



we all need
PARKS
PNA+



LOS ANGELES COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLUS (PNA+)

Adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on December 6, 2022

Los Angeles County
Department of Parks and Recreation



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants—past, present, and emerging—as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the:

- » Fernandño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- » Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- » Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- » Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation
- » San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- » San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.



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- » Thousands of residents shared their input about parks in Los Angeles County

CONSULTANT

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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- » Amigos de los Rios
- » Antelope Valley Community Organizing Alliance
- » Antelope Valley Partners for Health
- » API Forward Movement (APIFM)
- » Children's Bureau
- » Community Health Councils
- » Day One
- » Koreatown Youth and Community Center (KYCC)
- » Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT)

- » Mujeres de la Tierra
- » Nature For All
- » Promesa Boyle Heights
- » Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
- » Strength Based Community Change
- » The River Project
- » The Wilderness Society
- » Trust for Public Land
- » United American Indian Involvement (UAI)
- » Willowbrook Inclusion Network

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2022 LOS ANGELES COUNTYWIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLUS (PNA+)



Dear Residents of Los Angeles County,

I am so pleased to share with you the Parks Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+), a national model for park equity and planning that has been shaped by the communities we serve. Parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, trails, and gardens are essential community infrastructure, but not all communities have access to these resources. Every Los Angeles County resident in every neighborhood deserves safe and accessible parks. To help make this a reality, the Los Angeles Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) was adopted in July 2016 and comprehensively analyzes and quantifies the need for parks and recreational facilities in cities and unincorporated areas. Since its adoption, the PNA has been invaluable in advancing park equity and guiding funding allocation for parks and recreation across the County.

The 2016 PNA process was a groundbreaking initiative led and managed by the Los Angeles County Department Parks and Recreation (DPR). It has served as DPR's North Star, guiding its planning, resource allocation and decision-making. The PNA directly informed the development of Measure A which was approved by nearly 75% of voters in November 2016, is managed by the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) and includes dedicated funding for Very High and High park need study areas.

Since 2016, DPR, other park agencies, and our partners have collectively tackled park inequities by creating new parks and improving existing parks across the county, especially in Very High and High park need communities. However, much work remains to be done. The 2022 Parks Needs Assessment (PNA+) is a new detailed study which reveals that in addition to the park needs identified in the PNA, the county also has unmet needs with respect to environmental conservation and restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation.

The PNA+ identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration which form the basis of a 30x30 strategy for Los Angeles County. The 30x30 initiative is a commitment to conserve at least 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030. Our strategy reimagines conservation to include both traditional efforts that involve the acquisition and protection of natural lands as well as the restoration of degraded lands, such as brownfields, landfills, and oil fields, especially in lower income communities of color where vulnerable populations and environmental burdens are concentrated. People of color account for 84% of the population living in priority areas for restoration, i.e., those areas with highest environmental burdens.

The PNA+ also identifies priority areas for regional recreation and rural recreation using various indicators of population vulnerability and other factors such as access to regional and rural recreation sites via different modes of travel, the availability of such facilities, and the amenities they offer. Many of the most vulnerable areas identified in the 2022 PNA+ are also the Very High and High park need areas in the 2016 PNA. PNA+ additionally identifies numerous rural communities in the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley as areas with high population vulnerability.

DPR is committed to addressing the significant park and recreation needs documented in the 2016 PNA and the 2022 PNA+ in ways that produce tangible results, provide multiple benefits, and improve the quality of life for the residents we serve. But this is not easy to do and DPR cannot do it alone. Thus, the PNA+ is not only a study that supplements the PNA, it is also a reminder and call to action for DPR, RPOSD, and our many partners to urgently and intentionally address the park and recreation needs of the over ten million people who call L.A. County home, especially our most vulnerable residents.

Norma Edith García-Gonzalez, Director

County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation and
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 5, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted the 2016 Countywide Parks Needs Assessment (PNA). On March 5, 2019, the BOS passed a motion directing the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to complete a “Regional Recreation, Beaches, Rural Areas and Open Space Needs Assessment” in 2021*. Further, the Board motion called for DPR to prepare a unified Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment that combines both assessments in 2025 with the support and cooperation of the Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD).

Consistent with the Board motion, this report:

- » Builds upon and updates the 2016 PNA with data, analyses, and metrics tailored to regional and rural parks and open spaces.
- » Identifies gaps, opportunities, and priority areas based upon a comprehensive process of data collection and analyses, and community engagement and outreach.
- » Uses metrics, data, and analyses to guide future planning and resource allocation.
- » Recommends approaches and strategies for multi-jurisdictional coordination, collaboration, and partnerships.

This report builds on the PNA by inventorying and analyzing the amenities and needs associated with the following types of public lands:

- » Regional Recreation Parks
- » Beaches and Lakes
- » Natural Areas and Open Spaces
- » Trails
- » Park Facilities and Amenities in Rural Areas

* Project was delayed due to COVID-19.

EXPANDING ON THE 2016 PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT



The 2022 PNA+ is Los Angeles County's 30x30* Plan which focuses on 1) Conservation and Restoration, 2) Regional Recreation, and 3) Rural Recreation. It builds upon and supplements the 2016 PNA with a wealth of data about regional and rural park facilities and needs as well as information to help guide future environmental conservation and restoration efforts.

Like the 2016 PNA, the PNA+ involved extensive data collection and analysis, GIS/mapping, coordination with park and trail managing agencies, and community outreach and engagement. This effort focuses on the most vulnerable residents living in park-poor, tree-poor urban and rural areas with limited access to local and regional parks and recreational facilities. The PNA+ includes both conservation and restoration, emphasizing restoration of degraded lands which is an issue of environmental justice in L.A. County where numerous vulnerable communities face undue burdens.

The PNA+ is an informational and aspirational document. Priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration are identified by overlaying and scoring based on existing publicly accessible data layers. The mapping and analysis conducted are not parcel-specific and are intended to provide countywide and region-wide perspectives on where environmental benefits and burdens are concentrated and where conservation and restoration efforts should be prioritized. As PNA+ is not a regulatory document, it will not result in additional requirements or changes to approved land use entitlements and permits. Furthermore, implementation of PNA+ will require further analyses and actions that are not within the purview of this document.

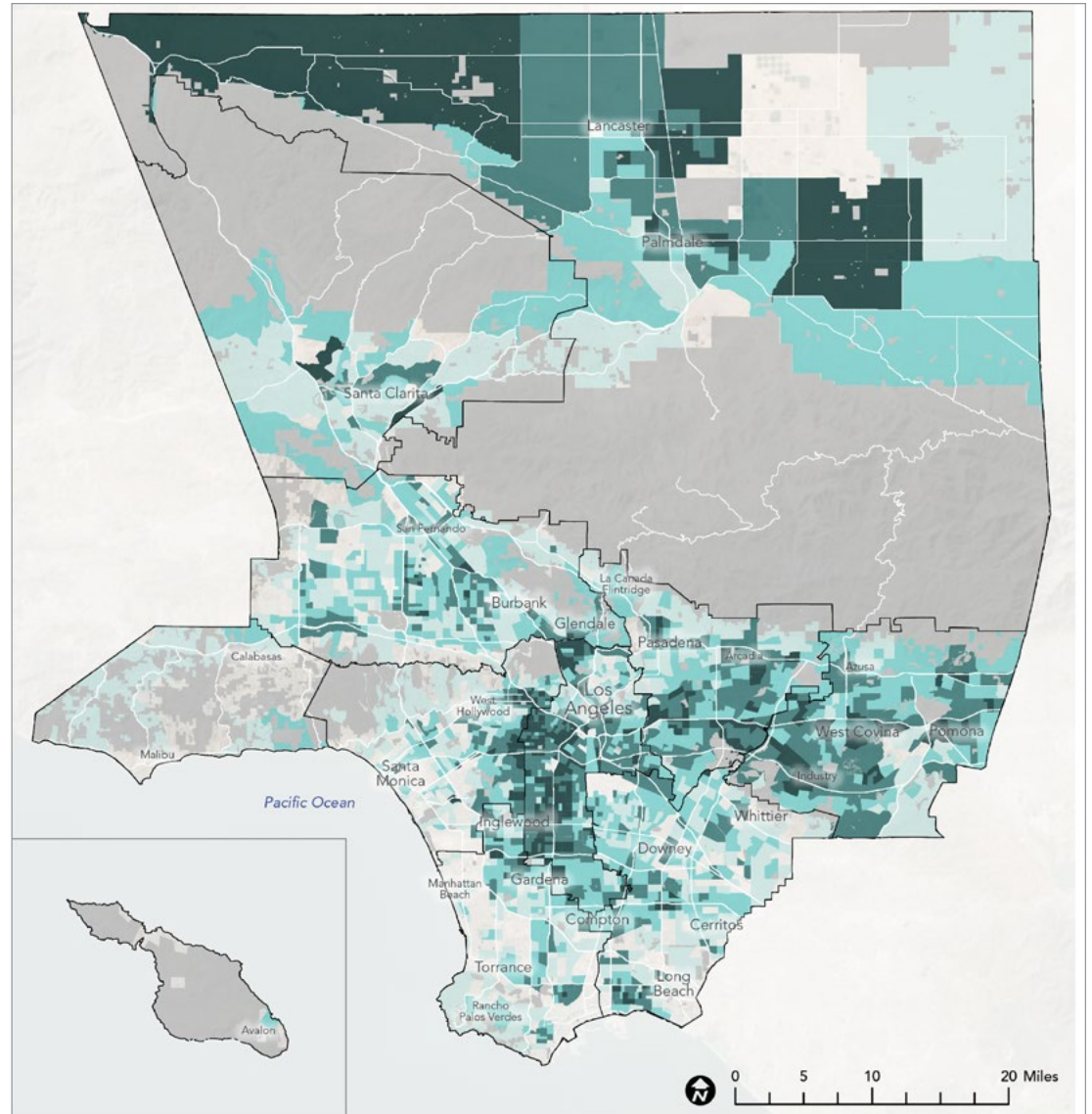
*30x30 refers to the goal of conserving 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by the year 2030 to fight climate change and advance biodiversity and conservation. Both the federal and state governments have committed to achieving this goal.

POPULATION VULNERABILITY

Population vulnerability is a focus of the PNA+ analysis to more broadly look at equity beyond population density to ensure that everyone has access to our beaches and lakes, open spaces and natural areas, regional parks, trails, and parks and recreational facilities in rural areas, regardless of race, social class, gender, disability status, or other characteristics.

While some areas of the County experience a single dimension of population vulnerability, in census tracts where multiple dimensions overlap, residents face compounding challenges. In these areas, multi-faceted approaches to reducing the barriers and increasing the benefits of access to parks and open space are critical to positively influencing the health and well-being of residents. In Los Angeles County, nearly 1.2 million people reside in areas that are experiencing a moderate or high level of vulnerability for all four of the dimensions identified in this analysis.

COMPOSITE POPULATION VULNERABILITY



Map source: California Healthy Places Index (HPI) , 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory
 Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology, individual indicators, and additional sources.

Social Barriers Dimension:



- Prevalence of:
 - » Poverty
 - » Young Children
 - » Elderly
 - » Non-English Speaking Residents
 - » Single Parent Households
- » Unemployment
- » Majority-Minority Population

Transportation Barriers Dimension:



- » Limited Active Commuting
- » Limited Automobile Access
- » Limited Public Transit Access
- » High Traffic Density
- » High Pedestrian Injuries

Health Vulnerability Dimension:



- » Reduced Life Expectancy at Birth
- » High Pollution Levels

Dimensions of Population Vulnerability

Environmental Vulnerability Dimension:



- » Limited Park Access
- » Limited Tree Canopy
- » High % of Impervious Surface
- » High Excessive Heat Days
- » High Urban Heat Island Index Score

Legend

- Moderate to High Vulnerability for ONE Dimension
- Moderate to High Vulnerability for TWO Dimensions
- Moderate to High Vulnerability for THREE Dimensions
- Moderate to High Vulnerability for FOUR Dimensions
- Regional Site Inventory
- Regional Study Areas
- Los Angeles County
- Freeways/Highways

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

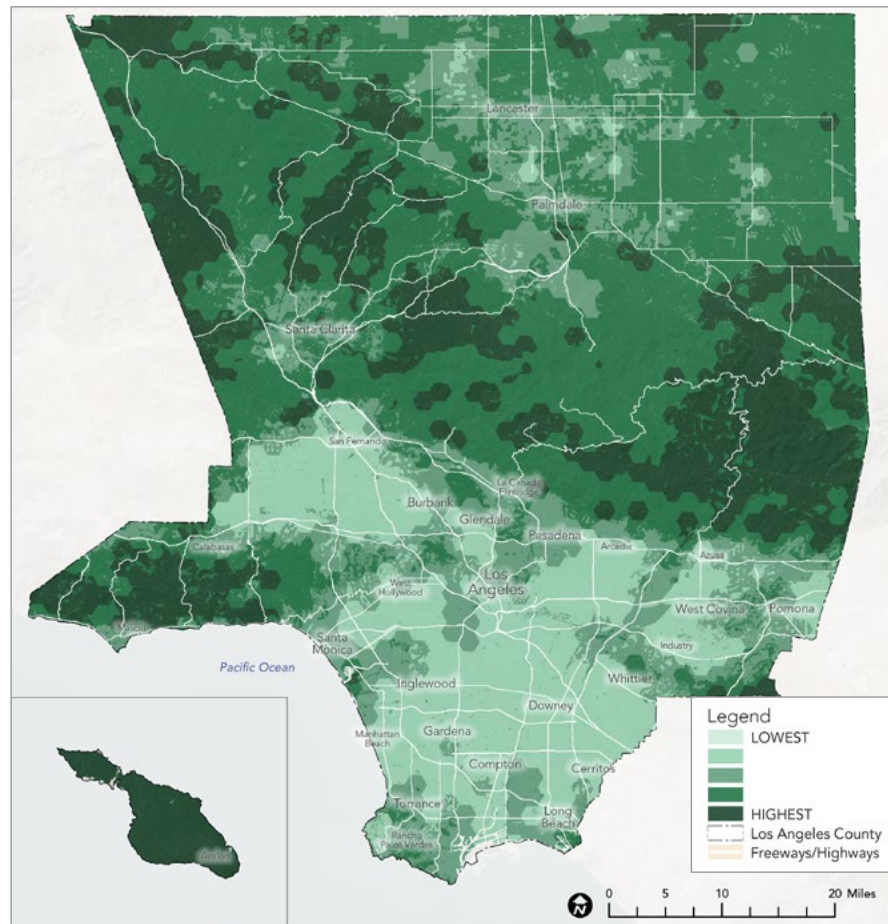
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND BURDENS

Though Los Angeles County encompasses a range of diverse ecosystems from inland deserts to coastal wetlands, many areas of the County have been densely urbanized and modified for industrial and agricultural production. As a result, while some lands within the County are able to provide a wide spectrum

of critical environmental benefits, others bear the burdens of environmental degradation. By overlaying a series of ecosystem health and threat indicators, the PNA+ identifies areas of the County where these environmental benefits and burdens have accrued.

