



## 2450 LA Park Needs Assessment

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**Meeting Date:** May 20, 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 #4

### Project Team Attendees:

#### City of Los Angeles, RAP

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

#### OLIN

- Jessica Henson
- Andrew Dobshinsky
- Sarah Swanseen
- Max Dickson

#### The Robert Group

- Isaiah Ford
- Christina Monzer

#### KDI

- Lauren Elachi

#### Agency: Artifact

- Chris Torres

#### Estolano Advisors

- Cecilia Estolano
- Thomson Dryjanski
- Sasha Ragland

#### Better World Group

- Kimberly Guo

#### GreenInfo Network

- Dan Rademacher
- María Lamadrid

#### UCLA/Luskin

- Jon Christensen

#### West of West

- Jonathan Rieke

#### HR&A

- Connie Chung
- Jill Bengochea

#### GreenInfo Network

- Dan Rademacher
- Maria Lamadrid

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Steering Committee Member/Organization	Committee Member		Present
	First Name	Last Name	
Trust for Public Land	Guillermo	Rodriguez	Y
Resources Legacy Fund	Alfredo	Gonzalez	Y
The Nature Conservancy	Kelsey	Jessup	Y
LA Neighborhood Land Trust	Tori	Kjer	Y

<b>LA County Department of Parks and Recreation</b>	Sean	Woods	N
<b>LA County Department of Parks and Recreation</b>	Sheela	Mathai	Y
<b>Community Partners</b>	Yvette	Lopez-Ledesma	Y
<b>University of Southern California</b>	Vanessa	Carter Fahnestock	Y
<b>LA Waterkeeper</b>	Bruce	Reznik	Y
<b>Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy</b>	Lauren	Ahkiam	N
<b>Prevention Institute</b>	Francisco	Romero	Y
<b>Friends of the LA River</b>	Candice	Dickens-Russell	N
<b>Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure, City of LA</b>	Randall	Winston	N
<b>Deputy Mayor for Neighborhood Services, City of LA</b>	Jacqueline	Hamilton	Y
<b>Deputy Mayor of Community Safety</b>	Karren	Lane	N
<b>Mayors Office</b>	Geoff	Thomspon	Y
<b>Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority</b>	Brian	Baldauf	Y
<b>Individual Expert</b>	Deborah	Cohen	Y
<b>Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative</b>	Veronica	Hahni	N
<b>Los Angeles Parks Foundation</b>	Tony	Budrovich	Y
<b>California Conservation Corps</b>	Duane	Wilson	N
<b>City of LA Recreation and Parks Commission Representative</b>	Marie	Lloyd	Y
<b>Los Angeles City/ County Native American Indian Commission Chair</b>	Rich	Toyon	Y

<b>Alternates and Other Attendees Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Present</b>
	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	
<b>Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy</b>	Stephany	Calvillo	N
<b>Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (Alternate)</b>	Aleigh	Lewis	Y
<b>Prevention Institute (Alternate)</b>	Rob	Baird	N
<b>California Conservation Corps (Alternate)</b>	Nikki	Morales	N
<b>LA Waterkeeper (Alternate)</b>	Maggie	Gardner	N
<b>Office of the Mayor</b>	Estephany	Garcia	Y
<b>Trust for Public Land (Alternate)</b>	Lee	Clauss	N
<b>Trust for Public Land (Alternate)</b>	Nola	Talmage	N
<b>LA Parks Foundation</b>	Lindsey	Kosberg	Y

### Meeting Objectives

- 1) Share results of LA County Dept. of Parks and Recreation's newest planning study.
- 2) Review the results from the web-based and statistically valid surveys for trends in park needs citywide.
- 3) Review preliminary results and refine methodology for the site-based evaluation framework ("universe of sites" and "site prioritization" steps).

