# Countywide Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

### Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation

**Summary Meeting Notes**
**Steering Committee Meeting #3 – July 9, 2015**

**Steering Committee Members in Attendance:**

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|---|---|---|
| Greg Alaniz | Norma E. Garcia | Veronica Padilla |
| Jane Beesley | Phil Hester | Ronda Perez |
| Alina Bokde | Michael Hughes | Dave Perry |
| Brad Bolger | Lacey Johnson | Jennifer Pippard |
| William Warren Brien | John Jones | Ed P. Reyes |
| Scott Chan | James Lott | Jeff Rubin |
| Kimel Conway | Linda Lowry | Bruce Saito |
| Cheryl Davis | Michael McCaa | Keri Smith |
| Reyna Diaz | Sandra McNeil | Christopher Solek |
| Belinda Faustinos | Martha Molina-Aviles | |

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

Rita Robinson, Sheela Mathai

**PlaceWorks Staff in Attendance:**

David Early, C.C. LaGrange, Tara Worden

*Agenda Item: Project Schedule Overview*

1. *Question:* Regarding the metrics, is that existing or the ideal situation?
   *Response:* We are looking for ideal metrics to use as comparisons for the existing conditions. We will dive into the specific numbers later in the meeting.

2. *Question:* Regarding the previous input that we have given, how do we know it's being implemented?
   *Response:* The summary notes are posted online and distributed to the group before the Steering Committee meetings. If there are issues that you are aware of that we have failed to address, please help us stay honest and remind us of your suggestions.

*A*gen*da Item: Existing Conditions – Web Portal Inventory Tool*

1. *Question:* When projects are currently in development, will they be documented? Will there be a process of capturing that information?
   *Response:* This project is intended to be a snapshot in time. If a city notices that a park in development is not listed on the map, and they feel as though they should add it, they can determine whether or not to add it to the inventory list. Additionally, if a city is adding amenities to a park, and the project is still in the design or construction phase, it's up to the city to whether to include the additional amenity.

2. *Question:* This is a great tool and we would like to keep it up to date, is there a way that cities and the county could keep updating the data and use this tool in perpetuity?
*Response:* After the data is compiled, the information will be redistributed to cities and the county to be of use for their own purposes. In terms of extending the lifetime of the web portal and its functionality, our staff will have to inquire further with GreenInfo, the creators of the web portal.

3. *Question:* After you save the information, can you go back and edit it?
*Response:* If you save it as final, you might have to send an email to GreenInfo, requesting that they re-open your access to edit the information. But if you save as incomplete, your city's information is editable.

4. *Question:* Are you expecting uploads of photos to document the condition of amenities?
*Response:* The web portal does not have the function currently, however we can see if something like that is possible.

5. *Question:* Are you collecting information about stormwater infiltration, or groundwater recharge facilities?
*Response:* We are not, however cities can include that information in additional special features. These are important co-benefits to the presence of parks, however if we just capture it in the special facilities, we surely won't collect all of the stormwater infiltration facilities.

6. *Comment:* The subjective nature of amenity conditions is concerning, especially in regards to comparing the need across the county. Is there a way that there could be photo documentation of just the poor condition to verify the actual condition?
*Clarification:* The information that is collected will not be compared across different study areas, but rather each study area will prioritize park needs within its own boundaries. We will look into the functionality of having the ability to upload photos.

7. *Question:* Is the county entering the information from the unincorporated areas?
*Answer:* Yes. The county is entering information for 48 study areas, plus parks they own/operate in other study areas as well.

8. *Question:* In situations where the city does not own or operate the park or open space, how will you gain the information about the amenity conditions?
*Answer:* This is still unknown and is being teased out currently. About 20% of the park land in the county is owned by non-city and non-county agencies. Of that park land, there are a handful of predominant organizations that own the majority of the land. We may have them become partners on the web portal to enter in their information, it's still unclear how we will deal with it but we are working on a solution.

9. *Question:* Is there any potential to capture information about facilities that provide educational programs?
*Answer:* Recreation facilities and senior centers are an amenity being collected, but other special features should be noted in the space allotted in the web portal.

10. *Question:* Is the information entered into the web portal able to be exported?
*Answer:* After GreenInfo cleans the data and organizes it, an electronic version will be distributed to the cities. Cities will not be able to immediately download the information they have entered.

