

we all need



for healthy, thriving and engaged communities

HEALTHY, SAFE COMMUNITIES HAVE THRIVING PARKS

Parks Strengthen Communities

Parks provide countless health, social, environmental and economic benefits to communities. Communities with abundant parks and quality recreational facilities thrive.

Improving Health

Study after study has shown that access to well-maintained parks increases physical activity among both children and adults.¹ Physical activity is essential to good health at every stage of life. Physical activity improves general health, prevents obesity and diabetes, reduces risk of hypertension and heart disease, reduces levels of attention deficit in children, improves cognitive ability and reduces aggressive behavior.

Teens who live near parks are 30% more likely to get recommended amounts of physical exercise.² But more than 1.5 million children in LA County do not live within walking distance of a public park.³ And in park-poor communities, as many as 30% of residents are obese.⁴

LA County has an urgent need for more parks and recreational facilities in low-income communities where improving health and preventing chronic diseases can have a huge impact on lowering health care costs and improving community well-being.

Increasing Community Cohesion

People from all backgrounds and all ages use the same park, interacting and learning about each other in a social atmosphere that encourages them to be more active. That's true while using the park and even more so while participating in one of the many programs local parks provide. Parks bring communities together, creating safer, stronger neighborhoods.

(over)



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

The County and all 88 cities are taking stock of what we currently have—parks, recreation facilities, open space and cultural and performing arts venues. What's the condition of the park and what would it cost to get it into good shape? Do residents have a park within a 10-minute walk? Is the park used beyond capacity, in need of improvement or different amenities? This assessment will provide a good snapshot of the current status of our parks.

We need to hear what residents want and need to ensure great, well utilized parks and recreational facilities.

From December through early February, the County and cities will be conducting almost 200 needs assessment meetings. **This is a once-in-a-generation chance to shape the priorities for where park funding will go for the next several decades.**

Encourage Everyone to Come to a Community Meeting

Find out where and when:
LACountyParkNeeds.org



LOS ANGELES COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
PARK & RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Improving the Environment

When rain flows off roads and paved areas it picks up pollutants, which then flow into our rivers, lakes and beaches. As unpaved areas, parks play a key role in capturing and holding rainwater, allowing it to percolate into the ground where it's naturally cleansed. The trees and shrubs in parks also remove air pollutants, improving the air we breathe and helping reduce greenhouse gasses.

Boosting the Economy

Studies have shown that the property values of homes near excellent parks can be as much as 15% higher than similar homes not near a park. Cities also benefit from the higher property taxes generated. LA County also attracts tourists to miles of beaches and major parks, boosting local businesses and generating sales and hotel tax revenue.

Toward Park Equity

However, not all Los Angeles residents benefit equally from parks. Only 15% of the region's population has pedestrian access to parks or green spaces. And while the nationally accepted standard of park space is 4 acres for every 1,000 people, many communities fall short. Predominantly African American communities have just 1.7 acres and Latino communities just .6 acre for every 1,000 people.⁵

¹ Much of this information comes from a 2009 study, "Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System" and a 2011 Study, "From Fitness Zones to the Medical Mile: How Urban Parks Can Best Promote Health and Wellness," both by the Trust for Public Land.

² From a March 2013 study, "Physical Activity, Park Access and Park Use among California Adolescents," by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

³ From "Parks for People Los Angeles: the Case for Support," Trust for Public Land, 2004.

⁴ From a September 2011 study, "Obesity and Related Mortality in Los Angeles County," County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health and a 2004 study, "The Relationship Between Community Physical Activities Settings and Race, Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status," in Evidence-Based Preventive Medicine.

⁵ From a study by Jennifer Wolch, John P. Wilson, and Jed Fehrenbach called "Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis" in Urban geography 26, no. 1 (2005): 4-35.



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