## AGENDA

<i>Time</i>	<i>Agenda Items</i>	<i>Notes</i>
10:00-10:05	<b>1. Welcome</b>	Cecilia Estolano (EA, BWG) welcomed the group and called the meeting to order. This included introducing a new member to the Steering Committee, Commissioner Rich Toyon, representing the LA County and City Native American Indian Commission.
10:05-10:15	<b>2. Updates:</b> <i>Project schedule, engagement meetings, and Community Partner Program</i>	<p>Jessica Henson (OLIN) provided an introduction and update to the Park Needs Assessment (PNA) process. This included a high level overview, a review of the project schedule, update on engagement to date, as well as high level updates on ongoing PNA Analyses.</p> <p>Jessica shared a timeline of park growth that has been in development by the Project Team which shows significant park additions since the first park in Los Angeles was designated in the 1780s. Additionally Jessica shared recent studies about the distribution and timing of capital investment across the park system. The Project Team is working to update the financial analyses with the information from the proposed 2026 City General Fund budget.</p>
10:15-10:30	<b>3. PNA+ Implementation Plan Presentation</b> <i>Presentation from Sheela Mathai, Section Head - Planning and Development Agency (LAC DPR)</i>	<p>Sheela Mathai (LA County Parks and Recreation) introduced the LA County implementation PNA+ effort which has grown from the 2016 Countywide PNA and the 2022 PNA+. It is a part of their ongoing mission to advance park equity and environmental justice in LA County.</p> <p>Sheela gave an overview of the 2016 PNA which established areas of high park need throughout the County. This mapping has given the decision makers guidelines for prioritization of investment moving forward. During the 2022 PNA+ the County further identified opportunities to both conserve and restore lands. The county has identified service gaps in the northern part of LA County - prioritize rural recreation.</p> <p>During the current PNA+ Implementation plan work, the County has been looking at needs and opportunities to aid in implementation of the PNA goals. This includes looking at Disadvantaged Communities (DAC census tracts), parks in poor condition, as well as opportunity sites such as LUST cleanup sites and tax-defaulted vacant parcels. Also during the PNA+ Implementation Plan there has been a lot of emphasis on coalition building including groups across the County, many of which sit on the LA PNA steering committee including, the Prevention Institute, LA Neighborhood Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land, and the Nature Conservancy.</p>