Examples of areas that offer the greatest environmental benefits include the San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island. Areas that bear the greatest environmental burdens include numerous communities in Central LA, East LA, South LA, Southeast LA, the San Gabriel Valley, and the San Fernando Valley.

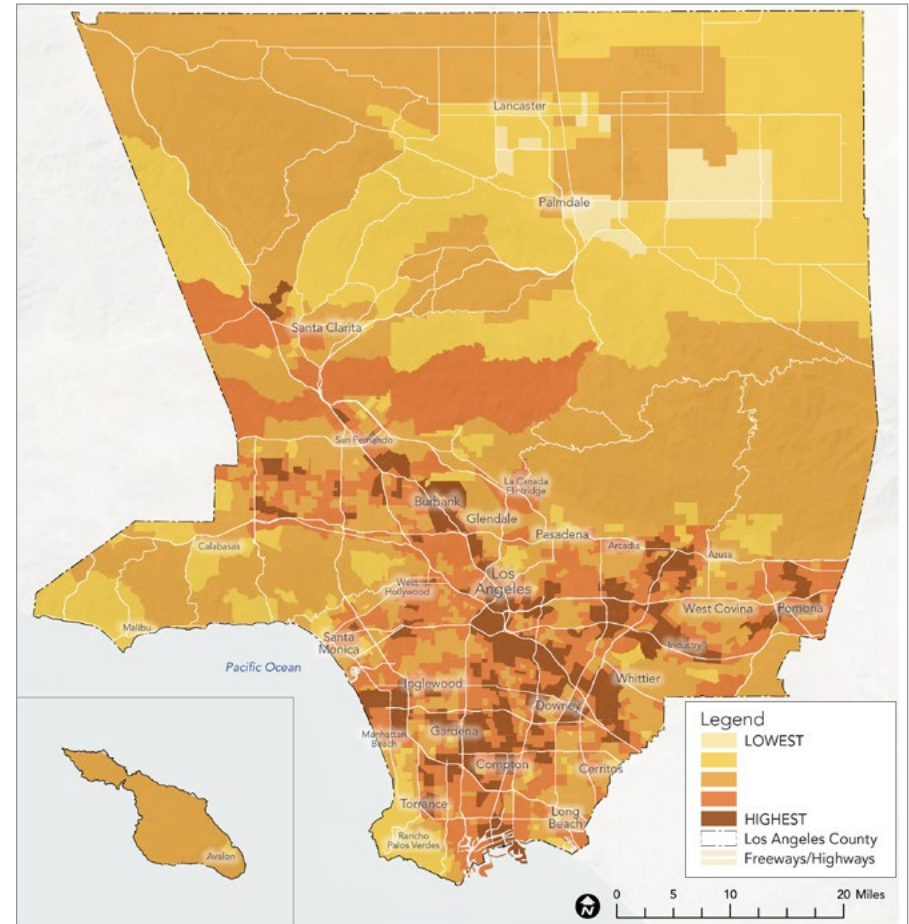
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

Indicators of Environmental Benefits include: Species Diversity, Significant Habitat, Habitat Connectivity, Proximity to a Waterbody, Habitat Type

ENVIRONMENTAL BURDENS



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

Indicators of Environmental Burdens include: Groundwater Threat, Hazardous Waste, Drinking Water Quality, Air Quality (PM 2.5), Pollution Burden

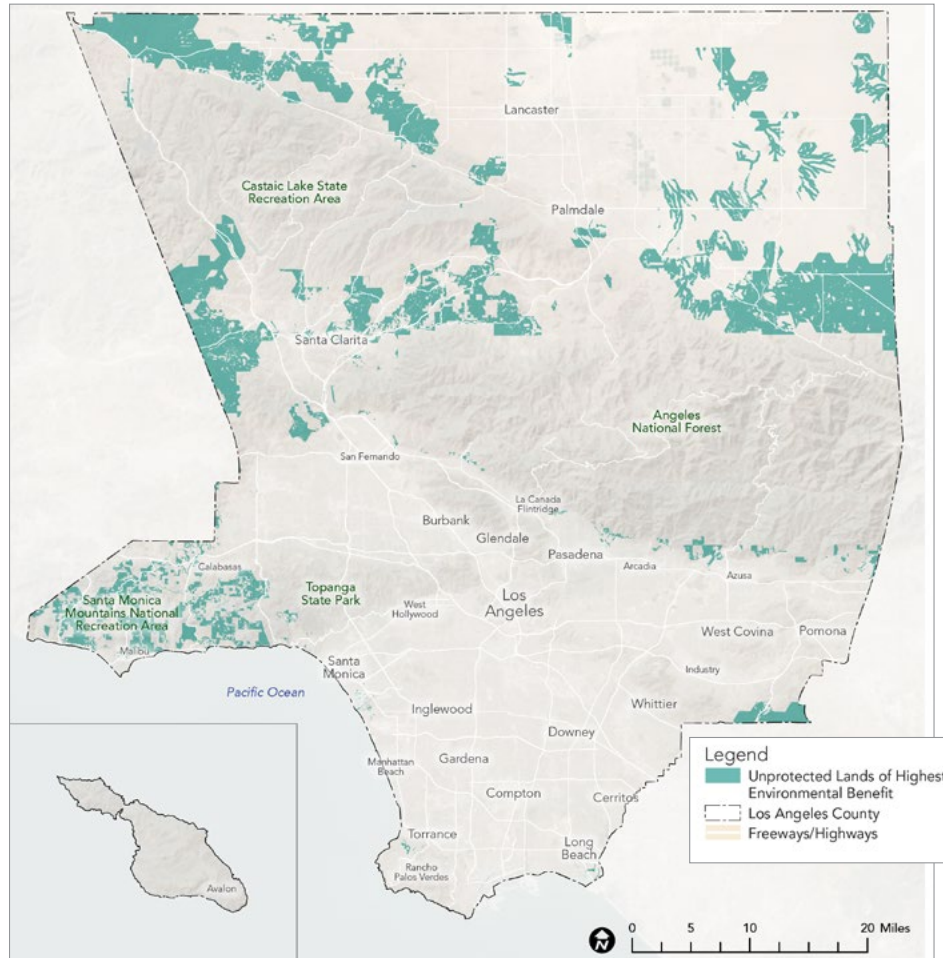
CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Not only does the PNA+ identify priority areas for conservation, it also calls out priority areas for restoration. While there is certainly a need to conserve additional natural lands, the restoration of degraded lands is also of great importance

and a matter of environmental justice in Los Angeles County where numerous underserved communities are plagued with environmental burdens. These are the areas that have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat,

hazardous waste, poor air quality, pollution burden, etc. These priority restoration areas require additional investments to transform liabilities to community assets.

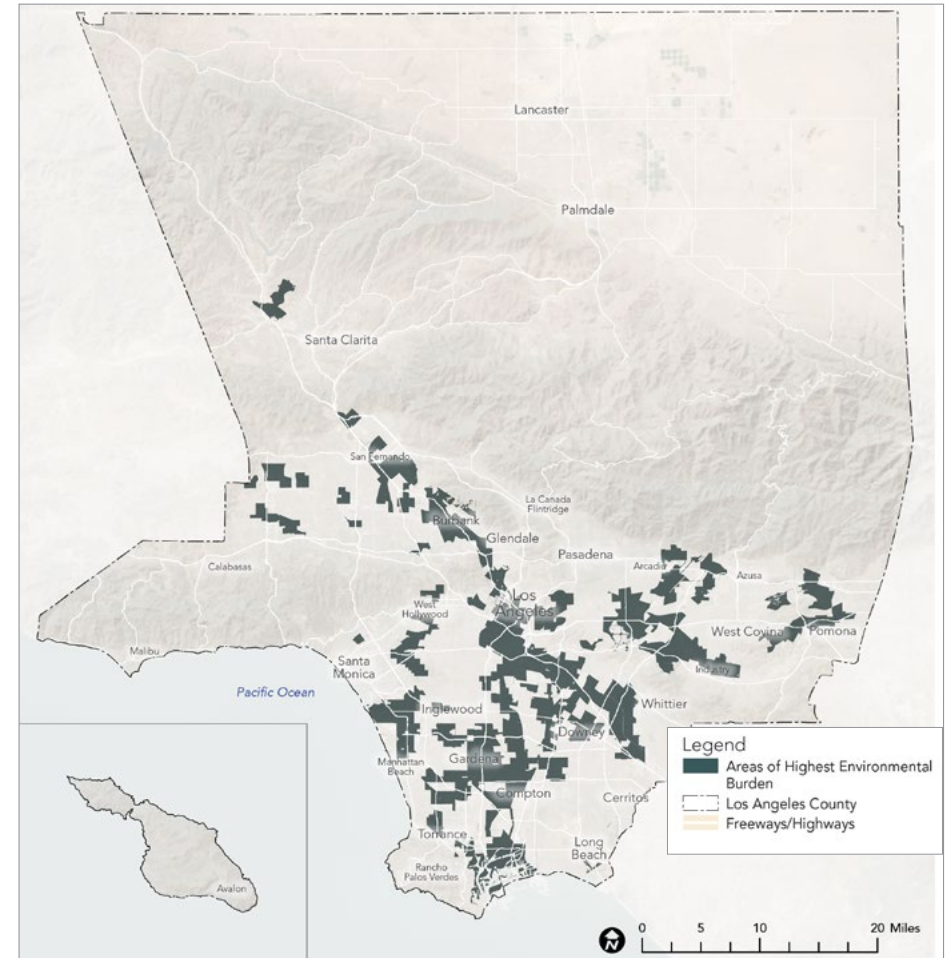
PRIORITY AREAS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

Indicators of Environmental Health include: Species Diversity, Significant Habitat, Habitat Connectivity, Proximity to a Waterbody, Habitat Type

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

Indicators of Environmental Burdens include: Groundwater Threat, Hazardous Waste, Drinking Water Quality, Air Quality (PM 2.5), Pollution Burden

L.A. COUNTY'S 30X30 STRATEGY

The PNA+ identifies conservation and restoration priorities which form the basis for a 30x30 strategy for Los Angeles County. In this report, restoration is specifically speaking to the restoration of areas with high environmental burdens as identified in PNA+; this does not preclude the need for restoration on areas identified as having high environmental benefit or priority areas for environmental conservation.

Conservation: PNA+ identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and management based on indicators of species diversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity and type and proximity to water bodies. Examples of these areas include portions of the Antelope Valley, Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Clarita Valley which are not currently owned and managed by public agencies and conservancies.

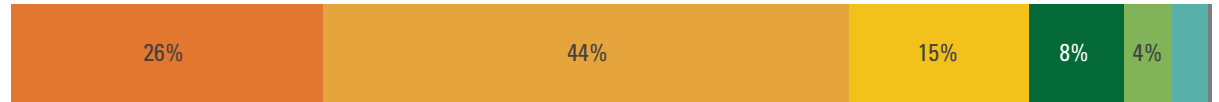
Restoration: The report also calls out priority areas for environmental restoration and enhancement. These are areas which have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air and water quality and pollution burden. Examples include oil fields (such as Inglewood Oil Field in Baldwin Hills), brownfields, landfills (such as Puente Hills), and other degraded lands which may be converted to park and open space in the future.

Underserved and Overrepresented: Los Angeles County's Black, Brown, Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander populations are underserved by parks and overrepresented in areas where environmental burdens are concentrated. Specifically, people of color account for 84% of the population living in priority areas for restoration, i.e. those areas with highest environmental burdens; people of color account for 74% of L.A. County's population. Approximately 60% of residents living in priority areas for restoration are Hispanic/Latino; 44% of L.A. County residents are Hispanic/Latino.

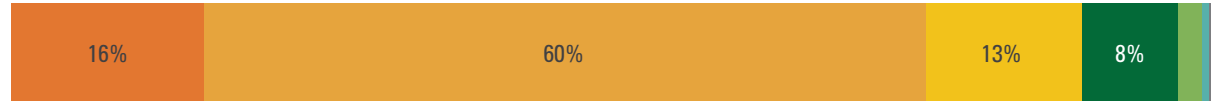
RACE AND ETHNICITY



COUNTYWIDE: 10,008,833 Residents



PRIORITY RESTORATION AREAS: 1,584,707 Residents



84% People of Color



REGIONAL RECREATION

The PNA+ inventories, maps, and analyzes the availability of and access to regional recreation facilities.

Availability of Regional Recreation Facilities: The regional sites inventory shows that Los Angeles County has about 1 million acres of regional recreation and conservation areas. These lands account for 38% of the County's total land area, but there are challenges associated with access to these areas given their location, distribution, and other factors such as the lack of public transit service. In particular, regional recreation and conservation areas account for less than 5% of lands in the Metro and Gateway Regional Study Areas.

Regional Recreation Priority Areas: PNA+ identifies regional recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with:

- » High levels of social and transportation barriers;
- » High levels of health and environmental vulnerability;
- » Low proximity to regional recreation sites; and
- » Low visitorship rates to regional recreation sites.

Given the specific barriers identified, these areas should be prioritized for interventions such as expanded public transit service to beaches, parks, and trails, and improved information-sharing about regional recreation facilities.

