



2450 LA Park Needs Assessment

Meeting Date: Sep 16, 2025
Meeting Time: 10am-12pm PDT
Meeting Location: In-Person; EXPO Center
3980 Bill Robertson Ln, Los Angeles, CA 90037
Subject: LA Park Needs Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting #6

Project Team Attendees:

City of Los Angeles, RAP

- Matthew Rudnick
- Jennifer Perkins
- Darryl Ford
- Meghan Luera
- Jeremy Silva
- Nicholas Caulfield

OLIN

- Jessica Henson
- Andrew Dobshinsky
- Sarah Swanseen

The Robert Group

- Mary Alice Williams

KDI

- Leslie Dinkin

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

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	No
LA Neighborhood Land Trust	Tori	Kjer	X
LA County Department of Parks and Recreation	Sheela	Mathai	X
Community Partners	Yvette	Lopez-Ledesma	X
University of Southern California	Vanessa	Carter Fahnestock	X

LA Waterkeeper	Bruce	Reznik	X
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy	Stephany	Calvillo	X
Prevention Institute	Francisco	Romero	X
Friends of the LA River	Candice	Dickens-Russell	No
Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure, City of LA	Randall	Winston	No
Deputy Mayor for Neighborhood Services, City of LA	Jacqueline	Hamilton	X
Deputy Mayor of Community Safety	Karren	Lane	No
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	Brian	Baldauf	No
Individual Expert	Deborah	Cohen	No
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative	Veronica	Hahni	X
Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Lindsey	Kozberg	X
California Conservation Corps	Duane	Wilson	No
City of LA Recreation and Parks Commission Representative	Marie	Lloyd	No
Los Angeles City/ County Native American Indian Commission Chair	Rich	Toyon	No

Alternates and Other Attendees Organization	Name		Present
	First Name	Last Name	
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (Alternate)	Aleigh	Lewis	X
Prevention Institute (Alternate)	Rob	Baird	No
California Conservation Corps (Alternate)	Nikki	Morales	X
LA Waterkeeper (Alternate)	Maggie	Gardner	No
Office of the Mayor	Estefany	Garcia	X
Office of the Mayor	Geoff	Thompson	X
Trust for Public Land (Alternate)	Lee	Clauss	No
Trust for Public Land (Alternate)	Nola	Talmage	No
LA County Department of Parks and Recreation	Loretta	Quach	Yes

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Receive Steering Committee member feedback on the draft PNA document.
- 2) Identify feasible funding strategies and elements for their success .
- 3) Groundtruth the decision-making framework for project and site-level implementation.
- 4) Share project updates and next steps.

AGENDA

Time	Agenda Items	Notes
10:00 - 10:05	1. Welcome + Updates	Cecilia Estolano (EA) called the meeting to order. Jessica Henson (OLIN) provided a quick update on the project schedule and engagement to-date.
10:05- 10:35	2. First Impressions: Draft PNA (group discussion) <u>Discussion Questions</u> <i>What stood out, could be clarified further, or should be emphasized more?</i>	The Consultant Team opened the floor for discussion and first impressions on the Draft PNA. Discussion takeaways are summarized by theme below. There was significant agreement that the PNA document is an impressive body of work. Engagement So Far Guillermo Rodriguez (TPL) asked how the public has received the PerSquareMile (PSM) outcomes and information? Are they understanding the technical nature of the report or confused? - Jessica noted some folks have identified needs in their neighborhood directly adjacent to PSMs and there have been discussions about what it means if there are opportunities adjacent to, but outside of, the PSM. - Jon Christensen noted that in conversations with the press, there has been interest in the PSM and prioritization methodologies and what they mean for the future of RAP's planning and spending. Sheela Mathai (LA County Parks and Recreation) added that the website was very user friendly. She asked the Consultant Team to expand more on what has been heard so far at community meetings. Jessica noted we have heard three main buckets of feedback; - Environmental groups and opponents of artificial turf - Community members expressing concerns about very specific issues at their parks. These were often with an overtone of distrust of RAP and the City and government more broadly. - Community members who are invested in improving conditions more broadly and who have contributed ideas to strengthen or add more nuance to the technical assessments. - Matt Rudnick (RAP) noted within conversations at RAP leadership there is a surprise at the level of support for passive recreation in the statistically valid surveying. This is a shift in thinking because