10:30-10:50	<b>4. Survey Results</b> <i>Presentation, followed by Q&amp;A.</i>	<p>Andrew Dobshinsky (OLIN) presented the main takeaways from the Statistically Valid, Online, and In-Person survey results.</p> <p>During the Phase 1 survey, the Project team collected over 5,000 survey results. This included 1,008 statistically valid survey results, 2,398 short online survey responses, and 1,750 long online survey responses. The 1,008 statistically valid survey responses exceeds the amount required for a statistically representative sample of the population of the City of Los Angeles.</p> <p><b>Access and Availability</b> The main takeaways from the survey were shared. Less than half of respondents feel that there are enough parks and/or recreation centers within walking distance of their home. The majority of respondents typically drive or walk to parks and recreation centers, compared to Bike, Bus, Rail, and other forms of transit. Most respondents have visited a City of LA park within the past year while only about half have visited a City of LA recreation center.</p> <p><b>Overall Condition</b> It was noted that the rating of park condition was the highest among the Statistically Valid Surveys when compared to the Online and In-person engagement responses at 65%, 40%, and 19% reporting a good or excellent condition respectively. This trend was also reflected in the rating of Recreation Center conditions.</p> <p><b>Participation</b> About one in four respondents have participated in a recreation program in the past year. Of those who participated over 75% rated the quality of the recreation programs as excellent or good. And over 75% of respondents agree that recreation of park facilities are available when they want to use them.</p> <p><b>Safety, Belonging, and Reasons they Don't Visit</b> More than three in four online survey respondents noted that they feel safe and/or that they belong at at least one park or recreation facility. When asked to select the reasons respondents do not visit parks and recreation facilities, close to half of respondents noted the presence of people experiencing homelessness as a reason. The next top three responses were because parks are too far from where they live, they do not know where to go/what is offered, and facilities are not well-maintained.</p> <p><b>Important Facilities and Programs</b> When asked to select four most important outdoor facilities the top four responses were unprogrammed green space, natural areas and wildlife habitats, paved, multi-use trails and non-paved multi-use trails.</p>
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		<p>by age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc. The Project Team will prepare some of these cross tab insights.</p> <p>Estephany Garcia (Mayor's Office) asked if young adults were represented in the survey results. Andrew noted that there are additional data points on gender and age that we can start to understand and represent.</p> <p>Francisco Rodriguez (Prevention Institute) asked if there had been less Hispanic/Latino representation at meetings. Jessica noted that RAP has seen a drop in participation in Recreation Centers across the City by minority populations during recent months, corresponding with fear of current national policies. This underscored the importance of the Statistically Valid surveying which is representative of the race/ethnicity breakdown of the City.</p>
10:50-11:00	<b>5. Methodology for the Systemwide Cost Estimate</b> <i>Presentation, followed by Q&amp;A</i>	<p>Max Dickson (OLIN) presented the high level methodology for the cost estimate process where the team is on step four of a five-step process. So far the team has evaluated budget and staffing, benchmarked RAP systems against other peer-cities, identified existing funding gaps, and now are using cost estimates to size capital and operations and maintenance funding needs. The final step to come before the Draft PNA is created is to identify potential funding sources.</p> <p>Guillermo asked about maintenance and operations within the parks system and highlighted that this will be a key consideration.</p> <p>Geoff Thomson (Mayor's Office) asked how this embeds considerations about design and building. Jessica noted that there could be consideration on standardization of components of new facilities such as restrooms, but it might not be appropriate for all facilities. In the 1980s, for example, RAP used a standard build for many recreation centers across the City. It is known as the "Mason Building" typology. The City of LA standardized paint palette was noted by Geoff as an example of standardization. Some Steering Committee members expressed concern over too much standardization.</p> <p>Cathie Santo-Domingo (RAP) noted that park activation is tied to park safety and security and spending, and ultimately care and maintenance. She noted that staffing and bringing people to parks is important to this discussion.</p> <p>Bruce Resnik (LA Waterkeeper) noted that funding opportunities like Safe, Clean, Water could be included in the cost estimate/and design guidelines framework.</p> <p>Brian Bauldalf (MRCA) asked about stormwater features in parks which are often managed by LASAN. Jessica noted that capacity growth for staff to maintain native</p>

		<p>habitat and stormwater management features has been an ongoing conversation during the PNA. Jimmy Kim (RAP) added that there is a desire to start an Open space division within RAP that up to now has not been approved in their budget but is an initiative the department plans to keep pursuing.</p>
11:00-11:05	Stretch Break	
11:05-11:55	<p><b>6. Site-Based Evaluation Framework Preliminary Results</b>  <i>Presentation, followed by group discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What aligned with your expectations?</i></li> <li>• <i>What surprised you about the results?</i></li> <li>• <i>What potential tools for design, policy, or engagement would you recommend based on the results?</i></li> <li>• <i>How should we display this on the web portal?</i></li> </ul>	<p>Andrew Dobshinsky presented the high-level site-based evaluation framework approach which includes determining the Universe of Sites, Prioritization of Sites, and Identification of Potential tools. The Project Team has recently completed the first version of step 2, Prioritization of Sites, for today's discussion.</p> <p><b>Universe of Sites</b>          Andrew noted that the site-based evaluation considers 485 existing RAP parks as well as 36 square-mile grid cells located across the City. Their locations are based on areas without existing parks, and areas with high park pressure. Twenty-three criteria organized under four categories (Rec and Parks, Equity, Resiliency, and City/County) were assessed and combined for each site. Criteria were given a high, medium, or low weighting based on past worksessions with the Steering Committee.</p> <p>Kelsey Jessup (TNC) asked how park prioritization (existing and new) fits into the overall budgeting methodology. Jessica noted that there will be multiple approaches, like what is the cost to do everything and what it would cost to do just the top 100 priorities, for example. This discussion would be ongoing in the summer months and fall. It is assumed that the cost to do everything will be very high, so prioritization will be important.</p> <p><b>Site-Based Evaluation Preliminary Results</b>          Sarah Swanseen (OLIN) presented the site-based evaluation framework preliminary results. The results were shown on "Park Pixel" maps which represent sites across the City as individual diamond shapes with the prospective sites shown overlaid as X marks.</p> <p>Each category was shown including the maps for each input and the score for that category.</p> <p><b>Criteria Categories</b>          The Recreation and Parks Priority category includes 9 criteria; Park Physical Condition, Rec Center Physical Condition, Park Pressure, Perceived Walkability, Measured Walkability, Access to Community Priority Amenities, Park Conditions Assessment, Park Visitation, MyLA311 Requests. When looking just at the criteria under the Recreation and Park Priority Category, it was</p>