11. *Question:* If a user draws a missing park or writes a note about a facility, will other users be able to see that information?
    *Answer:* Yes.

12. *Question:* How do you determine the levels of input from the community and their access to the web portal?
    *Answer:* The web portal is intended for the professionals within the cities. In the past, ground-up efforts have relied on community members to log information about their assets. That approach has been largely unsuccessful as it places a large burden on community members to input information.

13. *Question:* Who will have access to the data after the project is complete?
    *Answer:* When we return in October, we will present a summary report in the form of an interactive tool that will allow you to access the information across all study areas. Access to that information beyond the project has yet to be determined, although each city will received a report of the information they entered.

14. *Question:* What is the timeline?
    *Answer:* The web portal launches on July 16, closes on September 4. The outreach begins in December and is set to end mid-February.

15. *Question:* How are you solving the discrepancy between the cities' data and the data in the web portal?
    *Answer:* We are relying on the cities to verify the web portal information, to avoid any discrepancy in the data. We assume the city's information is correct and will correct the database to reflect their input.

### Agenda Item: Existing Conditions – Amenity Metrics

1. *Suggestion:* Using the Trust for Public Land's (TPL's) City Park Facts Data, maybe take the California cities and take an average of the totals. Or use Fresno or Long Beach as two examples?

2. *Question:* TPL's research likely doesn't include the joint-use school facilities, so how does that factor into the study?
   *Answer:* The data is still being reviewed and updated. It's unclear as to whether or not the report includes facilities with joint-use agreements, but we will look into this and adjust as necessary.

3. *Suggestion:* Big League Dreams could have additional information regarding baseball field metrics. Or California Parks and Recreation Society could be a good resource for information.

4. *Comment:* It seems like there should be an indicator of density, and access in regards to the metrics. For example, Pico Union might have 50,000 people per square mile, whereas Agoura Hills might have 3,000 people per square mile.
   *Response:* These metrics are attached to a density indicator, and in the final report the spatial analysis will convey, on maps, how many people in a certain area have access. These metrics are just used as comparisons to what the existing condition is, to inform us of where the need is.

5. *Question:* In lower income areas, the population count is under reported, how is that being dealt with?

*Response:* The best available data is the updated census information that is promulgated through the state and the local governing agency, adjusted for expected population data.

6. *Suggestion:* Maybe using data from the free lunch program in local schools overlaid on the census data would result in a more accurate population number?
   *Suggestion:* Could there be a formulaic approach to getting more accurate information, for example a data layer that indicates a percentage of assumed undercounting?
   *Response:* We could consider that as being an additional number, if anyone wants to submit an idea offline of where we could get this data, we would be more than willing to consider.

7. *Question:* Will the access to the amenities be noted, for example, if there is a concentration of amenities in one area of the park?
   *Answer:* We are using a Thiessen Polygon Analysis tool that will indicate the access to the specific amenities within a park. We will not be able to look at the location of amenities within the park and will reply on the knowledge of park owners/managers to raise concerns about the geographical distribution of amenities within each park.

8. *Question:* Access to the school facilities with joint use agreements is limited during the weekday and have limited hours during the weekend. How do you avoid misrepresenting the access?
   *Answer:* If you have a joint-use agreement, those facilities will be added, but there will be a note added that indicates the limited access. Use the "Access type" drop down box to choose "Restricted access" for these types of situations.

9. *Question:* Parks are natural cooling stations, and the impacts of climate change will differ depending on your location in LA County, (e.g. San Fernando Valley v. Santa Monica). Will these standards differ across LA County to account for the difference in weather patterns?
   *Answer:* We will be using a range of metrics that will be the same for the whole County as a comparison to existing conditions to determine need.

10. *Question:* How current is the metrics data for the ideal and the existing?
    *Response:* The data from the cities documents their existing conditions from 2015. The NRPA data is from 1983. Data from supporting organizations is assumed to be current.

11. *Comment:* The existing disparities of park space in Los Angeles cannot just be represented through numbers and data. It's the resulting outcome of a history of disenfranchised people and neighborhoods.
    *Response:* The scope of this project relies primarily on data that portrays the current day scenario, and does not delve into question of why the scenario is so bleak for the underserved population.