Regional Recreation Needs: Through the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, L.A. County residents identified the following needs to enhance access to and experiences at regional recreation facilities: more shade, expanded transportation options, improved signage, greater access to information about parks and programs, improved ADA

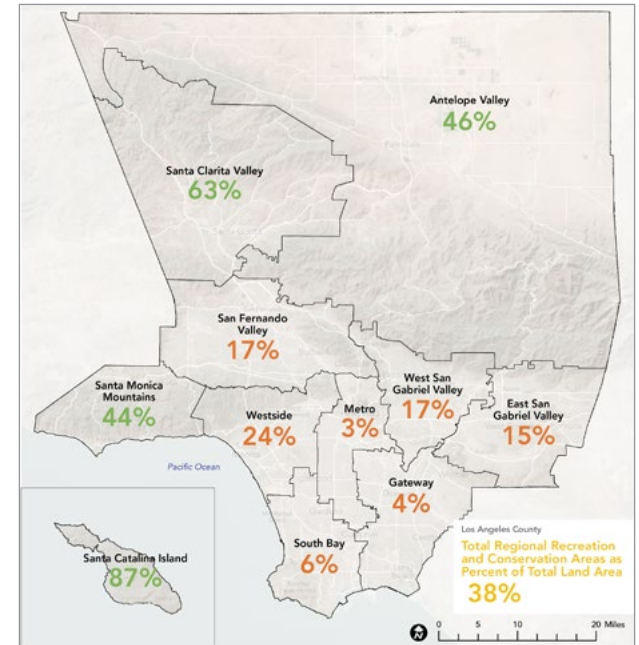
accessibility, better maintenance, additional staffing, increased parking, more water-related amenities like hydration stations, and safety improvements.

Regional Trails: PNA+ identifies over 3,300 miles of regional trails across L.A. County, which translates to about 0.33 miles of regional trail per 1,000 residents. This total trail mileage is more than previously estimated and reveals how significant trails are as a recreational resource. Trails are distributed unevenly across the County and trail mileage varies widely by Regional Study Areas, ranging from just 0.03 per 1,000 residents in the Metro Study Area to 39.83 per 1,000 residents in Santa Catalina Island. There are opportunities to create new trails and fill gaps in trails in both "trail-rich" and "trail-poor" areas.

Beaches: The ocean beaches that stretch along the 75-mile mainland coast of Los Angeles County are some of the most recognizable and popular destinations in the world. While these beaches provide unique recreational opportunities and serve a critical ecological role, they also face threats related to climate change and development, including sand erosion, sea level rise, and degraded water quality. Only about 100,000 Los Angeles County residents (1% of the population) live within walking distance of an ocean beach access point. The majority of ocean beach access points (71%) are not served by public transit.

Native and Tribal Access: As part of PNA+, DPR conducted focused outreach to engage Native Americans. Key needs identified by these stakeholders include having access to and privacy for Native peoples to use, enjoy, and practice traditional ceremonies on ancestral lands, and raising awareness and educating the public about tribal stewardship and the indigenous histories of the region.

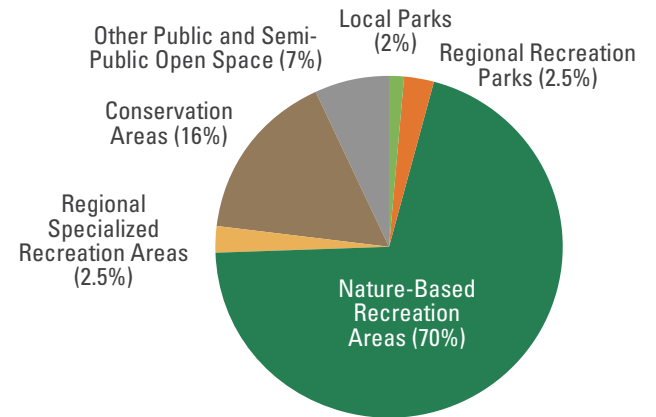
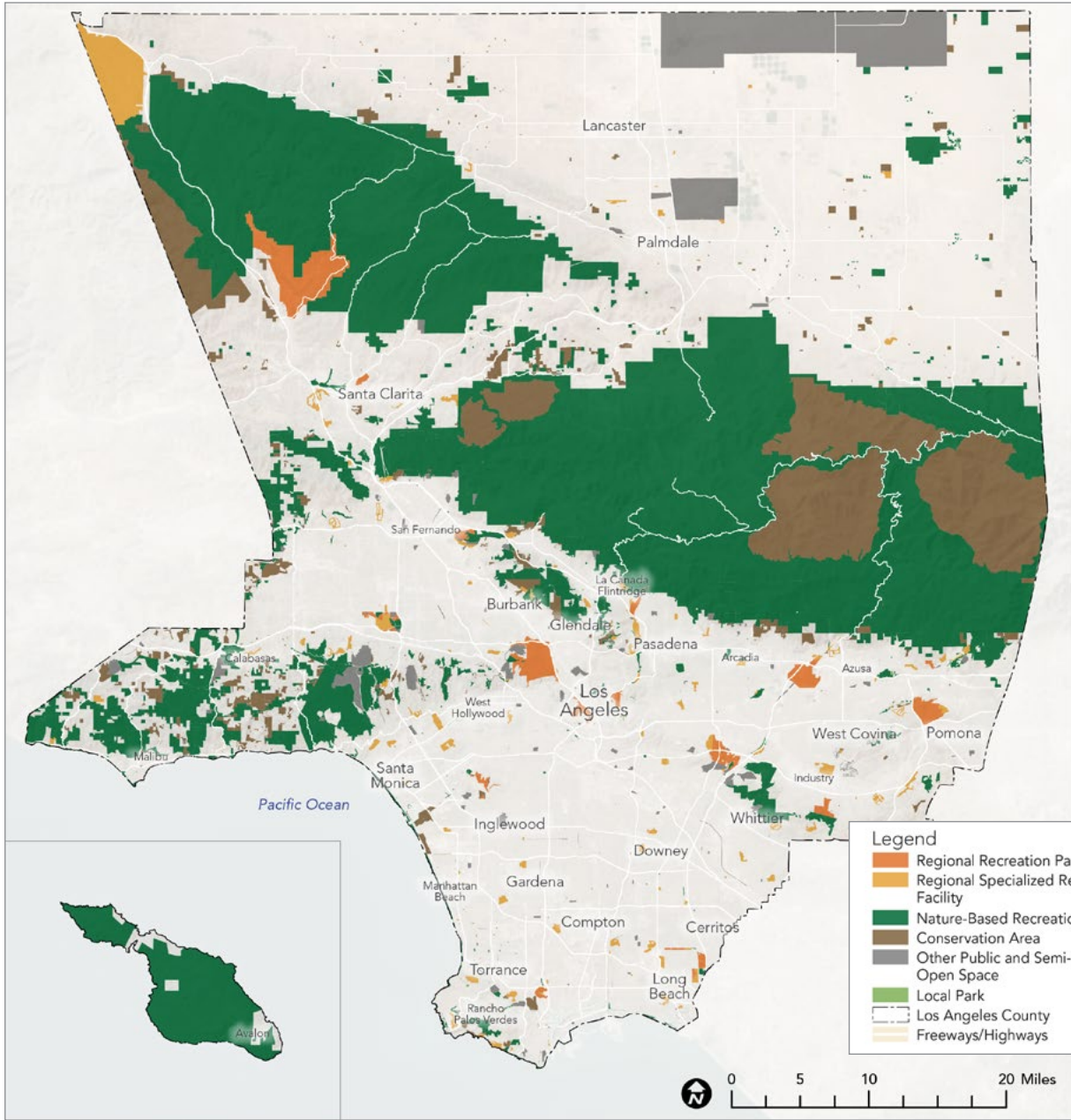
REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LAND AREA




Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory



REGIONAL SITE INVENTORY



► Regional Recreation and Conservation Areas in LA County


38%
of LA County's
total land area


998,301
acres


99
acres per 1,000
County residents

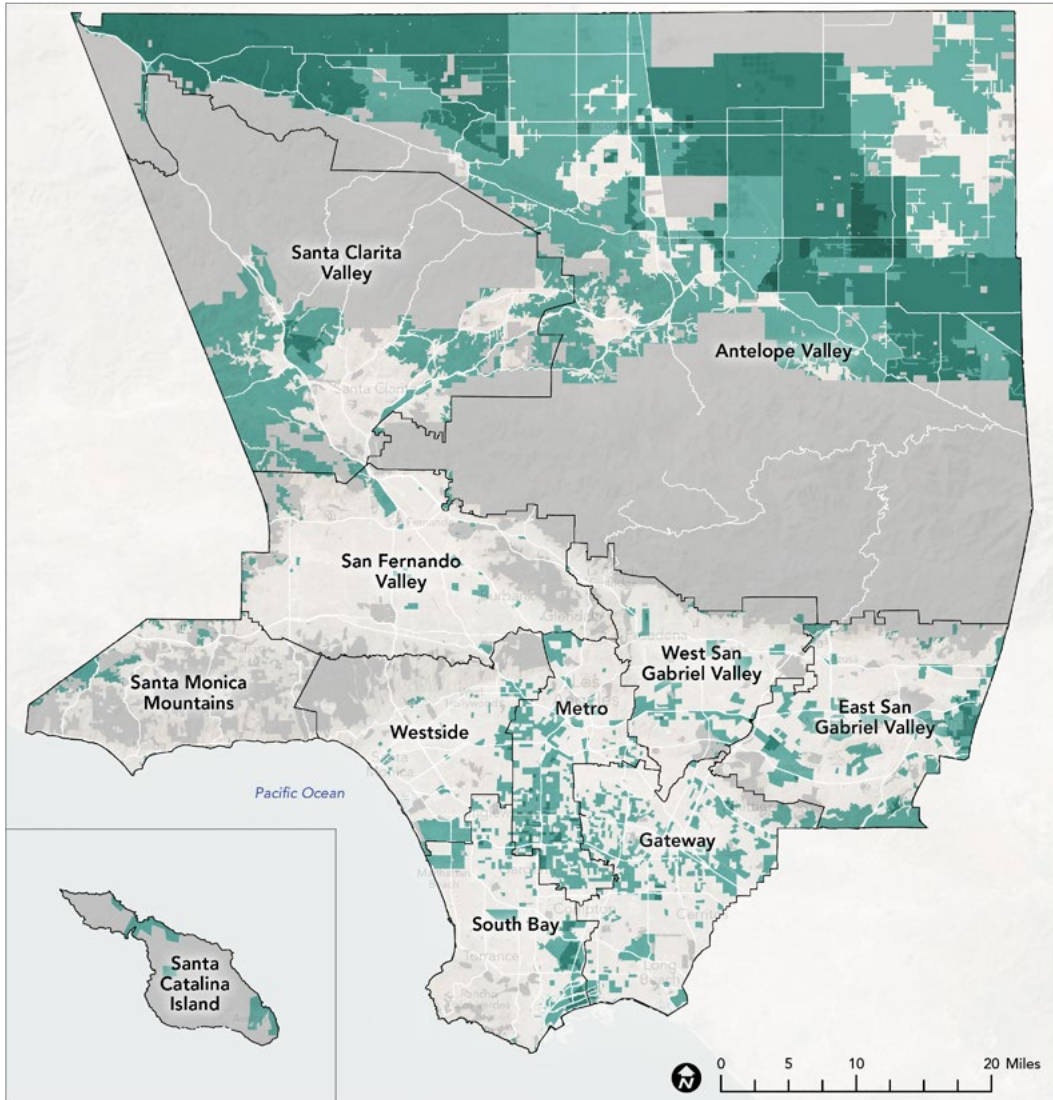
Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

PRIORITY AREAS FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO REGIONAL RECREATION

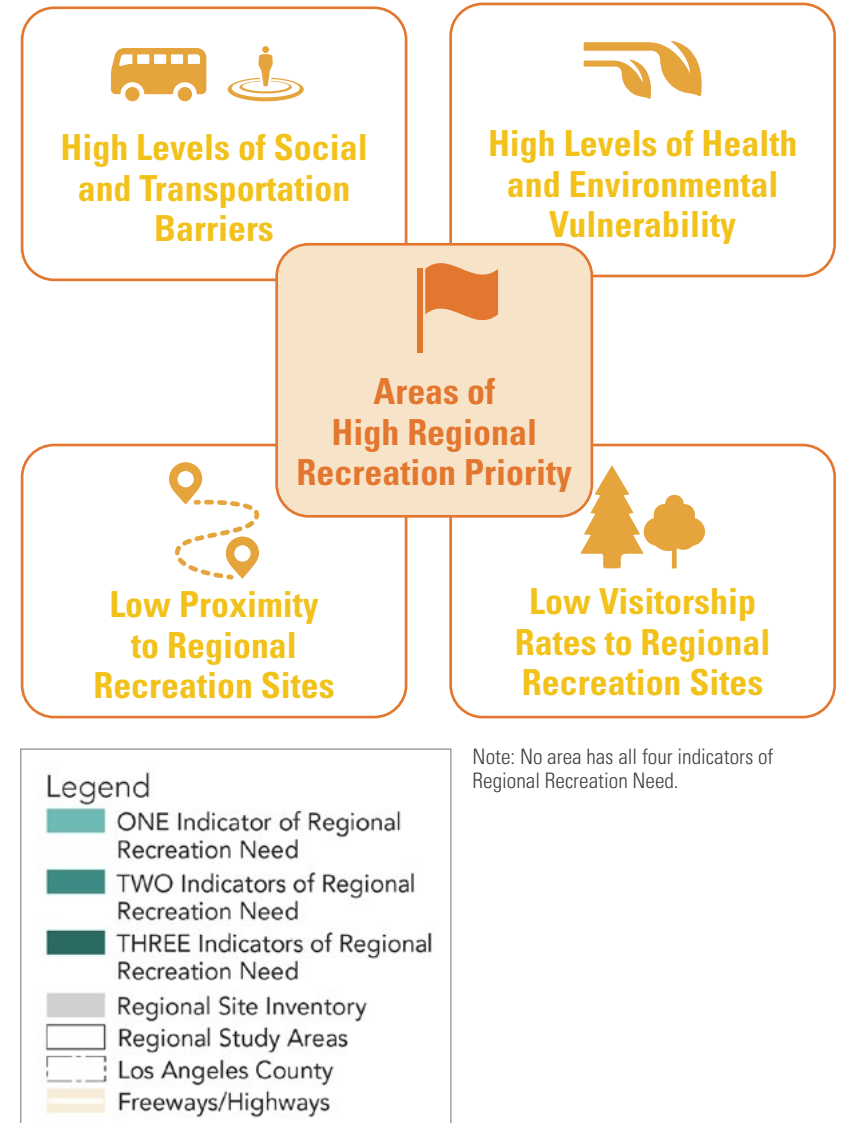
The PNA+ identifies regional recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with:

- » High levels of social and transportation barriers;
- » High levels of health and environmental vulnerability;
- » Low proximity to regional recreation sites; and
- » Low visitorship rates to regional recreation sites.

Strategies to address community-specific barriers to regional recreation should be prioritized for implementation in these areas. Examples include expanded public transit service to beaches, parks, and trails, and improved information-sharing about regional recreation facilities in the priority areas.



