



## Countywide Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation

### Summary Meeting Notes Steering Committee Meeting #2 – June 4, 2015

#### Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Greg Alaniz	Belinda Faustinos	Ronda Perez
Jane Beesley	Norma E. Garcia	Adriana Pinedo
Alina Bokde	Phil Hester	Jennifer Pippard
Brad Bolger	Michael Hughes	Ed P. Reyes
William Warren Brien	Lacey Johnson	Barbara Romero
John Bwarie	John Jones	Bruce Saito
Scott Chan	James Lott	Keri Smith
Cheryl Davis	Michael McCaa	Christopher Solek
Reyna Diaz	Veronica Padilla	Erin Stibal
Bettina Duval	Dave Perry	Teresa Villegas

#### County of Los Angeles Staff in Attendance:

Rita Robinson, Clement Lau, Warren Ontiveros

#### PlaceWorks Staff in Attendance:

David Early, C.C. LaGrange, Tara Worden

#### **Agenda Item: Technical Advisory Committee Update**

1. *Question:* How many TAC meetings will there be?  
*Response:* Three. Once the meeting dates are confirmed, they will be listed on the website.
2. *Question:* Who comprises the TAC?  
*Response:* A list of TAC members can be found on the website. <http://lacountyparkneeds.org/tac/>

#### **Agenda Item: Planning Areas Review and Approval**

**Steering Committee Action:** A vote was taken to determine if the steering committee should approve the following recommendation:

“The Park Needs Assessment should use the Study Area boundaries shown on the Draft Map as the basis for data gathering and analysis, with minor changes to be finalized by staff and consultant team.”

**The recommendation was approved unanimously.**

1. *Question:* Does the method used to divide the study areas take into account the future projected impacts of an enhanced transportation system, or other large projects in the works?

*Response:* The scope of the project is limited to the existing conditions that are present today and is not based on projected impacts of planned infrastructure projects. However, there will be a portion of the final report that addresses regional issues like transportation, housing, demographics, etc., and that acknowledges that park needs may change in the future.

2. *Question:* If the 4 cities that have not yet responded as to how they would prefer to divide their territory into Study Areas do not provide their feedback, how will the areas be dealt with?

*Response:* In that case, staff and the consultant team will determine Study Area boundaries.

3. *Question:* In the case of the City of Long Beach, which has yet to determine their Study Area boundaries, there are nine council districts areas that could function as Study Areas. What are thoughts on that?

*Response:* Long Beach can be split into a maximum of 3-5 Study Areas. The boundaries could be determined by geographical features like freeways or natural edges, by distinct neighborhood districts, or by grouping council districts.

4. *Question:* How were the unincorporated areas split into Study Areas? For example, how were the Study Areas for East LA determined?

*Response:* The unincorporated areas were split according to their geographic location and population density. Distinct and/or geographically isolated communities were designated as one Study Area. However due to the population threshold, East LA was subdivided according to the boundary created by interstate 710 and SR 60 which divides the community into two Study Areas with roughly equal populations. Any additional suggestions for different split options for East LA should be submitted to the consultant team and staff by June 11<sup>th</sup>.

5. *Comment:* Concern regarding the unincorporated communities of Westmont and West Athens being grouped together into one study area was expressed. Though the communities sit next to one another, there are distinct differences in income and demographics between the two, which will require different community outreach strategies.

*Response:* Indeed, some Study Areas contain very different and distinct neighborhoods that should be addressed at the outreach level, where strategies should be developed to engage all populations within each study area.

6. *Comment:* Regarding the language used in the recommendation to confirm the Study Area boundaries, will the Study Area be the only geography used for analysis, or one of several geographies used? For example, if a park lies just beyond the Study Area boundary, is it included in the Study Area's inventory?

*Clarification:* To clarify, this is the geography that will be used for the assessment. Parks across the boundary of the Study Area will be included in the analysis of park access (park within ½ mile) and park density for the population within the Study Area.

7. *Public Comments:* There were no public comments.

**Agenda Item: Park and Recreation Metrics Review and Approval**

**Steering Committee Action:** A vote was taken to determine if the steering committee should approve the following recommendation:

- The Park Needs Assessment will assess metrics in the following categories for existing parks in each Study Area:
  - Park land (acreage per 1,000 people)
  - Park access (percent of households within 10 minute walk of a park)
  - Park user density (acres per person within park service area)
  - Park amenities (variety and quantity)
  - Park conditions (level of maintenance needed for each amenity)
- The Needs Assessment will assess the variety of facilities discussed today, to be finalized by staff and consultants
- The Needs Assessment will include a Community Profile that analyzes existing health, safety, access, and socioeconomic conditions in each Study Area

