Countywide Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation

Summary Meeting Notes
Steering Committee Meeting #1 - April 30, 2015

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Greg Alaniz	Norma E. Garcia	Ronda Perez
Jane Beesley	Michael Hughes	Adriana Pinedo
Alina Bokde	Lacey Johnson	Jennifer Pippard
Brad Bolger	Mary Kaufman	Ed P. Reyes
John Bwarie	Amy Lethbridge	Barbara Romero
Scott Change	James Lott	Harry Saltzgaver
Maria Chong-Castillo	Linda Lowry	Dr. Paul Simon
Kimel Conway	Michael McCaa	Keri Smith
Cheryl Davis	Sandra McNeil	Christopher Solek
Reyna Diaz	Martha Molina-Aviles	Erin Stibal
Bettina Duval	Veronica Padilla	Teresa Villegas
Belinda Faustinos	David Perry	

County of Los Angeles Staff in Attendance:

Russ Guiney, Rita Robinson, Adrian Garcia, Clement Lau, Warren Ontiveros

PlaceWorks Staff in Attendance:

David Early, Marissa Aho, C.C. LaGrange

Agenda Item: Project Overview

1. *Question:* How will National Forest lands, cemeteries, golf courses, wilderness, rivers, wetlands, community gardens, privately owned parks, arboreta, nature centers, beaches, and other open space be accounted for in the inventory?
   Response: These types of existing park and recreational assets will be included in base maps if the data exists, but their inclusion in analyses of existing assets will depend on existing levels of access and use for recreational purposes. Beaches will not be included, but any adjacent parks will be.

2. *Question:* How will the prioritization portion of the project work?
   Response: Each planning area will prioritize its own projects using data from the inventory/analysis/opportunity phases of the project. The prioritized projects must be approved during the community outreach meeting. Each planning area's list of prioritized projects will be included in the summary report.

3. *Question:* If project prioritization is done on a Planning Area level, how are regional projects prioritized?
   Response: It will be the Steering Committee's responsibility to look at countywide priorities.
4. *Question:* How much time is allotted for cities to create and submit their list of prioritized projects? Do cities need to have a Parks Master plan if they do not yet?
   Response: Cities will have up to two months to complete their list(s). A Parks Master Plan is not required.

5. *Question:* How will recreational programming be addressed?
   Response: The Park Needs Assessment will not address programming needs. It will address needs in the following three categories: new parks; repairs to existing parks; and upgrades to existing parks.

6. *Question:* What is the relationship between the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee?
   Response: The TAC is focused on technical issues related to GIS analysis. PlaceWorks will convey information and share ideas between the Steering Committee and the TAC.

7. *Comment:* The Steering Committee lacks representation from utilities, who control easements that could become opportunities for new recreation space and who should therefore be included.
   Response: This does not preclude looking at utility easements during the opportunity phase of the Assessment.

Agenda Item: Service Standards Overview and Discussion/Park and Recreation Metrics
1. *Question:* Do park service area polygons take freeways into consideration, as they can be barriers to park access?
   Response: No, freeways and other barriers are considered when looking at park access, not park service area.
   Action Item: PlaceWorks to investigate feasibility of including physical barriers in park service area polygons.

2. *Comment:* The following issues affecting park use, park accessibility and park need also should be considered: pedestrian/bicycle traffic crashes, violent crime rates, LAPD gang injunctions, safe routes to school, crosswalks, sidewalk condition, park user characteristics, environmental hazards, transit lines, historic funding levels, obesity rates.
   Action Item: PlaceWorks will investigate sources for this data and consider methods for incorporating this information into the Park Needs Assessment.

3. *Comment:* Census data often undercounts population in some cities, which leads to a lack of resources allocated to these areas.
   Response: The undercount is a known issue with the Census population data, but we do not have any other population data that is more reliable.
   Action Item: PlaceWorks to consult TAC for sources of more accurate population data.

4. *Comment:* Please provide more detailed information on how conditions and amenities are defined and measured.
   Response: Metrics for conditions and amenities will likely be more subjective than the land, access and density metrics. Analyses may test land, access and density metrics for each separate amenity. Different disparities may come to light through re-measuring proximity and density while also considering conditions and amenities.

Agenda Item: Public Comment
There were no public comments

Agenda Item: Planning Areas Overview and Discussion
1. *Question:* What is the purpose of the planning areas?
    Response: To define a geographic area for creating priorities and doing outreach.

2. *Question:* Will the planning areas change once defined?
    Response: Only if a substantial unforeseen problem arises down the road.

3. *Question:* How is public safety connecting to each Planning Area?
    Response: Many of the analyses, including safety, will be completed by planning area.

4. *Question:* What is the timeframe for defining the planning areas?
    Response: The deadline to define them is June 4th. Anyone with concerns should bring them up as soon as possible.

5. *Question:* Have any other cities undertaken a similar project?
    Response: Not at this scale, but New York and the East Bay Regional Park District are models for capturing best management practices for this type of assessment.

6. *Question:* Can a larger city decline to have 2 planning areas if it will lead to political difficulties?
    Response: Yes, a larger city can choose to remain a single planning area if they prefer.
    Action Item: PlaceWorks to determine if such a city would still be eligible for 2 outreach stipends.

7. *Question:* Are all cities agreeable to the idea of doing planning work for adjacent unincorporated areas?
    Response: It would depend on which unincorporated areas and cities are involved.
    Action Item: PlaceWorks to contact each city that is being asked to plan for an adjacent unincorporated area. PlaceWorks to provide detailed map and spreadsheet to Steering Committee so that they review areas of concern.

8. *Comment:* Please clarify how unincorporated areas are grouped with cities; if small cities are their own planning area or not; and why there are so many unincorporated planning areas.
    Response: Only unincorporated areas with a population under about 2,300 are grouped into the adjacent city; each city is at least one planning area, regardless of its population size; the number of unincorporated planning areas was driven by County planning boundaries, geographic isolation and population size.

9. *Comment:* The City of Los Angeles planning areas have issues on the community level.
    Response: The Steering Committee should not direct cities on how to split, but might be able to offer fine-tuning suggestions in some instances.

10. *Comment:* Some unincorporated areas have significant environmental impacts.
    Response: Yes, it's possible some areas might be completely within an area with environmental impacts and this will need to be considered.

11. *Comment:* There is a lot of sensitivity in many of the unincorporated areas, and they should be joined together with an awareness of these sensitivities.
    Response: The detailed map and spreadsheet will be shared with the Steering Committee via email. Please direct any specific comments on the map to PlaceWorks.

12. *Comment:* If any unincorporated planning areas have a population great than 135k, they should be split into two planning areas.
    Action Item: PlaceWorks to determine if any unincorporated Planning Areas meet this threshold.

13. *Comment:* 6 unincorporated communities are in the process of creating park plans and should not be joined to other communities because of this.
    Action Item: PlaceWorks to determine if these areas have been joined with adjacent communities and separate them out if so.

14. *Question:* What information should be shared with the COGs regarding the Planning Areas?
    Response: COG representatives are not the only line of communication with the cities. County staff has been delivering presentation to the COGs and are available for additional presentations as needed. For now, there are 3 big messages to share: 1. If you are an incorporated city, you have your own planning area; 2. If you are a large incorporated city (over 135k), you have at least 2 planning areas; 3. If you are one of the cities adjacent to one of the identified small unincorporated areas, will you take it on?

Meeting Adjourned