		RAP has historically been primarily recreation/programming focused. - Darryl Ford (RAP) added that the budget and finance context has been a helpful tool within the department to tell the story about the staffing and budget picture over the past 25 years. Report Structure and Complexity Tori Kjer noted that she provided comments directly to the team via email but summarized that the report goes from the “high level” to technical and detail oriented very rapidly with an abrupt transition. She noted that the PNA would benefit from more storytelling. Can the results be made more related to the City and neighborhoods in a more “plan areas” approach. Lindsey Kozberg (LAPF) added that the earlier chapters are very thoughtful. She noted that there could be more added about cadence for example, how often do we need to perform actions at specific sites and within communities. Estefany Garcia (Mayors Office) noted that up to Site Prioritization the writing was more accessible. Site prioritization was not digestible and made her want more windows into the data. Bruce Resnik (LA Waterkeeper) noted that the executive summary needs to include more of the key information and should aim to summarize all of the most important information within 5-7 pages. Tori added that she did an exercise to condense the report into a “pitch deck” using the most compelling pages and graphics but noted that while this worked for some sections, this was difficult for the budget and financial story. Tori requested a clear infographic about the budget issues that could be summarized in one graphic. Yvette Lopez-Ledesma (Community Partners) noted that there should be more elevation of community engagement. “Ongoing engagement” chapter can be earlier. Francisco Romero (Prevention Institute) noted during the PNA+ there were sessions for review that were longer and more in-depth. “How to” navigate the document would be helpful even earlier in the document, for example, following the table of contents. Stephany Calvillo (LAANE) agreed that there is a lack of accessibility around the document's contents when approached as a whole. Veronica Hani (LANI) asked about the community response to the draft and stated that she found the PNA Draft to be overwhelming. She noted that she was glad this wasn't the community response being heard so far.
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		Alfredo Gonzalez (Resource Legacy Fund) noted that within the report the level of accessibility varies. He reiterated the potential value of an under 10 page summary document. Matt expressed concern that making a separate document may discourage people from engaging with the full document. Darryl noted that the existing light blue pages could become a part of the executive summary. Context of the PNA: Political Climate and Equity Vanessa Carter Fahnestock (USC) emphasized the need to contextualize the conversation at the Steering Committee and the PNA report within the current political climate and history of disinvestment. She specifically noted the reality that the locations across the City with residents who are most park poor and dependent on social services and benefits of public green open space are the same communities and geographies that are the most impacted by ongoing ICE raids and federal policies. Site Prioritization and future Case Studies Matt noted that there was ongoing conversation within RAP leadership about how to contextualize and explain the site prioritization and “Universe of Sites”. Jon Christensen (UCLA) noted that there can be an expanded storytelling around the prioritization. Specifically around how there is a neighborhood need around pressure. Thomson Dryjanski (EA) added that the team was looking to do case studies for the 25 top-priority sites. This was discussed in terms of best approaches to creating this information. Aleigh Lewis (LANI) noted her issues with the site prioritization is it is unclear why the department should focus on these sites. She feels the methodology is comparing apples to oranges as it does not have a separate set of criteria or methodology that is dependent on size and amenity. She posed to the team to consider if the sites can be separated by category. Lindsey also noted the PNA should emphasize growth and successes alongside the struggles of the past 25 years. Relating to case studies, she worries that this approach does not look at the aggregated story and doubles down on the individual nature of specific park sites. The collective difference for the different regions/neighborhoods should be better explained and worked into a narrative. Additionally she noted some discrepancies in amenity/park counts and asked the Consultant Team and RAP to review with an eye for consistency. Budget, Staffing, and Implementation Narrative Sarah Freidman (TPL) noted that RAP staffing and staffing cuts are the most striking. The Department is doing so much with so little – what is the bigger picture of this and
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		the options and strategy moving forward? The NA can better tell this story. Aleigh added that staffing will generate jobs within LA which is a point of view that can be leveraged in the narrative around future funding. Guillermo noted that a summary of implementation highlights a huge need and requires the City to take a huge step forward. People love their parks. What is the goal? How can we better clarify this within the narrative of the document?
10:35-11:15	3. Funding Strategies (group discussion) <u>Discussion Questions</u> <i>What funding strategies identified in the PNA should RAP focus on to increase their fiscal sustainability?</i> <i>When deploying those strategies, what are the key details - sectoral trends, partnerships, political considerations - that will contribute to success?</i>	Connie Chung (HR&A) presented the overall process and situated the group for discussion around funding strategy options. Yvette asked if when considering parking concessionaires and prices, is the cost of enforcement an offset? Connie noted that there is also an equity consideration, this would need a nuanced approach and is not a silver bullet. Matt added that self-generated revenue is something RAP would like to maximize while also being mindful of equity considerations. Lindsey noted that there are funding streams that move through the County which the City of LA may not be able to maximize on as grants go to smaller municipalities. The size of LA could be a disadvantage. How can we best leverage relationships with Metro and other entities? This is key especially due to CoLA's position as providing services to vulnerable populations, youth, and seniors. Deputy Mayor Jacequiline Hamilton noted that the City leaves money on the table due to understaffing for pursuing grant funds. Connie noted that in many peer Cities that were reviewed during the PNA, the money that the City was contributing was bolstered by Friends Of groups or other conservancies that manage a singular park. In other cities this looks like City funds going towards capital improvement. Guillermo noted that other cities like Seattle, and San Francisco collaborate for large joint efforts. Stephany Cavillo posed to the team to provide a more local example. Friends of Lincoln Park startup included case studies of other examples as precedents which helped inform decision making in the formation of the group. Jessica highlighted neighborhood level discrepancy between appetite for monetization of park space. Sheela Mathai noted that at the county level they are 10 years into these types of collaborations and have worked through several pain points. Formalization is key. Leveraging philanthropy helps to deliver more quickly overall this has been a successful model. Natural areas and more special use areas like arboretums have been a successful special