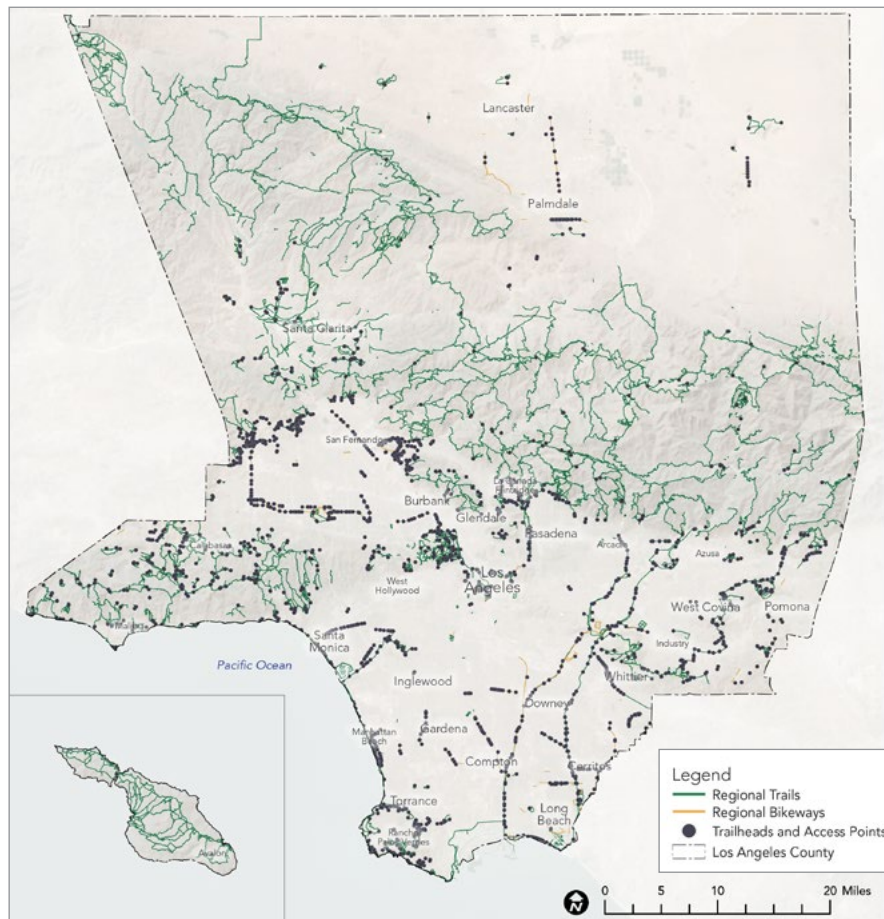
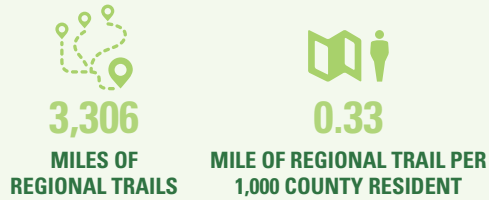
Map source: HPI, 2021; Unacast, 2021; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory



REGIONAL TRAILS

The PNA+ identifies over 3,300 miles of regional trails across Los Angeles County, which translates to about 0.33 miles of regional trail per 1,000 residents. This total trail mileage is more than previously estimated and reveals how significant trails are as a recreational resource.

▶ Regional Trail Metrics



Map source: LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

OCEAN BEACHES


The ocean beaches that stretch along the 75-mile mainland coast of Los Angeles County are some of the most recognizable and popular destinations in the world. While these beaches provide unique recreational opportunities and serve a critical ecological role, they also face threats related to climate change and development, including sand erosion, sea level rise, and degraded water quality.


Only about 100,000 Los Angeles County residents (1% of the population) live within walking distance of an ocean beach access point. The majority of ocean beach access points (71%) are not served by public transit.



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

1% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE (0.5 MILES) OF A BEACH ACCESS POINT

7% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN CYCLING DISTANCE (2.5 MILES) OF A BEACH ACCESS POINT

13% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE (5 MILES) OF A BEACH ACCESS POINT

29% 
OF BEACH ACCESS POINTS ARE LOCATED WITHIN A HALF-MILE WALK OF A PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP

RURAL RECREATION

The PNA+ inventories, maps, and analyzes the availability of and access to rural recreation sites, including local parks, regional recreation parks, and nature-based recreation areas.

Rural Recreation: The rural sites inventory shows the rural areas of L.A. County are home to a significant amount of parkland, including about 1,100 acres of local parks, 12,700 acres of regional recreation parks, and 636,000 acres of nature-based recreation areas. While rural areas are relatively rich in parkland, they are lacking in certain amenities, especially water-based recreation facilities such as swimming pools and splash pads, as well as shaded seating, play areas, and walking trails. Also, no new local parks have been created in rural unincorporated areas since the completion of the 2016 PNA.

Rural Recreation Priority Areas: PNA+ identifies rural recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with:

- » High levels of social and transportation barriers;
- » High levels of health and environmental vulnerability;
- » Low proximity to rural recreation sites; and
- » Proximity to fewest recreational opportunity types

Given the community-specific barriers identified, these areas should be prioritized for interventions such as developing new local parks, improving, expanding or adding amenities to existing parks, increasing transportation options to parks, and collaborating across agencies and communities to serve shared needs.

Rural Recreation Needs: Through the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, rural residents identified the following needs to enhance access to and experiences at rural recreation sites: more water-based recreation facilities like swimming pools and splash pads, more shade, more amenities in existing parks, expanded transportation options, improved signage, greater access to information about parks and programs, improved ADA accessibility, better maintenance, additional staffing, increased parking, more water-related amenities like hydration stations, and safety improvements.

Vulnerable Rural Communities: PNA+ analyzes and maps areas with high population vulnerability as measured by indicators in four dimensions:

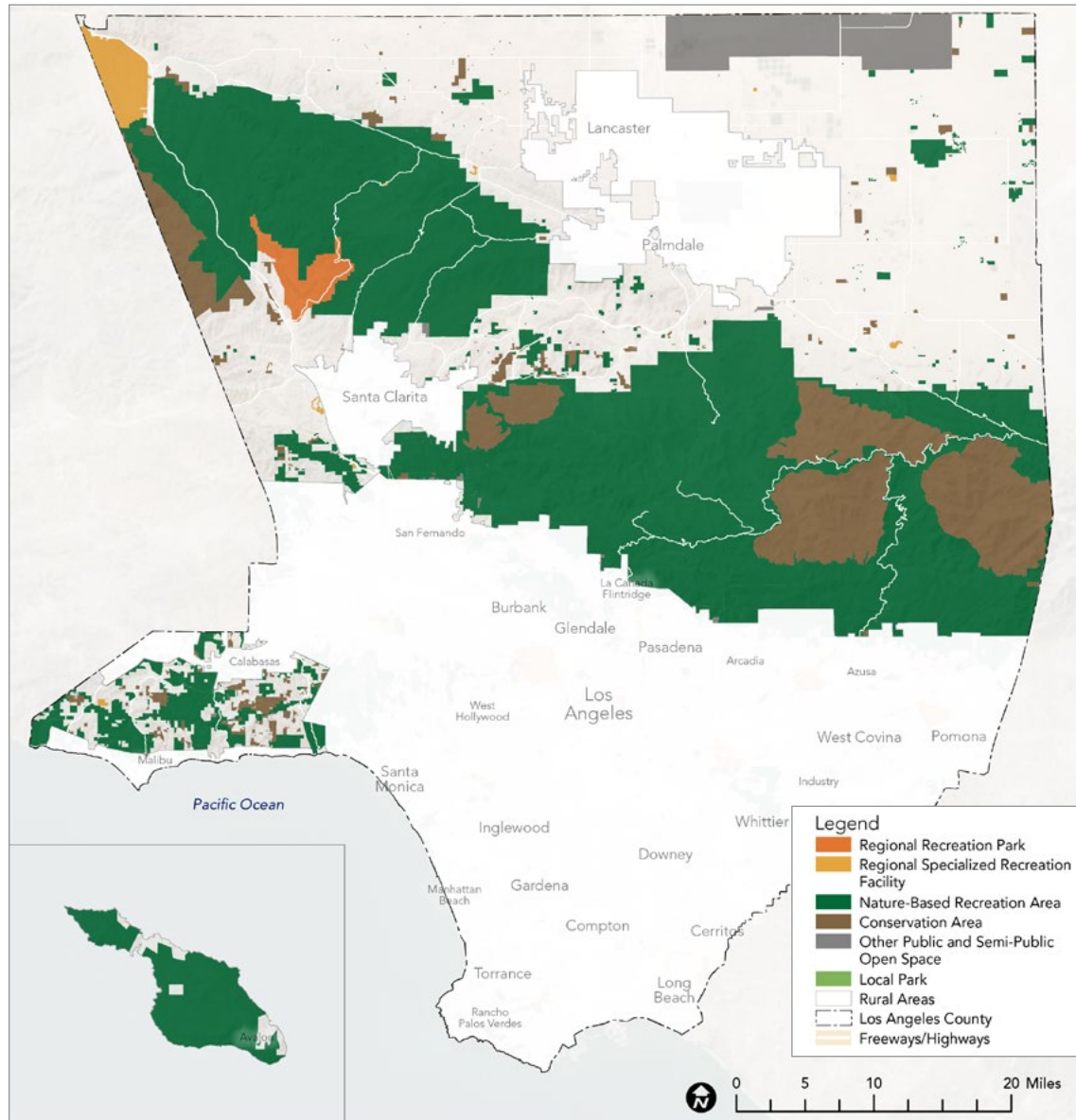
- » Social Barriers such as concentrations of poverty, minority populations, elderly
- » Health Vulnerability such as lower life expectancy, high level of pollution
- » Transportation Barriers such as limited access to automobile, limited access to public transit, higher number of pedestrian injuries
- » Environmental Vulnerability such as limited access to parks, lower tree canopy coverage, more excessive heat days

Many of the most vulnerable areas are also the very high and high park need areas identified in the 2016 PNA. PNA+ additionally identifies numerous rural communities in the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley as areas with high population vulnerability.

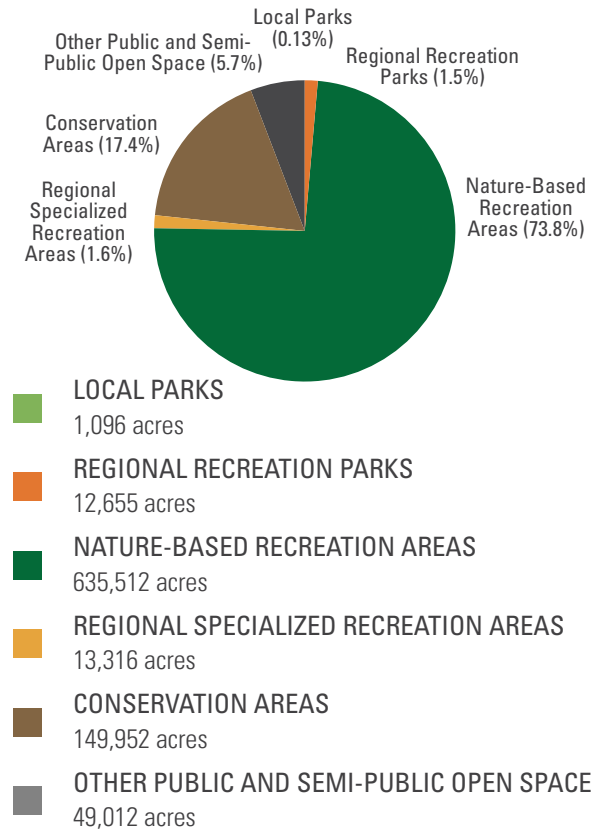


RURAL SITE INVENTORY

Rural areas of Los Angeles County are home to a significant amount of parkland, including approximately 1,100 acres of local parks, 12,700 acres of regional recreation parks, and 636,000 acres of nature-based recreation areas.



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory



- LOCAL PARKS
1,096 acres
- REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS
12,655 acres
- NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREAS
635,512 acres
- REGIONAL SPECIALIZED RECREATION AREAS
13,316 acres
- CONSERVATION AREAS
149,952 acres
- OTHER PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
49,012 acres