	<p>noted that scores are highest in sites within East LA and the Western San Fernando Valley.</p> <p>The Equity Priority category includes 5 criteria; Social Equity Score, Shade Availability, Criminalization Burden, Capital Improvement Project History, Availability of Private Open Space. When looking just at the criteria under the Equity Priority category, it was noted that high scores are concentrated in South, Central, and East LA, as well as in the Eastern San Fernando Valley.</p> <p>The Resiliency Priority category includes 4 criteria; Climate Vulnerability, Biodiversity and Habitat Conservation, Habitat Connectivity, and Tree Species Composition. When looking just at the criteria under the Resilience Priority category, it was noted that coastal sites as well as sites in Central LA and within or near Hillside Landscapes scored highly.</p> <p>The Other City/County Priority category includes 5 criteria; Perceived Park Safety, Metro Corridor Priority, Infiltration and Recharge, Water Quality Priority, and LA County Park Needs Assessment. When looking just at the criteria under the Other City/County Priority category, it was noted that sites in East and Central LA as well as scattered sites in the San Fernando Valley score highly.</p> <p><b>Composite Scores</b></p> <p>The Composite Score takes each of the 23 criteria and combines them based on their weighting. When looking at the Composite Score, it was noted that Sites clustered in East, Central, and South LA as well as the Southern and Eastern San Fernando Valley show up in the highest priority category. Sarah noted that each of the 521 sites were given a score and a ranking and shared a list of some of the top, middle, and lowest sites in the evaluation framework.</p> <p><b>Case Study Sites</b></p> <p>Sarah then shared six case study sites to provide a window into results across the high, medium, and low end of the ranking. In the preliminary ranking, the sites were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● #5: Reseda Park</li><li>● #8: MacArthur Park</li><li>● #68 PerSquareMile Westlake/Koreatown</li><li>● #69 Ernest E. Debs Park</li><li>● #258: Griffith Park</li><li>● #484: Pan Pacific Park</li></ul> <p>A graphic representing their overall scores as well as what their scores in each category are were shown for reference.</p> <p><b>Exercise and Discussion</b></p> <p>The Consultant Team then shared a print out list of the 521 sites, their scores for all criteria, criteria categories,</p>
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		<p>and their overall score and ranking. Jessica Henson (OLIN) noted that it is best to think of the priority rankings across the whole scale. For example, whether a site landed in the bottom 25% or the top 25%. Discussion then followed highlighting what was surprising, what aligned with expectations, and what are next steps for updating and using this data in the PNA. The discussion notes are organized by theme below.</p> <p><b>General/Methodology</b></p> <p>Kelsey Jessup (TNC) asked what does “priority ranking” mean for each case study, asking if the goal is to tell us what to do at a site in the future. The Consultant Team noted that this is Composite of 23 metrics to evaluate possible need and order of funding priority across these sites. It is not determining what to do at a site or a site's potential. Later Kelsey noted that some of the criteria are not directly influenced by RAP and could be introduced as guidelines.</p> <p>Vanessa Carter noted that weighting of the categories puts the Recreation and Parks category at 2-3x higher influence in the overall composite score by virtue of there being more of them. Her hope is that the Equity category could be a higher weighting. It was noted that there are criteria in other categories that are also related to equity so how we message and account for those items moving forward will be important when communicating to the public.</p> <p>Yvette Lopez Ledesma noted that when looking at 1-50 of the list many of them fall within the same 5 Council Districts. She asked how we could make the results applicable to communities across the City.</p> <p><b>Understanding and Communicating Results through Categories or Park Classifications</b></p> <p>Tori Kjer noted that she was not surprised that Griffith or Pan Pacific scored in the middle to bottom of the scoring. She did note that Reseda Park (#5) being higher than MacArthur park (#8) was surprising. She added that categorization and typology will be important in framing what to do with these types of results. For example, Reseda Skate park vs large regional parks cannot be compared in terms of the level of funding needed or types of intervention.</p> <p>Guillermo noted his support for larger groupings when communicating this information, for example, showing the top 20 as a bucket, to avoid really small differences in scoring making a bigger impact than it should. He also noted that in the case of Griffith, which is so large and has many subcomponents, it may overall score lower but some of its individual amenities may need attention and noted that these cases need to have a place in the overall framework.</p>