		interest typology for partnerships with non-profits. Matt noted that there are differences between guidelines of RAP and signage code. There are also differences between commercialized space vs partnerships with organizations that also support programs (i.e. LADF). The burden is always ongoing O&M. Alfredo added that the PNA should include a comprehensive list of all options. He underscored the need for a comprehensive approach. Starting with what will generate the most revenue i.e. property tax/bond replacement for Prop k. Another option he mentioned was the MRCA model which is not a perfect system for equitable development as it supports an improvement district which biases towards areas that can afford it. Tori added that quimby is flawed with RAP often not getting the full share of money that they should get based on the policy. This is where the land trust model is so critical. Yvette added that the PNA could consider a fee on production at parks. Matt noted that RAP has one but there are conversations to remove the fee. There could be a conversation around if there should be a differential fee for LA based production vs other. Lindsey underscored that these are City-wide policies that affect these levers.(i.e. Quimby, Signage, Sponsorship, etc.). The issue is they are created without consideration of the park but they end up impacting the parks. Guillermo noted that the PNA needs to elevate big-ticket items, particularly around budget shortfalls and the need for significant funding and park space. We need to replace Prop K at a minimum. This should not be a timid suggestion but needs to be stated and elevated. Additionally within the PSM squares there could be an opportunity for planning around alignment in initiatives within these areas of the city. How can these needs and relationships be leveraged?
11:10-11:15	Break	
11:15-11:55	4. Decision-making Framework (breakout groups) <u>Discussion Questions</u> What questions do you have about how the framework operates? What is missing or needs to be prioritized?	Andrew Dobshinsky (OLIN) presented the decision making framework including a case-study site, Saint James Park. The meeting then divided into two breakout discussion groups. The two groups shared key findings after discussions: Group 1: - Starting with a specific site may be too specific for decision making. - Conduct community engagement, specifically with CBOs and NGOs earlier in the decision process.

		• The framework serves an important tool of visualizing the decision making process and preserving institutional knowledge for RAP. • The framework plays an important role in communicating decision making to the public but it may be too visually confusing. A simplified graphic for the public and an excel version for decision makers could be beneficial. • An online portal to check on the progress of a park site may be beneficial. • Look beyond just the park site for additional opportunities. Group 2: • There seems to be a step missing that connects RAP's utilization of priority sites to the project/site level framework. SC members would like to see that spelled out. • Community engagement should not only be focused on new park projects. It should include proactive visioning for future projects with community members in high-need areas. ◦ RAP staff should research and be attentive to socioeconomic and other demographic data when consulting the community. • The framework could use some flexibility to acknowledge other specific priorities, such as: ◦ Special interest cases, like individual donations; ◦ Other infrastructure investments, like Measure W site upgrades; ◦ Councilmember priorities; ◦ And other RAP strategic directives, e.g. RAP may choose to upgrade the WiFi at a park and do other investments at the same time. • Other considerations that may be included into the decision-making framework include: ◦ Addressing public safety or liability concerns; ◦ The need for an increased level of service at that site; ◦ Assessing RAP's ability to operate and maintain that site.
11:55 - 12:00	5. Next Steps	

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.