► Recreation and Conservation Land within rural Los Angeles County


56%
of total
land area

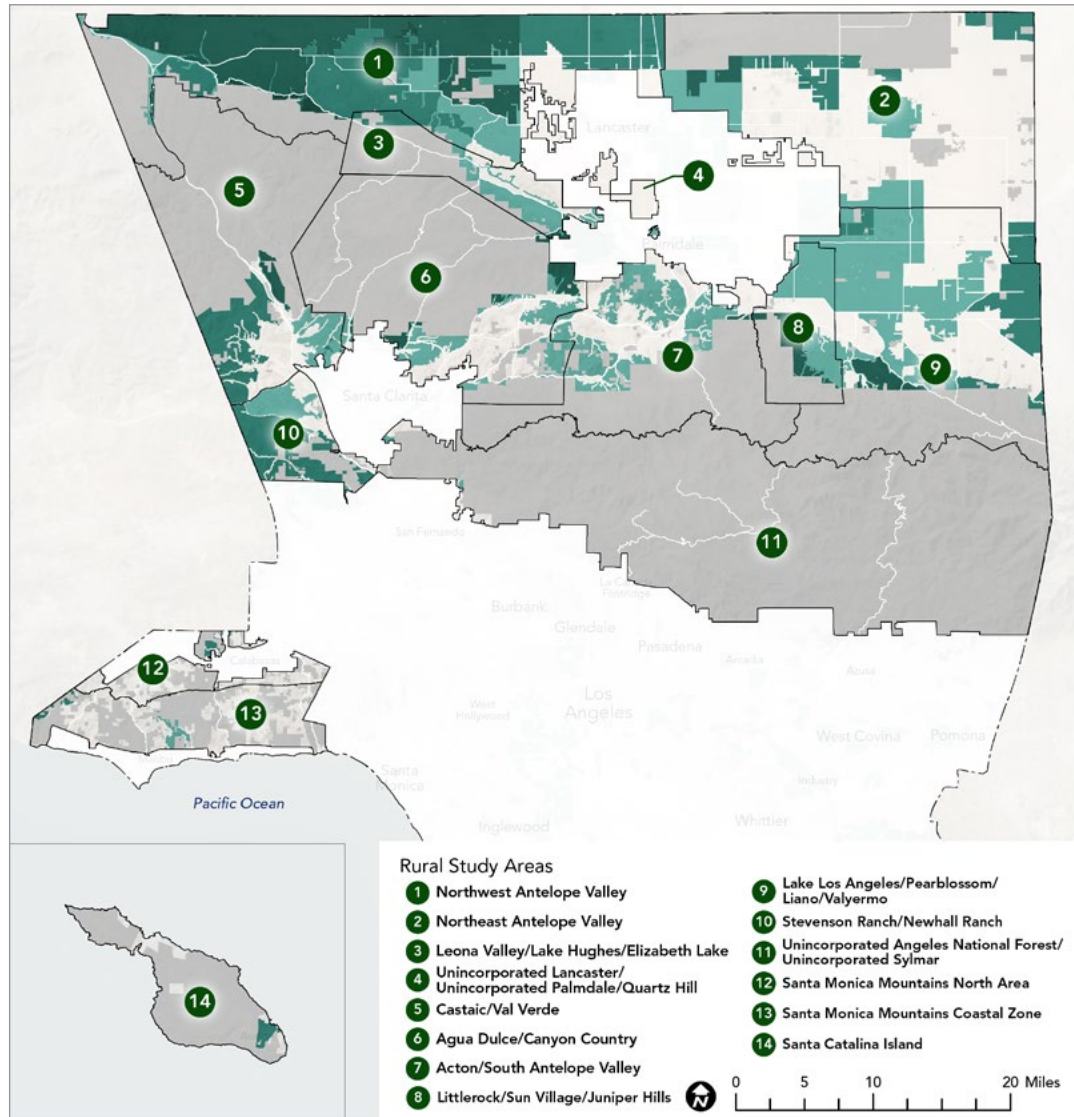

861,545
acres


5.3
acres per
resident

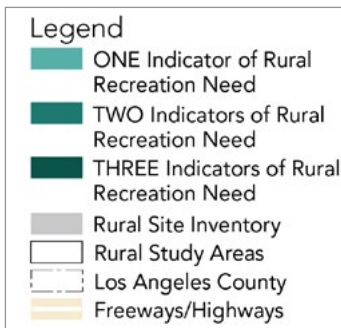
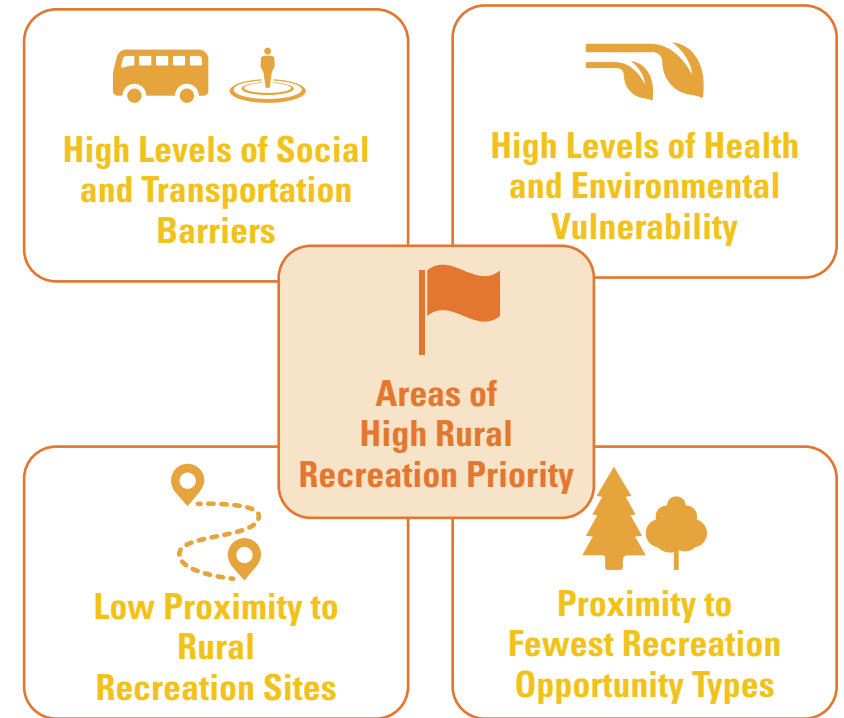
PRIORITY AREAS FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO RURAL RECREATION

The PNA+ identifies rural recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with: 1) high levels of social and transportation barriers; 2) high levels of health and environmental vulnerability; 3) low proximity to rural recreation sites; and/or 4) proximity to fewest recreational opportunity types.

Given the community-specific barriers identified, these areas should be prioritized for interventions such as developing new local parks, improving, expanding or adding amenities to existing parks, increasing transportation options to parks, and collaborating across agencies and communities to serve shared needs.

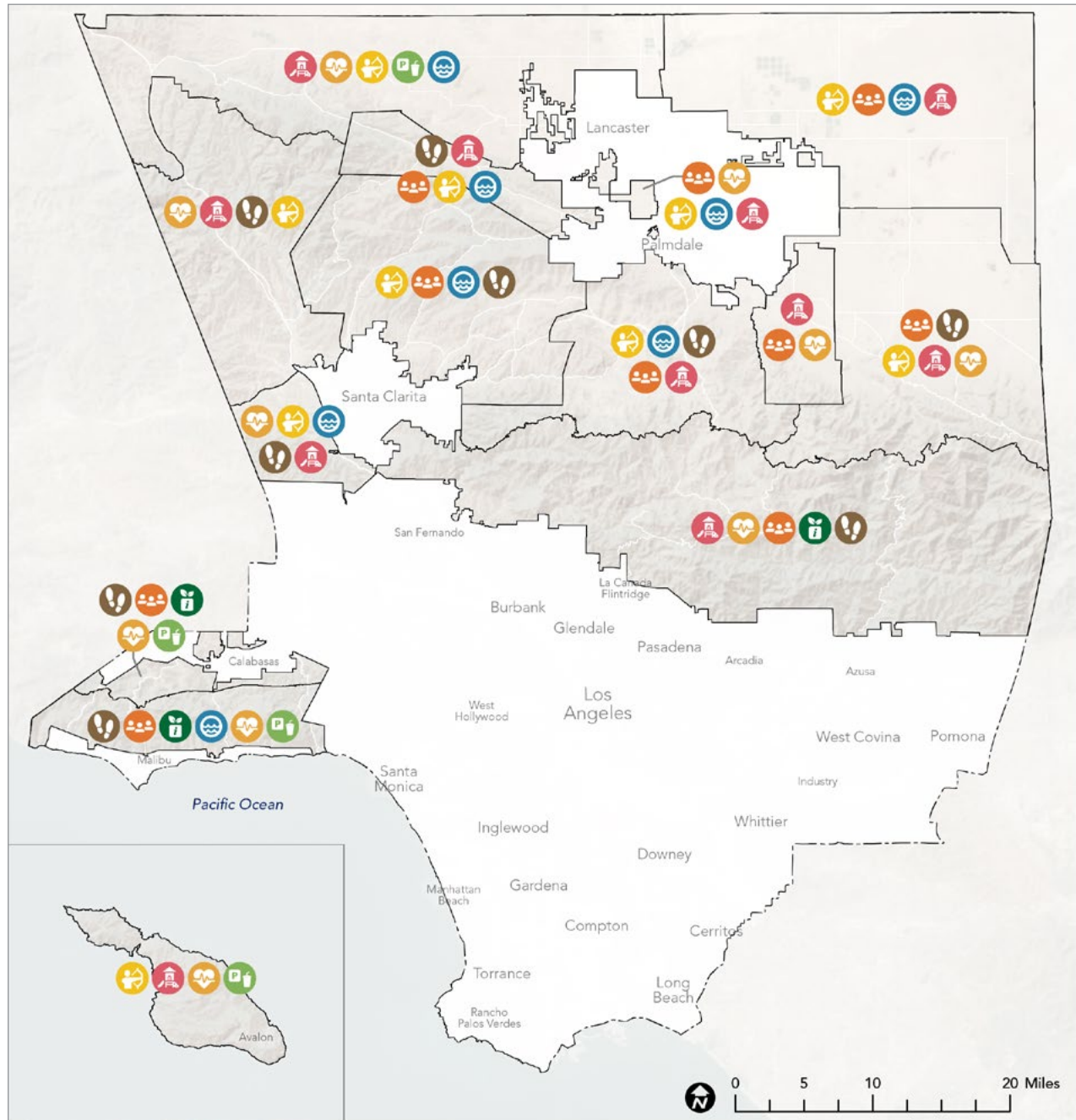


Map source: PNA, 2016; US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021



Note: No area has all four indicators of Rural Recreation Need.

RURAL PRIORITY PROJECT TYPES



Map source: PNA, 2016

While rural areas are relatively rich in parkland, they are lacking in certain amenities, especially water-based recreation facilities such as swimming pools and splash pads, as well as shaded seating, play areas, and walking trails. Also, no new local parks have been created in rural unincorporated areas since the completion of the PNA in 2016.

Where there are overlaps in prioritized amenities between adjacent rural study areas, opportunities may exist to share and leverage resources to serve residents of multiple study areas with centralized facilities that address common needs.

Legend

- Gathering Spaces
- Sports Facilities
- Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Water-Based Recreation
- Trails and Pathways
- Overnight Accommodations
- General Recreation
- Health and Fitness
- Support Facilities
- Rural Study Areas
- Rural Areas
- Los Angeles County
- Freeways/Highways

RURAL RECREATION: NEEDS

Through the community engagement process, Los Angeles County residents of rural areas identified the following key rural recreation needs and issues.

COMMUNITY NEEDS: FOR IMPROVING RURAL PARK ACCESS AND EXPERIENCES



TRANSIT OPTIONS

Improved and more frequent public transit service, carpools and shuttle options to parks.



INCREASED PARKING

Affordable parking options with ample space for horse trailers and electric car charging stations.



MORE SHADE

Shaded seating, play areas and walking trails, and shaded greenbelts between and around parks.



ACCESS TO WATER

More hydration stations for people and animals, and additional water facilities and features like pools and splash pads to keep residents cool in hot months and provide swimming lessons.



ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Improved lighting at parks, more desert walking paths, and better maintenance of trailheads.



BETTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

More information about events at local parks, mini-transit (like Metro Micro) to parks and walking and hiking opportunities at wildlife sanctuaries. More publicity about community workshops and other opportunities to provide feedback.



ENHANCED SIGNAGE

Signage maintained and provided in multiple languages, as well as additional interpretive and wildlife identification signage needed along trails.



ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Trails and parks with better access for wheelchair users and people with disabilities, and playground equipment that is accessible.



NATIVE AMERICAN AND TRIBAL ACCESS

Privacy for ancestral practice, and land access for gatherings and events.



MORE CULTURAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

More community events like art shows and concerts.



IMPROVED MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Better upkeep of restroom facilities, improved lighting on streets and paths, and trash and vegetation overgrowth removal in parks and on trails.



ENHANCED TRAILS AND TRAIL SAFETY

Protected and safe bike trails to connect users to parks, and resolution of conflicts between trail to ensure trails are safe for horses, riders and other users.



MORE FACILITIES FOR EQUESTRIAN USE

A staging area for horses and trailers at trailheads with trees, water, and picnic tables, and a place to host horse shows and equestrian events.



ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

More park activities and programs available to all ages.



EXPANDED RECREATION FACILITIES

More tennis and pickleball courts, and swimming facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

DPR is committed to addressing the significant park and recreation needs identified in the 2016 PNA and the 2022 PNA+ in ways that produce measurable results, provide multiple benefits, and improve the quality of life for the residents it serves. But this is not easy to do and DPR cannot do it alone. To address the identified needs, DPR and its partners, including other park agencies, community-based organizations, funders, and volunteers, must take the following next steps which are organized into six broad categories:

FUNDING PRIORITIES

- » Work at the Federal, State, and local levels to incorporate LA County's PNA+ (30x30 framework) into programs, legislation, policies, and funding opportunities.
- » Work with the State of California and other grantors to update scoring tools and methodologies for parks-related grant programs to address the conservation and restoration, regional, and rural needs identified in the PNA+, specifically looking at racial equity and population vulnerability metrics.
- » Initiate new funding mechanisms to expand restoration of degraded lands for park use. PNA+ calls out environmental restoration priority areas which have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air and water quality and pollution burden. Examples include oil fields, brownfields, landfills, and other degraded lands which may be converted to park and open space. These areas are most often located in lower income communities of color.

- » Evaluate existing funding mechanisms such as Quimby and create new funding tools such as park impact fees to fund the development, improvement, operation, and maintenance of parks, especially in very high and high need areas identified in the PNA and priority areas identified in the PNA+.
- » Coordinate with the Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) to integrate findings from the PNA+ Final Report into the Measure A grant-making process and update the Grant Administration Manual to inform prioritization and selection of projects for competitive grants, including expanding the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to include High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation.



PARK, TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE PROVISION

- » Update DPR's parkland acquisition strategy based on findings of the PNA+ Final Report. Specifically, the PNA+ identifies and maps areas that should be prioritized for both conservation as well as restoration opportunities. The updated countywide strategy needs to prioritize land acquisition in very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA as well as priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration identified in the PNA+.
- » Implement additional multi-benefit park projects that concurrently address the climate crisis, enable more residents to get outdoors to experience and enjoy nature, as well as protect and enhance biodiversity in the county. Development of additional multi-

benefit park projects will help to implement plans like the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, the General Plan, Community Parks and Recreation Plans, and advance initiatives such as WHAM, which supports projects that simultaneously address stormwater management (Measure W), affordable housing (Measure H), park (Measure A), and transportation (Measure M) needs.

- » Implement priority trail projects as identified in adopted trail plans. The County has adopted various trail plans which identify priority trail projects to be implemented. Given the growing popularity of trails and the many benefits they offer, there is a need as well as opportunities to create new trails and fill gaps in trails in both "trail-rich" and "trail-poor" areas.
- » Develop and implement solutions, such as partnerships with other organizations and sharing/pool of Measure A funds for multiple study areas, to address the unique park and recreation needs of rural unincorporated communities, especially those identified as high priority rural recreation areas in the PNA+ Final Report.



COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

- » Establish a regular convening with partner agencies to coordinate and collaborate on regional parkland initiatives, including the acquisition of land for park purposes, and implement the recommendations of the PNA+ Final Report.
- » Expand the quarterly meetings of countywide trail managers taskforce to coordinate interagency trail connectivity, practices and policies, signage, network, and trail related needs identified in the PNA+ Final Report.
- » Update the Los Angeles County General Plan and other County plans to incorporate findings and recommendations of the 2016 PNA and 2022 PNA+ Final Reports. DPR will coordinate with the Department of Regional Planning to update the General Plan, including the Parks and Recreation Element and the Conservation and Natural Resources Element, Area Plans, and other plans to incorporate analyses, mapping, and recommendations from the PNA, PNA+, and other recent park and trail planning efforts.



ACCESS AND INFORMATION

- » Expand public transit to parks, open space, trails, and beaches. DPR and other park agencies should partner with Metro and other transit providers to implement the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan and related projects to enable more residents to more easily and conveniently access the full range of parks and recreational options in Los Angeles County. Expanded transit to parks services should be prioritized for very high and high park need areas identified in the 2016 PNA as well as priority areas for regional recreation and rural recreation identified in the 2022 PNA+ Final Report.
- » Formalize partnerships with Native American tribes and groups to pursue opportunities for acknowledgement and stewardship of land. As part of various County planning processes, including those for the OurCounty Sustainability Plan and the PNA+, Native American residents and stakeholders identified numerous barriers to accessing County-owned land for cultural, religious, and traditional practices such as harvesting and gathering on ancestral lands. DPR and partner agencies should continue to collaborate with the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (NAIC) and Native American tribes, indigenous-led organizations, and other indigenous stakeholders to remove barriers to the observance of cultural, religious, and traditional practices and explore partnerships for the co-management of lands.

- » Update and expand the Trails LA County website and app to additionally serve as a hub and an empowerment tool from which to advance equity and expand access to the regional trail system. DPR will coordinate and collaborate with partner agencies to continually update and expand the Trails LA County website and app to include information on additional trails. In addition, the website and app should serve as a resource hub and an empowerment tool from which to address a whole host of initiatives related to equity and access to our trail systems including enhanced language and accessibility and culturally relevant educational themes.
- » Provide historically inclusive, eco-literate, and multilingual interpretive signage at parks, including natural areas and nature centers. As part of the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, some residents reported that the lack of signage, maps, and other information displays and materials in languages besides English discouraged them from visiting certain parks and trails. Some also shared the desire for more historical and environmental information at parks. To address these needs, DPR and partner agencies should provide historically inclusive, eco-literate, and multilingual interpretive signage at parks, including natural areas and nature centers.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- » Prioritize community engagement for programs, services, and park development. DPR will continue to prioritize community engagement for programs, services, and park development to ensure that the communities it serves are engaged and involved. Community-based organizations are trusted by residents and have played a vital role in community engagement and outreach in the development of the PNA, PNA+, OurCounty Sustainability Plan, and numerous other County plans, especially in under-resourced communities. DPR will continue to collaborate and coordinate with community-based organizations for community engagement and outreach for park planning and development efforts, including involving them early and often in processes, and providing them with financial, technical, and other support.
- » Expand opportunities for community engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community meetings have primarily been online for the past two plus years. While not ideal, virtual engagement does offer certain benefits, including making it easier for some members of the public to participate in meetings from the comfort of their homes without traveling, arranging for childcare, etc. However, not all community members have access to the internet or know how to use smart phones. DPR and partner agencies should expand their approach to community engagement to include in-person, analog and virtual options for the public to be informed and get involved in processes for parks and recreation plans, policies, projects, and programs.



CAPACITY BUILDING

- » Create career pathways, including training and workforce development opportunities, for jobs in nature education, resource protection, conservation, and outdoor access related fields. Parks contribute to the creation of a variety of employment opportunities. To grow and strengthen the parks and recreation workforce, there is a need to increase access to parks career pathways for young people, especially young people of color/Black and Brown young people. This can be accomplished by providing job training skills, mentorship, and/or career exposure, especially for Black and Brown youth from very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA, and Black and Brown and other vulnerable communities identified in PNA+.
- » Prioritize recruiting volunteers for core programming, such as out-of-school and sports programming, in very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA and priority areas for restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation identified in the PNA+. Volunteers play a critical role in parks and recreation, with many already serving at parks and still more members of the public expressing a desire to serve. DPR and partner agencies should expand the recruitment and participation of volunteers to help address a variety of needs at parks, natural areas, trails, beaches, and other recreational facilities, including education, programming, and maintenance.





1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.0 Introduction

1.1 PARK INEQUITIES

Where one lives has direct impacts on one’s health, wealth, education, and opportunities. A history of policies, procedures, and practices have generated, reproduced, and maintained park inequities in Los Angeles County based on race/ethnicity and location. Specifically, racial segregation, disinvestment in and dispossession of land, redlining, use of eminent domain, location of large infrastructure projects, land use zoning, regional planning, and other efforts have disproportionately impacted communities of color.

Past decisions and policies continue to impact communities of color, increasing the gaps in and inequities of access to resources and amenities. Tailored and focused strategies are needed to ensure that all residents in Los Angeles County, regardless of race and ethnicity or where they live, have safe and convenient access to quality parks and open space.

Every Los Angeles County resident in every neighborhood deserves safe and accessible parks. To help make this a reality, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors called for the preparation of the PNA which was adopted in July 2016. Since that time, DPR, other park agencies, and our partners have collectively tackled park inequities by creating new parks and improving existing parks across the county, especially in Very High and High park need communities.

However, much work remains to be done. The PNA+ reveals that in addition to the park needs identified in the PNA, the county also has unmet needs with respect to environmental conservation and restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation. The PNA+ is Los Angeles County’s 30x30* plan, identifying priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration. It also calls out priority areas for regional recreation and rural recreation using various indicators of population vulnerability and other factors such as access to regional and rural recreation sites via different modes of travel, the availability of such facilities, and the amenities they offer.

The PNA+ continues and elevates the park equity discussion by offering new data and analyses that underscore racial inequities that still exist when it comes to parks and environmental justice. A particularly noteworthy finding from the PNA+ is that people of color are disproportionately represented in those areas with the highest environmental burdens, accounting for 84% of the population living in priority areas for restoration. Policies, practices, and procedures must be changed to close gaps in distribution of, quality of, and access to parks, programs, and resources.

Chapter 6 of this report provide key findings, metrics, recommendations, and next steps to spur change and work toward achieving greater equity in park and open space throughout Los Angeles County.

*30x30 refers to the goal of conserving 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by the year 2030 to fight climate change and advance biodiversity and conservation. Both the federal and state governments have committed to achieving this goal.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The 2022 Parks Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+) is a focused update to the 2016 Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) and serves as the County’s 30x30 strategy for land conservation and restoration.

This report builds on the PNA by providing a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of 1) the distribution of **environmental benefits and burdens** within the County, 2) park access and need considerations for **regional parks and open spaces** and 3) park needs that are specific to the **rural areas** of the County.

In response to a motion passed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2019, the PNA+ comprehensively inventories and maps regional and rural parks and open spaces, including beaches, lakes and trails, and their related amenities. Based on this inventory, several measures are used to analyze the distribution and level of access provided to these resources throughout the County. With a focus on population vulnerability, priority areas for addressing barriers to regional recreation and rural recreation opportunities are identified. In addition, priority areas are identified where environmental conservation and restoration measures would be most beneficial.

This project was previously called the Regional and Rural Edition (RRE) to emphasize its focus on regional and rural recreation needs and priorities. This project name was used during the data collection, and community engagement and outreach phases which occurred primarily in 2021.

PARK METRICS (PNA)



Park Land:
How many acres of park are there per 1,000 people in each Study Area?



Park Access:
What percentage of the population lives within a half mile of a park?



Park Pressure:
How much park land is available to residents in the area around each park?



Park Amenities:
What amenities are available in parks?



Park Condition:
Are parks in good, fair, or poor condition?

As this report was being completed in 2022, DPR decided to rename the project the Parks Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+) to clarify and better communicate that this project complements and offers new information not previously included in the 2016 Parks Needs Assessment (PNA), such as mapping and analyses related to population vulnerability, environmental benefits, environmental burdens, and priority areas for environmental conservation, environmental restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation. (Please note that there remains some text and graphic references to the RRE in this document because that was the project name when some components of this study were completed.)

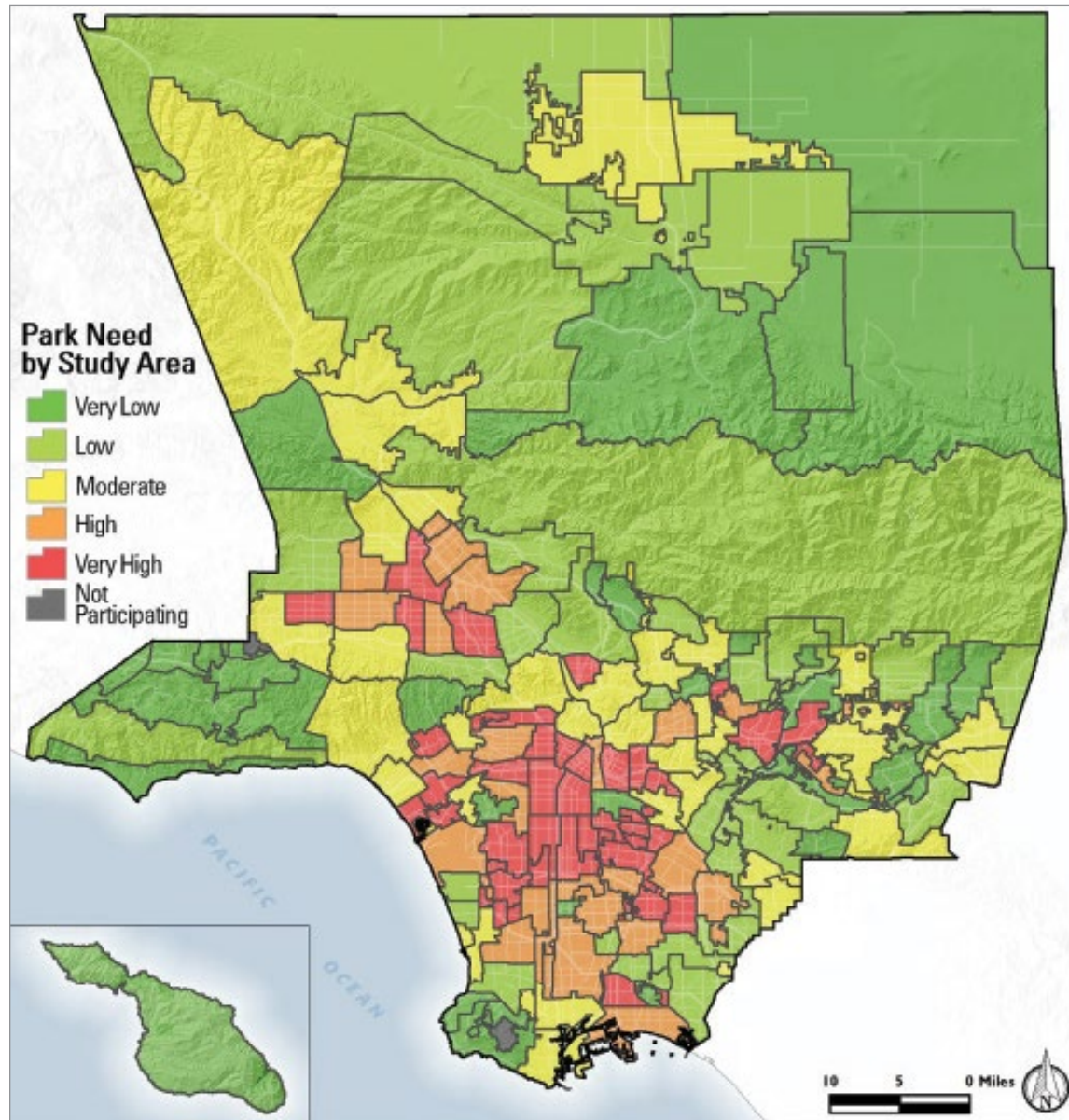
2016 PARKS AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PNA)

Unprecedented in scope and scale, the PNA was a comprehensive study of the diverse parks and recreation facilities throughout Los Angeles County’s cities and unincorporated communities that was funded by RPOSD. The PNA gathered data to determine the scope, scale, and location of park need in Los Angeles County. To ensure that communities across the County received equal representation in the PNA, the County was divided into 188 individual Study Areas. The analysis of population density and various park metrics resulted in the determination of the overall level of Park Need (ranked from Very Low to Very High) identified for each Study Area (see Figure 1-1: Park Need by Study Area based on 2016 Countywide PNA).

The findings from the PNA were instrumental to the development of the Los Angeles County Safe, Clean Neighborhood Park, Open Space, Beaches, River Protection and Water Conservation Measure of 2016 (Measure A). Approved by over 74% of voters, Measure A is a parcel tax that generates more than \$90 million per year for parks, beaches, and open space areas in Los Angeles County. Administered by the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD), Measures A includes formula-based allocations to each Study Area, dedicated funding for Very High and High park need Study Areas, and competitive grants that are open to public agencies, non-profit organizations, and schools.



Figure 1-1: Park Need by Study Area based on 2016 Countywide Parks Needs Assessment

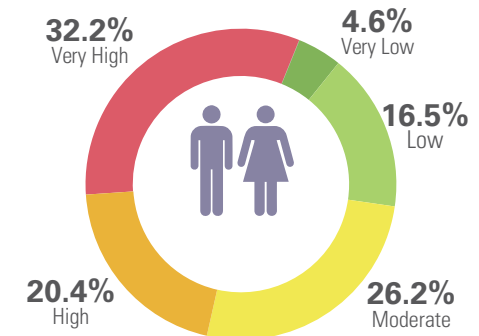


Map source: PNA, 2016

PARK NEEDS

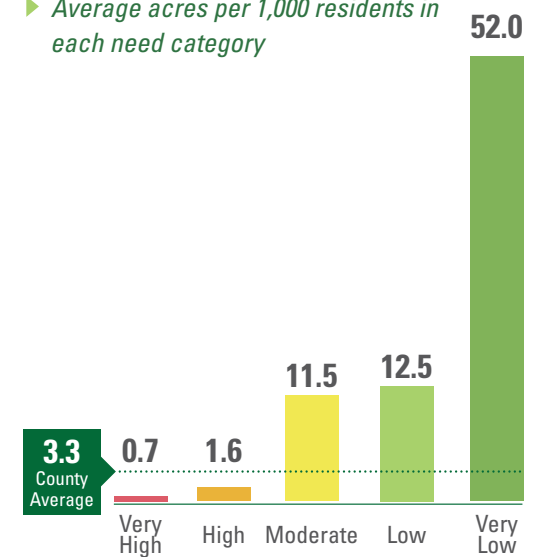
The results of the analysis of the park metrics were combined to determine an overall park need level for each Study Area. This approach creates a framework for assessing park need from a Countywide perspective.

