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WHAT IS THE PARK NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

The County of Los Angeles is conducting a countywide assessment of the need for parks and recreation in both cities and unincorporated areas. The goal of the Park Needs Assessment is to engage all communities within the County in a collaborative process to gather data and input for future decision-making on parks and recreation. The Park Needs Assessment will increase our understanding of existing park and recreation assets, and help us to determine how to improve, expand, and make them more accessible. Specifically, the final report will determine Study Areas and will identify, prioritize and outline costs for potential park projects within each Study Area.

Who will be involved?

- You! All communities within the County, including cities and unincorporated areas.
- A Steering Committee composed of:
  - *Supervisorial Districts*
  - *Councils of Government (COG)*
  - *Community-Based Organizations*
  - *Community Members*
  - *County Departments and Partnering Agencies*
- Local agencies and community-based organizations will be trained to hold community engagement events in each Study Area to determine park and recreation needs and priorities.

What are the Study Areas?

- The Park Needs Assessment is organized around Study Areas, which will be used to identify community-specific needs and determine priority projects.

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WHY COMPLETE AN ASSESSMENT?

- The assessment will result in a visionary list of projects and cost estimates, in order of priority, for each Study Area.
- It will identify future opportunities for parks and recreation throughout the County by Study Area.
- The Park Needs Assessment will assist cities and unincorporated areas in future park planning.
- The Park Needs Assessment may be used as a guide for potential development of future funding mechanisms.
- Results could also be used to leverage Federal and State resources, and guide local funding decisions.

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- The Steering Committee, with support from the consultant team, developed criteria to identify Study Areas.

What standards will be used to determine need?

- The Steering Committee established a set of park and recreation standards to compare needs across the entire County.
- This set of standards will be used for the Park Needs Assessment, but is not intended to replace municipal park and recreation standards.

What will be included in the analysis?

- City and County parks including community parks, neighborhood parks, pocket parks and tot lots
- City and County recreational facilities including swimming pools, recreation centers, gyms, and skate parks
- Regional parks
- School recreation facilities with joint use agreements
- Trail corridors along flood control channels
- Separately owned public trail rights-of-way outside of parks

What will not be included in the analysis?

- Golf courses
- Cemeteries
- Plazas and public art installations
- Beaches
- Schools (except recreation facilities with joint use agreements)

When will the assessment occur?

- The Park Needs Assessment will be conducted and completed over 15 months, between March 2015 and May 2016.

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TWO DECADES OF PARKS PROJECTS

Every year, more than 70 million people visit parks in LA County and participate in park-sponsored recreational programs. Millions of children and youth use park facilities for after-school, weekend, and summer programs, and millions of seniors attend programs at nearby senior centers.

The 1992 parks funding measure passed by LA County voters will expire soon and the County and cities still have unmet needs for parks, recreational facilities and open space–especially in underserved areas.

During the past two decades, while state and federal funding for parks and recreation was decreasing, LA County was able to complete almost 2,000 parks and open space projects, including:

328
new children's play areas

350
new and refurbished recreation, senior, community and nature centers

244
trails projects

33,000
acres (approx.) permanently converted to parks or open space

110
water quality and water supply enhancement projects

175
tree planting projects (10,000 trees planted)

200
restrooms added or refurbished

LOS ANGELES COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PARK & RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

10/15

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TOP LA COUNTY PARKS COMPLETED PROJECTS

District 1

- Emerald Necklace Trail Improvements and Parks
- Whittier Narrows Regional Park Improvements
- Los Angeles River Projects
- Vista Hermosa Park
- Wellness Center Park Fitness Zone
- Grand Park Playground
- La Plaza Outdoor Improvements
- El Sereno Indoor Pool, Park Rehabilitation
- Elysian Park Improvements
- Belvedere Park Pool
- Obregon Park Pool
- Bosque del Rio Hondo Park

District 2

- East Rancho Dominguez Community and Senior Center Project
- Memorial Center Gymansium
- Baldwin Hills Acquisition and Development
- LA County Natural History Musuem
- Park de Playa Trail
- Stoneview Nature Center
- Ballona Creek Wetlands and Trail Restoration and Development

District 3

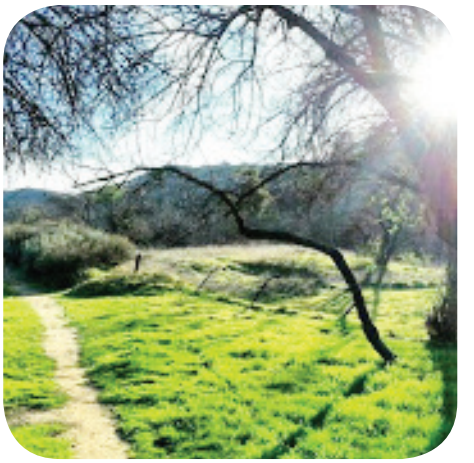
- Hollywood Bowl Renovations
- Los Angeles Zoo
- Malibu Legacy Park
- Calabasas/Agoura Hills Community Center
- Acquisitions in Santa Monica Mountains