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	<p>Cathie Santo-Domingo noted that the results could be organized by scale or number of community members, noting that regional spaces serve a larger community vs. skate park. Andrew noted that visitation data is something that could start to get to this. He noted that currently it is weighted low but could increase if that is desired.</p> <p>Geoff asked if the really large facilities could be broken down into smaller park facilities. He noted that while Griffith on the whole isn't in equity focused areas of the City it does serve equity focused communities as a regional park.</p> <p>Darryl Ford (RAP) underscored that the group should focus on the "Universe of Sites" approach, noting that while each site is ranked on the list next to each other, this does not necessarily mean funds will be distributed equally across the ranking. Some parks may just need focused maintenance funding while others would need larger changes or additional amenities. Investment will vary site by site.</p> <p><b>Potential for Use of Data</b> Marie Lloyd (LA Parks Commission) highlighted the potential in this list to approach groupings of high priority sites holistically. She noted 3-4 sites in close proximity to one another on the first page of the preliminary scoring that could be connected by walking trails for example. Can the team identify other such groupings and opportunities? There are strategic design solutions that could be supported by the site-evaluation results.</p> <p><b>Data Updates and Life after the PNA Report</b> Brian Baldauf noted that some of the top parks shown in the preliminary results are locations that will be coming from the MRCA soon, which was something that was positive to see. He asked how many of the parks are in planning or may be soon implemented.</p> <p><b>Tension between High Level Data and Lived Reality</b> Francisco noted that he will need to spend time with the data and that the group should not forget the community voices and results from the survey coming out of the PNA in the discussions of the Site Based Evaluation. He noted that the survey result about reasons people do not visit parks including our unhoused community members and issues of perceived safety and security in parks should all stay with us as we consider how we tell the difficult story of the varied needs across the City.</p> <p>Geoff Thomson noted that the data should be operationalized for RAP and the City and used to show progress when projects and improvements come on-line moving forward.</p> <p><b>Overall RAP Mission and Narrative of Data</b></p>
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		<p>Deborah Cohen asked that this information and its messaging be centered around what is the overall goal of the parks system. Noting that with the Olympic and Paralympic games upcoming, we want to inspire people to use the parks. Jimmy Kim (RAP) noted that their goal is to bring more people into parks that haven't used them before. Investment can help bring people into parks through facility improvements.</p> <p>Deputy Mayor Jacqueline Hamilton asked, do we need to think about alignments with the overall RAP vision in this exercise? This could look like greater emphasis on things like park pressure and access.</p> <p>Geoff Thomson noted that the LA Times came out against the last ballot initiative because it was "paying for games related initiatives." He noted that this Site-Based Evaluation framework gives us data with which to support decision making and provide a value proposition to voters.</p> <p>Cecilia closed the discussion by noting the importance of connectiveness. Parks are places where people are connected and see each other. We need to communicate the spirit of parks!</p>
	<b>7. Next Steps</b>	<p>Jessica concluded the meeting with an overview of next steps. Attendees were asked to keep draft materials shared within the Steering Committee as drafts are revised based on the comments.</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.*