Population in Each Need Category*



*0.1% Not Participating

Average acres per 1,000 residents in each need category



EXPANDING ON THE 2016 PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT



The PNA+ is an informational and aspirational document. Priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration are identified by overlaying and scoring based on existing publicly accessible data layers. The mapping and analysis conducted are not parcel-specific and are intended to provide countywide and region-wide perspectives on where environmental benefits and burdens

are concentrated and where conservation and restoration efforts should be prioritized. As PNA+ is not a regulatory document, it will not result in additional requirements or changes to approved land use entitlements and permits. Furthermore, implementation of PNA+ will require further analyses and actions that are not within the purview of this document.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MOTION

On March 5, 2019, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to complete a “Regional Recreation, Beaches, Rural Areas and Open Space Needs Assessment” in 2021.* Further, the Board motion called for DPR to prepare a unified Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment that combines both assessments in 2025 with the support and cooperation of the Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD).

Consistent with the Board motion, DPR’s goals for the this report are as follows:

- » Build upon and update the PNA with data, analyses, and metrics for regional recreation parks, beaches and lakes, open space, trails, and park facilities/amenities for rural areas.
- » Identify gaps, opportunities, and priority areas based upon a comprehensive process of data collection and analyses, and community engagement and outreach.
- » Use metrics, data, and analyses to guide future planning and resource allocation.
- » Recommend approaches and strategies for multi-jurisdictional coordination, collaboration, and partnerships.

* Project was delayed due to COVID-19.



WHAT IS NEW IN THIS REPORT?

	2016 COUNTYWIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PNA)	2022 COUNTYWIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLUS (PNA+)	
		Regional Assessment	Rural Assessment
Focus	COUNTYWIDE	COUNTYWIDE	RURAL AREAS ONLY
Study Areas	188	11	14
Park Categories Included In Inventory and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local Parks » Regional Recreation Parks » Regional Open Space Inventoried, but not included in analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Natural Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Regional Recreation Parks Regional Open Space and Natural Area refined into four categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conservation Areas » Nature-based Recreation Areas » Regional Specialized Recreation Areas » Other Public and Semi-Public Open Space 	Rural Recreation Sites Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local Parks » Regional Recreation Parks » Nature-based Recreation Areas
Park Amenities	Local Park Amenity Inventory and Condition Analysis	Regional Recreation Park and Nature-based Recreation Amenity Inventory and Access Analysis	Local Park, Regional Recreation Park and Nature-based Recreation Amenity Inventory and Access Analysis
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Park Land per 1,000 Residents » Park Access » Park Pressure » Population Density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Regional Park Land and Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents » Regional Park and Trail Access » Regional Site Visitorship Rates » Environmental Benefits and Burdens » Population Vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rural Recreation Site Land per 1,000 Residents » Rural Recreation Site Access » Population Vulnerability
Park Access Modes Analyzed	 Walking (10 minutes or 0.5 miles)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Walking (10 minutes or 0.5 miles) </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Cycling (2.5 miles) </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Driving (5 miles) </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Public Transit (stop within 0.5 miles of entry) </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Walking (10 minutes or 0.5 miles) </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Cycling (2.5 miles) </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Driving (5 miles and 10 miles) </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Public Transit (stop within 0.5 miles of entry) </div> </div>
Priorities Identified	Park Need Category by Study Area based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Population Density » Distance to a Park » Park Acre Need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Environmental Conservation and Restoration Priority Areas » Regional Recreation Priority Areas based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social, Environmental, Transportation and Health Vulnerability » Distance to Regional Recreation Sites » Regional Site Visitorship Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Priority Areas for Enhancing Rural Recreation based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social, Environmental, Transportation and Health Vulnerability » Distance to Rural Recreation Sites » Distance to Rural Recreation Amenities » Priority Project Types by Study Area

1.0 Introduction

WHY EVALUATE THE DISTRIBUTION AND CONCENTRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND BURDENS?

Parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, trails, and gardens are essential community infrastructure, but not all communities have access to these resources. Conservation and protection of natural resources and lands is critical to ensuring a sustainable environment for current and future generations. However, in Los Angeles County, conservation efforts must also include and prioritize the restoration of degraded lands. Those communities with the fewest parks often have the environmental burdens, i.e. most pollutants and other stressors that directly impact public health and well-being. Over time, some areas of the county have accrued significant environmental burdens as the result of historic land development practices, natural resource extraction and consumption, industrial operations, transportation projects, energy production and other impacts of urbanization. These lands are disproportionately located in communities of color.

Restoration of degraded lands is typically costly, complicated, and requires time and commitment. Mapping where environmental benefits and burdens are concentrated is a critical step in reversing policies, systems, and norms that have led to pervasive open space inequities in our most diverse communities. By leveling the playing field, park equity has the potential to make long-overdue gains in health equity and racial justice in the built environment. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the need for environmental conservation and restoration.



WHY EVALUATE THE NEED FOR REGIONAL FACILITIES?

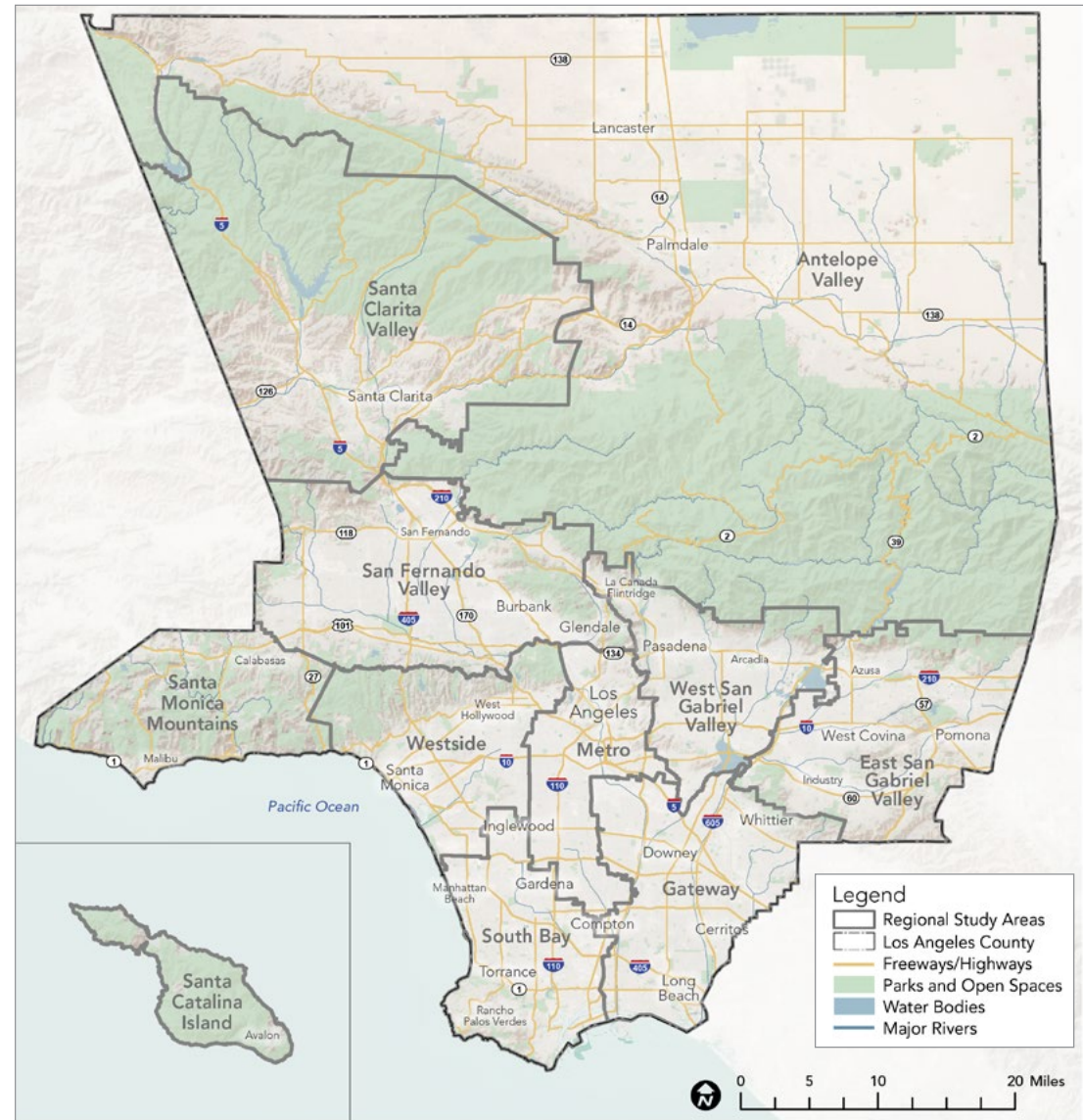
Regional facilities include natural areas and open spaces, beaches and lakes, regional recreation parks, and trails. These facilities are intended to serve broad geographical areas of the County. In the PNA, over 3,000 parks and open spaces were inventoried and categorized as:

- » Local Parks
- » Regional Recreation Parks
- » Regional Open Space
- » Natural Areas

Because the PNA focused on the ability of residents to access the parks located closest to their homes, the study placed special emphasis on Local Parks and Regional Recreation Parks. The Regional Open Space and Natural Areas categories were intentionally broadly defined and included a wide variety of public lands (see Figure 1-1: 2016 PNA Categories).

Together, the over 1,400 properties that were identified as Regional Open Space and Natural Area comprise 96% of the more than 900,000 acres of lands inventoried as part of the PNA. The PNA+ refines the PNA definitions and classification system for regional facilities to allow for further evaluation of the ecological and recreational benefits that these vast lands provide to the greater population of Los Angeles County.

Figure 1-2: Regional Study Area Map



Map source: US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021

Note: All Los Angeles County maps in this chapter include and refer to the sources listed here as basemap layers.

1.0 Introduction

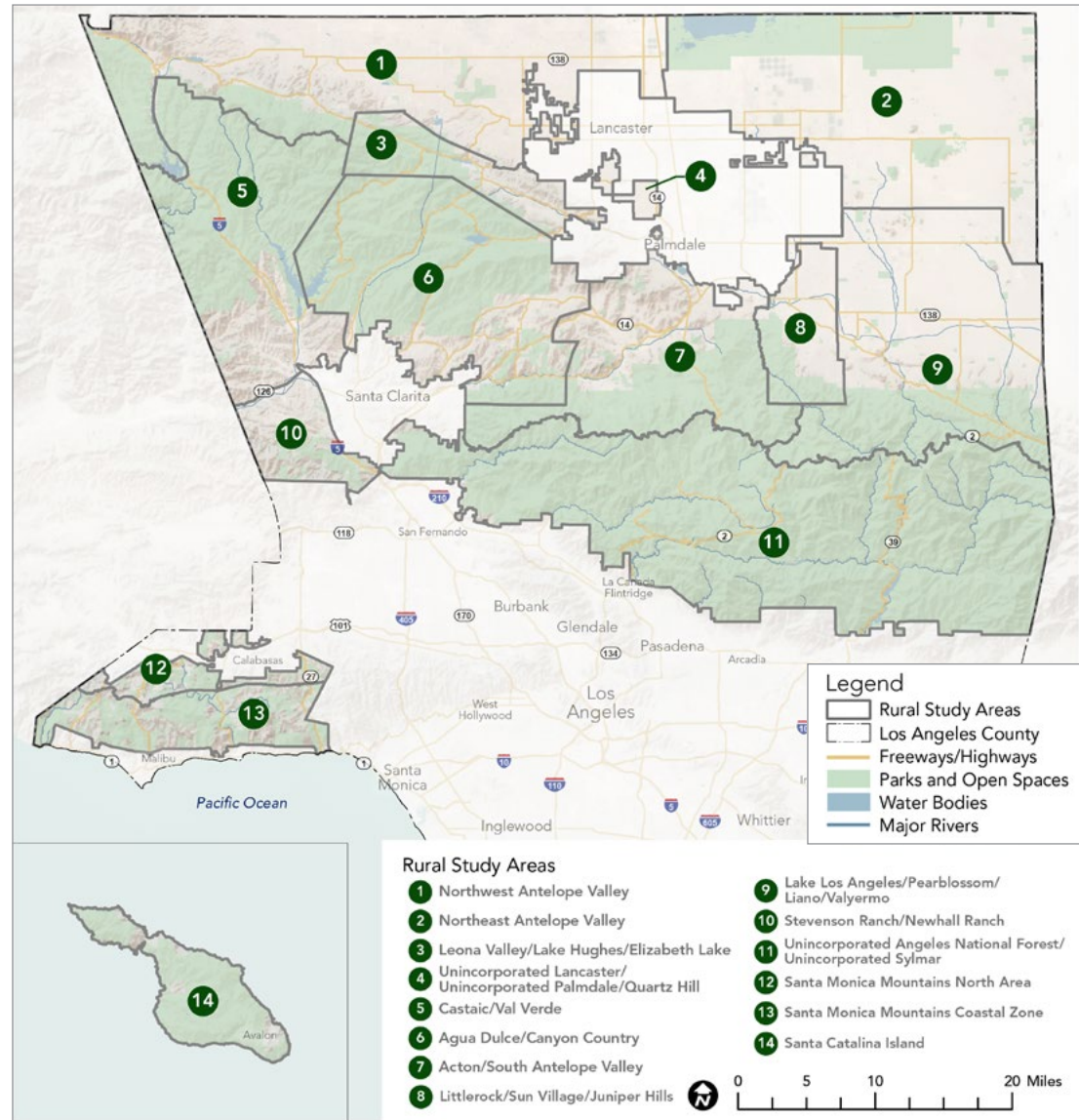
For the purposes of this analysis, the County has been divided into eleven Regional Study Areas. To allow for alignment with current and future planning efforts, the Regional Study Areas are consistent with the Planning Areas identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan (see Figure 1-2: Regional Study Areas).

Chapter 4 includes a detailed discussion of regional conservation and recreation needs and Appendix A provides a profile of each Regional Study Area.

WHY REVISIT THE PARK NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES?

