



Countywide Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation

Summary Meeting Notes

Steering Committee Meeting #6 – March 24, 2016

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Greg Alaniz	Michael Hughes	Adriana Pinedo
Jane Beesley	Lacey Johnson	Ed P. Reyes
John Bwarie	John Jones	Barbara Romero
Scott Chan	Amy Lethbridge	Bruce Saito
Cheryl Davis	Linda Lowry	Harry Saltzgaver
Reyna Diaz	Michael McCaa	Dr. Paul Simon
Belinda Faustinos	Sandra McNeil	Christopher Solek
Norma E. Garcia	Ronda Perez	Erin Stibal
Phil Hester	Dave Perry	Teresa Villegas

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: Community Engagement Summary

1. *Public Comment* from Steve Salas, a resident of Wilmington, City of Los Angeles: The community engagement meeting held in Wilmington was publicized with the inaccurate location, time of day and held three days before Christmas. This did not provide the community with an opportunity to participate in the community engagement process. Parks and open space are in severe disrepair in Wilmington, the Banning Recreation Center specifically needs funding for its rehabilitation, and the East Wilmington Green Belt would be a great asset to the community if it was usable. The residents of Wilmington are faced with environmental justice concerns in their neighborhood. The refineries are a source of severe pollution, causing the children to have asthma and threatening the livelihood of the already vulnerable and marginalized community.
Response: Thank you for your comment – this is something that we will address in the presentation
2. Comment: Will there be a lessons learned section in the Final Report- in particular documenting what the nuances were between the cities that had low attendance and high attendance?

Response: The community engagement process will be well documented in the report. A separate “lessons learned” document could be instructive for future large-scale efforts.

3. Comment: The quality of the community engagement workshops seemed to vary greatly from workshop to workshop and facilitator to facilitator. Workshops were susceptible to take over from special interest groups.
Response: There was significant variation in meeting attendance and quality throughout the County. All facilitators received the same training, and technical assistance was available to all who had questions and asked for assistance. The issue of special interest groups is always important in public meetings, however, the overall numbers of infrastructure projects and projects to repair existing parks indicate that special interest groups did not dominate all meetings.
4. Comment: Projects similar in scale usually take about 3 years to complete, however this project was limited to a one year timeline. This significantly impacted the breadth of community engagement. In addition to all the community engagement meetings there was a lot of work done behind the scenes with cities to set up their meetings. City of LA had over 40 study areas and had the same amount of time to complete the community engagement process as cities with just 1 study area. There were cities that had formal organizations that could hit the ground running and other cities that did not have that type of community infrastructure. The logistics of setting up a meeting in the rural parts of the county are very different from setting up a meeting in an urban neighborhood.
5. Question: Please review how the data and analysis was presented at the community meetings.
Response: Over 300 facilitators attended one of the three facilitator training sessions in November. The most effective facilitators studied the data until they really understood it, and then customized the workshop to fit their community. The consultant team was available for technical assistance for any facilitators that needed it and spent many hours waling facilitators through the information before their meetings. Cities that used the stipend for food, translation services, and child care were better attended than those who did not provide those amenities.
6. Comment: The online survey restricted the submission of multiple surveys from the same computer, limiting residents that may need to use a public computer IP address from submitting.
Response: Thank you for voicing this concern.
7. Question: Will you be circling back with the cities to vet the cost estimates with the cities? We have concerns that this data is relying too heavily on data from the City of LA.
Response: The cost-estimates team has based the assumptions on data from LA County, and has done significant research to validate the costs, including the use of third party cost estimators familiar with construction costs throughout Los Angeles County.
8. Question: At what point was it determined that surveys and emails were being used to collect community input?
Response: The survey has been actively promoted through the website, and different media outlets. Survey results did not change the voting at the community meetings, rather the results were provided to the facilitator prior to the meeting as a way for the voice of the residents to be heard.
9. Question: Are the prioritized lists going to be listed in the final report? What impact will this have on the ballot measure?
Response: The final report structure and outline will be addressed later in today’s meeting. The funding structure is a separate item – this project is to establish a framework for funding, not a final say on which projects get funded.