District 4

- Cerritos Park
- Dockweiler Beach
- Friendship Park
- Cabrillo Marine Aquarium
- Dills Park
- Seaside Lagoon
- Sand Dune Park
- Chittick Sports Complex & Fields
- Pantera Park

District 5

- Arcadia Park Pool
- Placerita Canyon Nature Center/Acquisition
- Regional Soccer Complex
- Walnut Creek Improvements
- Hughes Community Center
- La Fetra Senior Center
- Live Oak Park



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HEALTHY, SAFE COMMUNITIES HAVE THRIVING PARKS

Parks Strengthen Communities

Parks provide countless health, social, environmental and economic benefits to communities. Communities with abundant parks and quality recreational facilities thrive.

Improving Health

Study after study has shown that access to well-maintained parks increases physical activity among both children and adults.[1] Physical activity is essential to good health at every stage of life. Physical activity improves general health, prevents obesity and diabetes, reduces risk of hypertension and heart disease, reduces levels of attention deficit in children, improves cognitive ability and reduces aggressive behavior.

Teens who live near parks are 30% more likely to get recommended amounts of physical exercise.[2] But more than 1.5 million children in LA County do not live within walking distance of a public park.[3] And in park-poor communities, as many as 30% of residents are obese.[4] **LA County has an urgent need for more parks and recreational facilities in low-income communities where improving health and preventing chronic diseases can have a huge impact on lowering health care costs and improving community well-being.**

Increasing Community Cohesion

People from all backgrounds and all ages use the same park, interacting and learning about each other in a social atmosphere that encourages them to be more active. That's true while using the park and even more so while participating in one of the many programs local parks provide. Parks bring communities together, creating safer, stronger neighborhoods.

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MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

The County and all 88 cities are taking stock of what we currently have–parks, recreation facilities, open space and cultural and performing arts venues. What's the condition of the park and what would it cost to get it into good shape? Do residents have a park within a 10-minute walk? Is the park used beyond capacity, in need of improvement or different amenities? This assessment will provide a good snapshot of the current status of our parks.

We need to hear what residents want and need to ensure great, well utilized parks and recreational facilities.

From December through early February, the County and cities will be conducting almost 200 needs assessment meetings. **This is a once-in-a-generation chance to shape the priorities for where park funding will go for the next several decades.**

Encourage Everyone to Come to a Community Meeting

Find out where and when:
LACountyParkNeeds.org

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LACountyParkNeeds.org

Improving the Environment

When rain flows off roads and paved areas it picks up pollutants, which then flow into our rivers, lakes and beaches. As unpaved areas, parks play a key role in capturing and holding rainwater, allowing it to percolate into the ground where it's naturally cleansed. The trees and shrubs in parks also remove air pollutants, improving the air we breathe and helping reduce greenhouse gasses.

Boosting the Economy

Studies have shown that the property values of homes near excellent parks can be as much as 15% higher than similar homes not near a park. Cities also benefit from the higher property taxes generated. LA County also attracts tourists to miles of beaches and major parks, boosting local businesses and generating sales and hotel tax revenue.

Toward Park Equity

However, not all Los Angeles residents benefit equally from parks. Only 15% of the region's population has pedestrian access to parks or green spaces. And while the nationally accepted standard of park space is 4 acres for every 1,000 people, many communities fall short. Predominantly African American communities have just 1.7 acres and Latino communities just .6 acre for every 1,000 people.[5]

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[1] Much of this information comes from a 2009 study, "Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System" and a 2011 Study, "From Fitness Zones to the Medical Mile: How Urban Parks Can Best Promote Health and Wellness," both by the Trust for Public Land.

[2] From a March 2013 study, "Physical Activity, Park Access and Park Use among California Adolescents," by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

[3] From "Parks for People Los Angeles: the Case for Support," Trust for Public Land, 2004.

[4] From a September 2011 study, "Obesity and Related Mortality in Los Angeles County," County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health and a 2004 study, " "The Relationship Between Community Physical Activities Settings and Race, Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status," in Evidence-Based Preventive Medicine.

[5] From a study by Jennifer Wolch, John P. Wilson, and Jed Fehrenbach called "Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis" in Urban geography 26, no. 1 (2005): 4-35.