### Agenda Item: Community Outreach Overview

12. *Comment:* Concern regarding the timeline of conducting outreach over the holiday season. It's nearly impossible to hold public meetings over the holidays.
    *Response:* The community outreach will begin on December 1 and end in mid-February. This should provide enough time for each city to have at least one meeting. We are unable to shift the project timeline to any sooner, as the data will not be available, or any later, as the County Board of Supervisors has requested a report at their May 2016 meeting.

13. *Question:* Could you review for us how this Steering Committee's input will guide the community outreach process?
    *Answer:* Our next meeting will primarily focus on the data collected, but we could agendize a draft copy of the toolkit that will then be used for the outreach process. The two points of the Community Outreach is to 1) present the existing conditions and 2) receive feedback about which projects are priority to the community. We could squeeze in an extra meeting for the Steering Committee to meet before the October meeting to discuss more about how the community outreach will look.

14. *Question:* Despite the tight project schedule, is there any way that we could ask the County Supervisors for an extra month, and push the community outreach to just after the holidays?
    *Answer:* This is a Catch 22. This process has never been completed in less than 3 years. We decided to do it and engage the community in this fashion, rather than not engage the community at all. Though there is no guarantee of a bond measure, that decision will be made after this report is completed. Therefore, there is no time to push back on the schedule.

15. *Question:* Do cities have to go to council for approval of the prioritized parks list?
    *Answer:* We want the cities to follow their own procedure, they will determine whether or not the list needs to go on to the city council or just proceed through staff.

16. *Comment:* Perhaps if you want to avail yourself to hold a preliminary meeting prior to the December kickoff, to involve multiple stakeholders and community members, then you are more than welcome. Currently there is funding for one meeting, but if there is a way that the outreach can be conducted based on your knowledge of the community, then feel free to take on that task.

17. *Comment:* For those of us that work very closely with the Board of Supervisors, we should work together to determine whether or not there is a likelihood for a bond measure. If the Board is unlikely to agree on writing a bond measure, then perhaps more time could be allotted to conduct outreach.

18. *Question:* What is the end product of the community meetings? Is it broken down into two lists (new projects v. deferred maintenance)?
    *Answer:* The Steering Community will have an opportunity to weigh in on the project prioritization guidelines during the October meeting. We are currently thinking that there will be a list of top ten projects, a list of deferred maintenance, and a list of opportunity sites.

19. *Question:* Is there something that we can do besides the community meetings that will engage the community prior to the outreach?
    *Answer:* In the end, the list needs to come out of the outreach process, but perhaps there are ways that these subsets of groups could provide input that informs the workshops at the beginning of the workshop.

20. *Question:* What is inhibiting moving the community outreach ahead in the schedule? What does the toolkit consist of, and why is the outreach dependent upon it?
    *Answer:* The December timeline is being pushed by the data availability and the preparation of the toolkits. The toolkits will display the park needs, which is essential to understand before producing a list of projects. We will have to brainstorm what those pre-meetings will consist of, because the data will not be available until December.

21. *Question:* Does the prioritized list deliverable have cost attached to it?

*Answer:* It does not. But the portal will open a second time to ask cities for their known costs of projects already on their internal lists.

22. *Comment:* Pre-meetings are essential in the communities that are particularly disinvested, and it would be helpful for these communities to understand what this whole project is about.
    *Response:* The data may not be needed in some communities to run the pre-meetings, and it could be helpful to raise awareness of the Needs Assessment in advance of the official meeting.

23. *Comment:* We could take advantage of the holiday events and festivals by engaging community members through some sort of picture/dot method, or other tool to receive feedback about projects.
    *Response:* We will need to defer to the cities that will be running their own outreach. Getting in touch with them about the structure of the outreach is key to shaping what the outcomes of the feedback would be.

24. *Question from Facilitator:* How many study areas do we think there are that there should have more than one workshop AND have the resources to run additional meeting?
    *Response:* Room counts between 35-40 study areas that would likely need an additional outreach meeting AND have the resources to hold it.

25. *Comment from Facilitator:* Homework for the Steering Committee members is to contact CBOs, neighborhood councils, etc. to gauge interest in running/hosting pre-meeting workshops.

26. *Comment:* The process of community outreach is the most important. Perhaps there could be a session at the Quarterly Park Summit that would encourage cities to think about how the outreach will be conducted.


*Meeting Adjourned.*