Countywide Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation

Summary Meeting Notes
Steering Committee Meeting #4 – September 10, 2015

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Greg Alaniz	Norma E. Garcia	Ronda Perez
Jane Beesley	Michael Hughes	Dave Perry
Alina Bokde	Lacey Johnson	Jennifer Pippard
William Warren Brien	John Jones	Barbara Romero
John Bwarie	Mary Kaufman	Paul Simon
Scott Chan	Amy Lethbridge	Christopher Solek
Kimel Conway	Linda Lowry	Teresa Villegas
Reyna Diaz	Sandra McNeil	
Belinda Faustinos	Veronica Padilla	

County of Los Angeles Staff in Attendance:

Rita Robinson, Sheela Mathai, Warren Ontiveras, Clement Lau

PlaceWorks Staff in Attendance:

David Early, C.C. LaGrange, Tara Worden

Agenda Item: Welcome and Project Updates

- 76 cities complete, 5 cities to finish by end of week, 5 cities not responding, 2 cities not participating
- Parking Lot: Documentation of ideas that cannot directly be addressed during the meeting but will be addressed in the final report
- Next step: Board of Supervisors approved working group to put together a bond measure
- Overall thanks of the Steering Committee members participation in the process

Agenda Item: Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Education and Outreach (MIG)

1. *Question:* Is the goal of reaching out in the areas determined as 'high need' getting the residents involved in the process or is it focused towards prioritized funding on the future ballot?
   Response: Focusing outreach in the 'high need' neighborhoods is strictly for engagement purposes and does not have any influence on funding.

2. *Question:* In terms of housing and development, how are you conducting the outreach to include the development sector? Are you presenting location-based solutions to housing?
   Response: Residents are the main target of outreach through the process; however developers are not precluded from attending the education and outreach sessions. Housing issues will not be directly addressed; rather we will focus on Park Need.

3. *Question:* Are you including equestrian trails in the outreach?
   Response: Yes. The components of the outreach will include multiple park activities and typologies that will be considered in the process.

4. *Question:* What other languages are you offering the materials other than Spanish?
   Response: We will provide the outreach materials in the languages that are needed for the community to have a conversation. (i.e. Chinese, Korean, etc.)

5. *Question:* What about Native Pacific Islanders- they are certainly underserved and they may not connect in the same way to social media.
   Response: We will focus efforts individually regarding the specifics of study areas. More traditional outreach like flyering neighborhoods and posting leave-behinds on doors will be used in areas that have lower use of social media resources.

6. *Comment:* In terms of engaging teens, I would be in favor of supporting outreach to teens, considering they are the larger users of social media.
   Consensus from SC members: Include outreach to teenagers on social media, as they are likely to engage with social media sites on a more consistent basis and can relay the message to adults.

7. *Question:* The study areas in Lennox and the surrounding cities have residents that are not using the parks in their neighborhoods, but rather they drive to outside parks. How are you dealing with that?
   Response: We are attempting to connect residents in the 'high needs' area to the Community Based Organizations in their area- they will receive small grant funds to conduct additional outreach to engage such residents in the conversations about their parks.

8. *Question:* As steering committee members, what access would we have to knowing who the non-profits are that are being used - so we will be aware of the gaps in services?
   Answer: MIG will send out a preliminary list for Steering Committee members to review and send feedback about the list and consider alternatives.
   ACTION ITEM

Agenda Item: Draft Toolkit Review

1. *Question:* In terms of mapping opportunity sites, are you including developed sites as potential acquisition for future parkland?
   Response: We do not have the capacity to identify countywide potential opportunity sites including already developed land. We are including vacant publicly owned land and vacant land according to the County Assessor's data. That information will be reviewed by the cities or county to add or delete opportunity sites, which will hopefully capture the developed land that is underutilized.

2. *Question:* Is the data threshold weighted per study area or is it the same throughout the county?
   Response: We are still refining the threshold numbers but the standards will be countywide and not weighted. The TAC is informing what the standards should be.

3. *Question:* Is the amenity data unique to the study area?
   Response: Yes. The amenity data will show which amenities are in the study area as well as their condition. This information came directly from the city/County.

4. *Question:* Will there be an index of terms that describes the information presented, like what PM 2.5 is?
   Response: Yes. The glossary will include definitions and clarification about what the data terms mean and how maps were derived.

5. *Question:* The term 'linguistically isolated' could be offensive, is there another way of stating this?
   Response: That's the term used by the US Census, and that's where we've derived the data, so we are inclined to use this term. The definition of 'linguistically isolated' will be included in the glossary.

6. *Question:* Two suggestions for the facilitator's toolkit. First, clearly explaining the methodology as to how the list of park projects was established will give attendees an understanding of their study area's needs and will allow them to contribute to the list according to how they see the need in their community. Second, there should be some time allowed for the facilitator to review the history of park planning in their study area. This will allow the attendees to have background knowledge as well as feel involved in the planning process.
   Response: Yes. Both of those suggestions will be included in the final draft of the toolkit.
   ACTION ITEM: Include methodology of prioritization process and a method for acknowledging current and past park planning efforts in the community.