The cost estimates associated with projects in the Needs Assessment are for determining countywide need – they are not intended to set the amount of funding that the project will qualify if it is ever implemented.

10. Comment: To represent a full share of the population, you should host community meetings where the community gathers - at the schools, churches, senior centers.

Response: Thank you for your guidance – there were many concerns about how the community meetings were structured and there were many discussions regarding the best approach within the time constraints of this project. Ultimately, a decision was reached that attempted to maximize the outreach efforts within those constraints.

Prioritized Projects/Cost Estimates

11. Comment: Does the project address the notion of opportunity for foundations, community groups, etc. that have the ability to use this data to make real change in their community by using the data to leverage funding?

Response: The analysis within the Needs Assessment is strictly focused on physical need and population density. It does not overlay socio-economic data with this data, but that will be a likely enterprise for community groups, students, and researchers in the future.

12. Question: In regards to the project costs - will that cost estimate list be used to inform or influence the determination of what projects are funded?

Response: No. Any potential ballot measure will address the determination of what projects are funded. The cost estimate within the Needs Assessment merely gives a rough-order-of-magnitude estimate of the dollar amount needed to meet need.

13. Comment: Just to clarify further - the cities will later be applying for funds. Can they apply for projects outside of the park need lists?

Response: Yes.

14. Comment: This meeting is about the Parks Needs Assessment. The structure of the funding measure has been conducted separately and is not a topic of this meeting. Any discussion of a potential funding measure is speculation, as we can't know how the Board will vote or how the measure will be structured.

15. Question: In previous parks bonds there has been some ties to the prioritized lists - this is not the case?

Response. Correct.

16. Question: Is the list that cities submitted constricted to how much money a city gets or which projects get funded?

Response: No.

17. Comment: As a city - it's important to utilize this information when allocating parks funding rather than worrying about how the parks will get funded. Utilize this information for your own purposes rather than worrying about the county.

18. Question: Is there a possibility for the City of Long Beach to review the cost estimate methodology in depth prior to May 3rd?

Response: Yes. The consultants will be in contact with the City of Long Beach

19. Comment: The Department of Parks and Recreation has been meeting with the cities and the county supervisors – and will be having another meeting in a few weeks with all of the community services directors to discuss the Parks Needs Assessment.

Park Needs Framework

20. Question: This is great I understood it – were there any study areas that fell right in between the separators?
Response: The framework used a natural breaks statistical method to create the separators, there was a break at 23% that made sense; and the other quintiles were adjusted slightly to see what made logical sense.
21. Question: How do you see this information informing the funding process? Will there be buckets of money allocated for areas labeled as “high need” to prioritize the park funding throughout the county?
Response: Again, this conversation is about the Needs Assessment, not about the funding structure.
22. Question: There could be a skew in the data due to the presence of nature preserves or ports and the dependency on the population density.
Response: The data was vetted repeatedly throughout the process; if there is still a specific concern, please let us know.
23. Question: Why wasn’t public safety considered in the metrics?
Response: The Steering Committee determined the five park metrics in June 2015 and focused on physical park need because the assessment was of park need. Additionally, focusing on a public safety metric, could deter a community from investing in parks.
24. Comment: This Park Need Map displays the similar areas that suffer from health disadvantages, but my concern is that there is not something lighting up in the Antelope Valley.
Response: The main reason for that is the reliance on population density.

Final Report

25. Comment: Could there be a lessons learned section in the final report?
Response: Possibly. The timeline for completing the report is very tight, but the consultant team can try to integrate some of these lessons.
26. Comment: Could the Steering Committee have an opportunity to review the report prior to the April 27th meeting?
Response: Certainly. It will be sent out for distribution to the Steering Committee, and we can discuss it via a conference call.
27. Comment: Will the GIS Data be available to the public in shape file data?
Response: Yes, although where it will be stored and how it can be accessed has not yet been determined.