5
● Transit-Oriented Communities	2	2	1	5
● Availability of Private Open Space	1	2	2	5
● Park Visitation	1	1	2	4
● Recreation Center Enrollment	0	1	1	2

Criteria categories

● PNA ● Equity ● Resiliency ● Other City and County Metrics

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.