7. *Suggestion:* Perhaps it would be best to prioritize the data from within the study area? For instance, presenting air quality data could be confusing for some study areas as their entire neighborhood would have poor air quality, and that would indicate they shouldn't have any parks there.
   Response: The meeting facilitator will have flexibility to decide what data to share at the community meeting and should prioritize the data depending on what is most pertinent to the community. The toolkit glossary could include state and local recommendations regarding park locations.
   ACTION ITEM: PlaceWorks to study potential inclusion of state and/or local policies guiding park location in the toolkit.

8. *Suggestion:* In regards to the amenity metrics, there should be a citation of where the data is from, along with a description of how the data manipulated to provide these numbers.
   Response: Yes. All of the data and definitions regarding the metrics will be included in the glossary of terms.

9. *Suggestion:* In some study areas, there will likely be up to 80% Asian population. In cases like that, it seems helpful to separate out the different Asian ethnicities.
   Response: Using a to-be-determined threshold (most likely between 25% and 75%), we can separate out ethnicities that are within specific study areas.
   ACTION ITEM: When a study area meets a to-be-determined threshold percent of Asian residents, this data will be further separated to show ethnicity.

10. *Suggestion:* Could the languages that represent the 'linguistically isolated' residents be listed?
    Response: Yes. That's a great idea to inform the translation services that will be needed.
    ACTION ITEM: List languages that are spoke by 'linguistically isolated' populations in each study area.

11. *Suggestion:* Is it appropriate to discuss the different funding sources between city, county, state and federal funding to help clarify to community members which complaints can be dealt with through this process, i.e. whose responsibility it is to maintain a park?

Response: Because the Needs Assessment is focused on park need, funding sources should not be a point of focus during the community engagement meeting. There should be some framework to the project that indicates what this meeting can and cannot accomplish.
ACTION ITEM: PlaceWorks to add this information to the PowerPoint template included in the toolkit.

12. *Suggestion:* The definition of parks and park-related amenities could be limiting to the visioning process. Can the facilitators be trained to allow the space for community members to dream a larger vision than what was included in the scope of this assessment?
Response: Yes. During the facilitator trainings, it will be made clear to the facilitators that one of their tasks is to elicit additional ideas for park projects from the community during the engagement meeting. Facilitators will be given tools for initiating this conversation.

13. *Question:* Why are we proposing that there should be one of the amenities in each of the study areas? The level of detail could preclude other ideas - and mandate that there needs to be an amenity at a certain area
Response: Our approach was to include the missing amenities to give the community members a starting point for ideas, but we could not include that and wait for the community members to bring up the desired amenities. Thoughts?
   Suggestion: Tying the amenity information to the level of population rather than study area would be helpful in terms of deciding what amenities should definitely be in the neighborhood.
   Solution: Amenity information should be included in the toolkit, as it will be important for the facilitator to demonstrate knowledge of the parks in the study area.
   Solution: Participants can choose to not vote for a given amenity during the prioritization exercise if they feel it is not needed in their study area.

14. *Suggestion:* To help the facilitator understand how the ranking of the amenities were conducted, an Amenity Handbook should be included in their training packet. This will allow them to be knowledgeable about the potential differences between what is considered 'good', 'fair', and 'poor' condition. Facilitator should also be prepared to answer questions regarding crime and safety in terms of access to the parks.
Action Item: Include Amenity Handbook in facilitator packets, and include a crime and safety FAQ in toolkit.

15. *Suggestion:* When you ask the community what creates a safe and beautiful park, the conversation inevitably includes a dialogue about beauty, nature, open space and flowers, community and neighborhood. Has that been addressed in the toolkit?
Response: Not directly – but we can include that in the FAQ and/or facilitator training.
Action Item: Addresses this suggestion in FAQ and/or facilitator training.

16. *Question:* Will zócalos and public urban space be allowed on the list of potential park projects?
Response: Yes, if the community considers those types of spaces a need, then they can add them to the list of potential park projects.

17. *Question:* Can a parking lot be included on the list of potential park projects?
Response: Yes. If a city or a community member thinks more parking is needed to access the park, then a parking lot can certainly be added to the list.

18. *Question:* If t we have groups that need the information presented in a different language, and we know groups that could translate- is there a rigorous back checking of the translation between you and the group?
    Response: Public printed materials will be provided in the 4 four most commonly spoken non-English languages in the County. For all other languages, each study area is responsible for determining need and providing translations. The Needs Assessment doesn't have resources to do back checking. If a document is translated, please let us know so we can share this resource with other Study Areas that may need it.

Agenda Item: Review of Technical Training for Engagement Meeting Facilitators

1. *Question:* Is the community outreach plan integrated into the MIG Community outreach efforts?
   Answer: We are asking the city contact to describe their logistical plans for their meeting - MIG will be doing the outreach on top of that on a countywide level and then in the high priority areas they will do an extra boost of social media outreach to publicize the date and time of the community outreach meeting. This coordination will occur after we receive the details for the study areas' meetings on October 15.
   Action Item: Send Steering Committee members the Community Action Plan document.

2. *Question:* Speaking for the Santa Clarita Valley and the unincorporated county land - is there a possibility to move the meeting to the earlier Saturday before thanksgiving?
   Answer: The County is aware that the Santa Clarita Valley study areas may need a second training date.

Agenda Item: Public Comment

1. *Question:* Once you gather the input from the community, how will parks planning projects be incorporated into the prioritized parks list?
   Answer: Current planning projects will be included on the list depending on whether or not representatives are present at the meetings to provide their input on developing the list.

Meeting Adjourned.