***The recommendation was approved unanimously, with 1 abstention.***

1. **Question:** Could the metrics include a layer that accounts for the impact of land uses on the built environment?  
**Response:** Yes, the County Assessor's data differentiates between single-family and multi-family (R1 and R2) parcels and should be added to the metrics.  
**Action Item:** PlaceWorks to add R1 and R2 land use information to the metrics.
2. **Question:** Should the metrics include opportunity sites where presence of natural resources lend themselves to function as a multi-use park facility?  
**Response:** The professional city staff will be responsible for documenting existing parks in each study area. The metrics will be based on existing park resources and will be used to determine park and recreation needs, rather than the opportunity sites for parks. Opportunities for new parks will be analyzed in a later phase.
3. **Comment:** The lack of open space and parks needs to be addressed on a regional level, as well as the local level.  
**Response:** Due to the limited scope of the project, regional issues will not be assessed. However, there may be an opportunity to address broader regional policies in the final report if the Steering Committee provides direction to do so.
4. **Question:** The ranking of existing conditions in parks could be problematic if there is no validation system to confirm that data being entered is correct. What means of verification does the project set up?  
**Response:** Instructions for ranking the conditions of park amenities will include images and descriptions of each ranking for each amenity, so the understanding of each condition will be clearly understood. The project does not have the capacity to ground-truth the conditions. Cities are to report the presence of all parks and related amenities, even if the parks/amenities are not in operating order. The final report will differentiate between deferred maintenance and present needs.
5. **Comment:** Could a stakeholder group validate the conditions of park space?  
**Response:** The scope of this project does not have the resources to organize or manage that endeavor.

6. *Comment:* Are things like water fountains, restrooms, and parking included in the inventory list?  
*Response:* Information about the overall level of infrastructure and whether the park has restrooms will be collected.
  
7. *Comment:* Could homelessness be added as an indicator to the community profile data?  
*Response:* The difficulty is finding data that is meaningful to the project, which needs to include the size and location of the homeless population. Potentially there could be an addition to the web portal that asks a simple question of whether or not there is a homeless population known to be present at the park. However, this is really an issue that should be considered at the community level, not as part of the Park Needs Assessment. The Park Needs Assessment is limited in scope to assessing the physical needs of existing parks and any need for new parks. This issue may surface during the community outreach phase as well.  
*Action Item:* PlaceWorks to study approaches for including data related to the homeless presence in parks
  
8. *Question:* The closest park is not necessarily the safest park. In this case, families would rather drive to a park that is farther away and safe. Will the methodology presented overestimate the accessibility of parks?  
*Response:* This is an issue that should be considered at the community level, not as part of the Park Needs Assessment. The Park Needs Assessment is limited in scope to assessing the physical needs of existing parks and any need for new parks or amenities. Additionally, there is no known database that shows which parks are considered too dangerous to visit. This issue may surface during the community outreach phase as well, when community members are prioritizing projects.
  
9. *Comment:* Documenting current park users is a recurring request that is beyond the scope of this project. The final report should note that the users of the parks were not documented but can affect the accessibility of existing park resources.
  
10. *Question:* On the community profile data, what are environmental hazards measuring?  
*Response:* To clarify, the data isn't meant to serve as a measurement; rather it is a way to take a snapshot of current conditions. Currently, the consultants are looking for meaningful data that is inclusive enough, yet avoids overstating unrelated environmental issues.
  
11. *Comment:* Certain areas in the county are better positioned to receive funding for park space. For example, the hills naturally serve as attractive park space as compared to flat, industrial lands. The areas that are good candidates for park space are often the areas that are not in need. There should be a documented statement in the final report that gives priority based on potential funding limitations.  
*Response:* To some degree, this will be included in the final report, which will document needs in each Study Area. The final report will not prioritize projects on a countywide basis, but the Steering Committee can address regional issues as they see fit.
  
12. *Question:* On the list of amenities that the study areas will be inventorying, could child care facilities be included?

*Response:* If the data is available, it could be included. The hesitancy in adding such a specific type of data is that it might be too small to be meaningful. Also, if child care is offered within a community center or rec center in a park, the building will be included in the inventory, but not necessarily all the programming within it.

*Action Item:* Placeworks to investigate data source for this information

13. *Question:* Could open space and dog parks be added to the list of amenities?

*Response:* Yes. Parks were assumed to have open space, but the fact is that is not always the case. Parks are sometimes so specialized that they cannot be considered to have the traditional features of a park.

*Action Item:* PlaceWorks to consider including passive open space and dog parks on amenities list.

14. *Question:* If park amenities are not functioning, should they be included in the inventory? For example, splash pads have been shut off due to drought conditions.

*Response:* Yes. All amenities should be counted even if they are not functioning. The inoperable status of the splash pads reflect deferred maintenance, as the system has not been updated to use recirculated water.

15. *Question:* In areas like South LA, there is known to be significant undercounting of populations. How is that accounted for in the project analysis?

*Response:* The American Community Survey will be used for population data, and it has been adjusted by the state and SCAG. More accurate data is not available. Disclaimers regarding the over/undercounting of residents will be noted in the final report.

16. *Public Comments:* In terms of verifying the existing conditions, you could consider including the maintenance hours in the collection of information. Additionally, how are community gardens and land trusts considered for the scope of the project?

*Response:* Community gardens will be documented where the data exists. Inclusion as an existing park and recreation will be dependent on current use and access.

17. *Comment:* For all future meetings, materials for review will be disseminated to Steering Committee members 3 working days before the scheduled meeting.

18. *Comment:* All future agendas will clearly identify items that the Steering Committee is being asked to take action on.

*Meeting Adjourned.*