Rural land accounts for nearly 40 percent of the area (over 600,000 acres) of the unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County. One of the stated goals of the County’s General Plan (Goal LU 6) is to “protect rural communities characterized by living in a non-urban or agricultural environment at low densities without typical urban services”. The physical context in which rural areas are located is inherently characterized by longer distances between developed areas and limited pedestrian infrastructure. As a result, some common assumptions about the ways people typically access and use local parks are not as applicable in rural communities as they are in urban and suburban areas of the County. The key reasons for revisiting metrics in rural areas include the following:

Figure 1-3: Rural Study Area Map



Map source: PNA, 2016; US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021

Note: All Los Angeles County maps in this chapter include and refer to the sources listed here as basemap layers.

- » Due to the extended distances between developed areas and the limited pedestrian infrastructure that are inherent to rural areas, the travel mode and park service threshold assumptions utilized in the PNA analysis are less reflective of the typical park user behavior in the rural context.
- » While population density increases demand on park amenities, the need for recreational amenities is often great in low-density environments where social isolation and low physical activity levels may be more prevalent.
- » Due to the inherently low population density of rural areas, a tailored, rural-specific approach to recreational resource mapping is necessary to better understand the need for specific types of amenities.

As part of the PNA+, rural study areas were established following an analysis of the PNA study area boundaries, rural land use categories from the General Plan and other land use plans, and community standards districts and Rural Outdoor Lighting District boundaries as detailed in the Los Angeles County Zoning Code. These areas are located in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island (see Figure 1-3: Rural Study Areas).

Chapter 5 includes a detailed discussion of rural recreation needs and Appendix B provides a profile of each Rural Study Area.



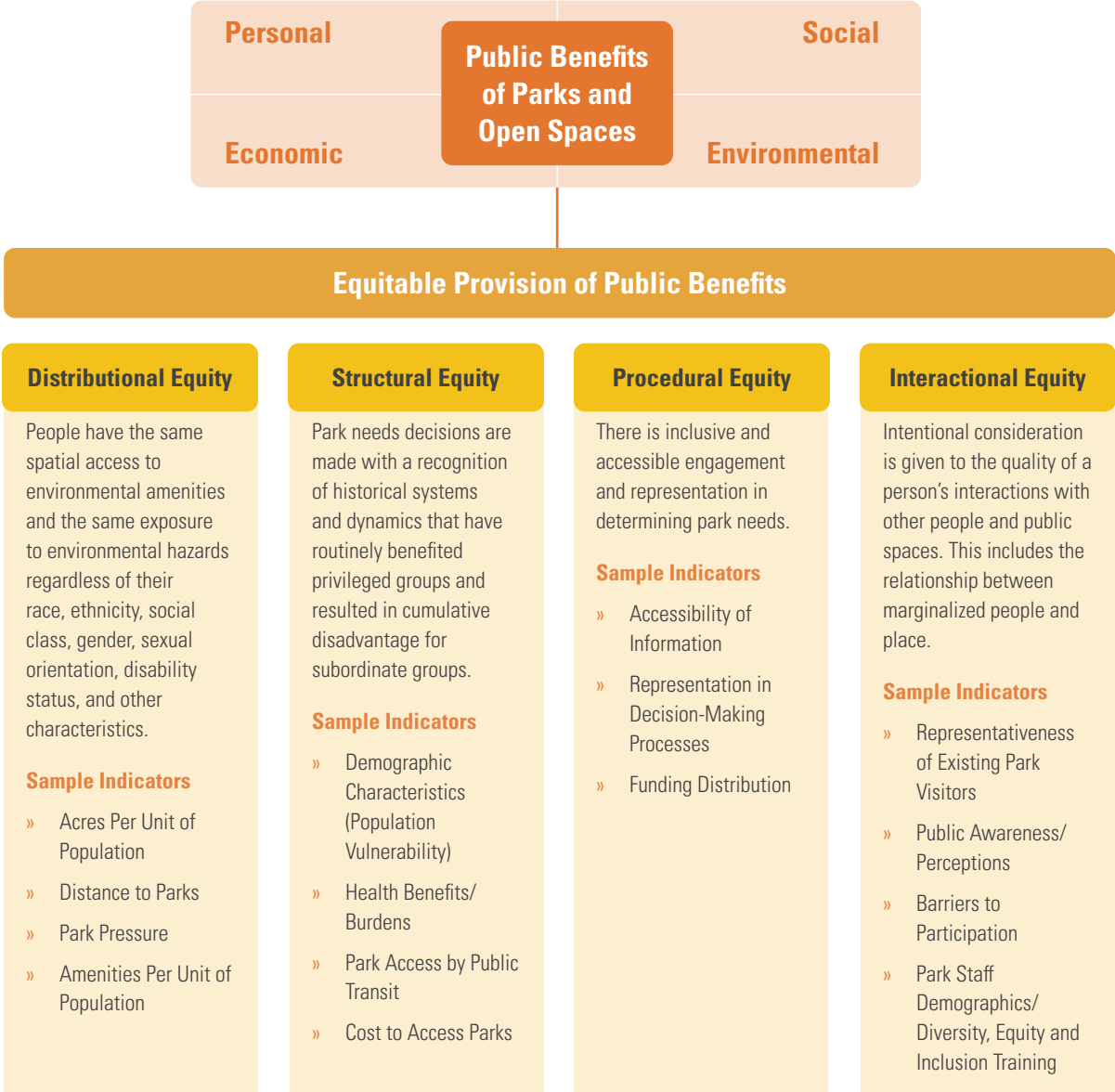
1.3 FOCUS ON EQUITY

This study is equity-focused. Specifically, DPR sought to:

- » Ensure that everyone has access to our beaches and lakes, open spaces and natural areas, regional parks, trails, and parks and recreational facilities in rural areas, regardless of race, social class, gender, disability status, or other characteristics;
- » Collect data and provide analysis that will inform planning and decision-making to ensure that park resources are distributed more equitably and that all communities will be able to enjoy the full range of benefits offered by parks and recreational facilities;
- » Create opportunities for meaningful dialogues and connections among people from diverse backgrounds and cultures; and
- » Develop an inclusive, accessible, and transparent process for public engagement and decision-making.

This report incorporates an Equity Framework that is consistent with the approach presented in the 2019 Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, *OurCounty*. *OurCounty* defines equity as “an end state in which all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to improve the quality of their lives,” and the framework encompasses distributional, structural, procedural, and interactional equity.

Figure 1-4: Equity Framework



The project's Equity Framework is intended to assist DPR in comprehensively evaluating parks needs with the goal of ensuring fair and equitable access to parks and green spaces, considering pervasive park inequity and environmental injustice affecting under-served communities in Los Angeles County. This Equity Framework includes the following four aspects of equity¹ as crucial to the equitable provision of the public benefits of parks and open spaces (see Figure 1-4: Equity Framework).

- » **Distributional Equity:** The fair distribution of benefits and burdens across all community groups, prioritizing park and recreation benefits to communities with the highest needs.
- » **Structural Equity:** The institutionalization of accountability in which park needs decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics, and structures that have routinely benefited privileged groups and resulted in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups.
- » **Procedural Equity:** Meaningful inclusion and representation of marginalized groups in decision-making processes about the location and qualities of environmental amenities and hazards.
- » **Interactional Justice:** The quality of a person's interactions with people and public spaces, including parks and recreation areas.

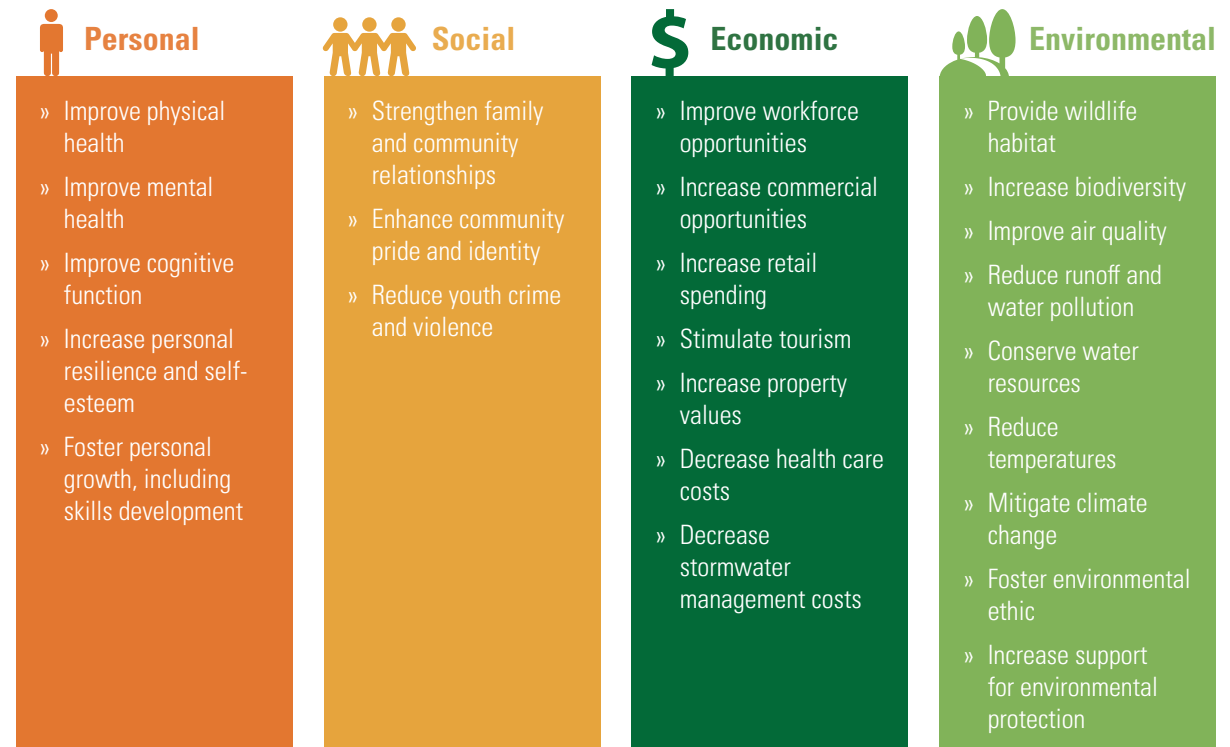
¹ As defined by Rigolon, A., Harris, B., Fernandez, M., and Stewart, W. in "An Ecological Model of Environmental Justice for Recreation"

² Christensen, J., Rigolon, A., Robins, S., and Alemán-Zometa, J. in "California State Parks: A Valuable Resource for Youth Health"

MULTI-BENEFIT PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Everyone in Los Angeles County should have equitable access to parks and open spaces and the benefits they offer. Visitors to parks typically enjoy numerous benefits while participating in outdoor recreation activities. For example, there are community-level social and economic benefits associated with visiting or living near parks and open space. Research also attributes public health and social benefits to the use of parks and recreation areas.

Figure 1-5: Benefits of Parks and Open Spaces



According to the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, parks and recreation areas serve as public health tools by promoting physical activity and improving mental health, particularly in people who spend less time outdoors, such as disadvantaged youth². Further, parks and open space provide a range of environmental benefits. The benefits of parks and outdoor recreation participation are described in more detail below, divided into the following main categories: personal, social, economic, and environmental (see Figure 1-5: Benefits of Parks and Open Spaces).

1.0 Introduction

PERSONAL

Personal benefits that can be attributed to the individual user or visitor include:

- » Improved physical health;
- » Increased self-esteem; and
- » Personal growth, such as skills development and risk taking.

Physical health benefits include lowering the risk of circulatory and cardiovascular disease and lowering the overall risk of death. Opportunities for repeated contact with nature and physical exercise, even in dense urban settings, offer psychological benefits, such as improved mental health and mood, stress reduction, and increased personal resilience^{3,4,5}.

Parks offer additional benefits for older adults through frequent visitation, social opportunities, and better perceived health, and for young people through physical and mental health, well-being, and cognitive, social, emotional development⁶.

Additionally, time spent in parks can contribute to attention restoration, reduce symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, improve cognitive function, and reduce problem behaviors in young children. The mental health benefits of parks are often comparatively higher for disadvantaged youth, increasing their resilience in the face of the increased stress and greater health challenges members of low-income and minority communities typically experience^{7,8}.

SOCIAL

Parks and outdoor recreation participation are associated with social benefits, including strengthening of family and community relationships, enhanced community pride, and increased community identity. In addition to promoting physical health and mental wellbeing, park use facilitates social interactions and strengthens community ties, prevents youth crime and violence, and boosts economic development by improving workforce opportunities and creating new commercial opportunities⁹. The lack of fair and equal access to parks and recreation areas limits the access of disadvantaged communities to these social benefits can exacerbate existing social inequities. Parks and open spaces provide safe, free/affordable, and attractive places for residents and families to exercise, play, gather, and congregate¹⁰.

ECONOMIC

Parks and open spaces also offer numerous economic benefits. There are jobs associated with designing, planning, building, managing, operating, and maintaining parks, including temporary and permanent park staff and vendors. Additionally, parks with regional draw can provide employment in complementary industries, such as hospitality where visitors spend money on food service and hotels. The Outdoor Industry Association (2018) reported \$92 billion in consumer spending in California associated with outdoor recreation in 2017, including spending on outdoor recreation products (e.g., gear, equipment, services etc.), and there were 691,000 jobs statewide in the industry.

Further, homes nearest to parks often enjoy higher property values. Parks stimulate tourism and related revenue, which supports local economies. They also decrease health costs by encouraging low- or no-cost exercise; providing low- or no-cost services to residents; reducing air pollution; and reducing urban stormwater management costs^{11,12,13}.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environmental benefits of parks and open spaces include providing habitat for wildlife, reducing air pollution, providing stormwater benefits, promoting biodiversity, mitigating the urban heat island effect, and stabilizing temperatures. When visitors have opportunities to engage with nature in parks and open spaces, they may in turn strengthen their personal environmental ethics and increase support for environmental protection¹⁴.

Parks and open spaces play an important role in mitigating climate change by increasing carbon sequestration potential. They also contribute to the urban tree canopy, provide shade, and facilitate evapotranspiration to reduce surface temperatures exacerbated by the rising temperatures associated with climate change^{15,16}.

Increasingly, park amenities are designed to aid in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promotion of energy efficiency through the installation of solar panels over parking areas and on buildings (reducing reliance on fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy sources) and the addition of bike racks (reducing motor vehicle miles traveled). The provision of parks and open spaces closer to where people live encourages users to walk or bike to

facilities, thereby decreasing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle travel. In addition, parks and open spaces provide trails that reduce carbon emissions by serving as transportation alternatives to vehicle¹⁷.

Parks and open spaces that are designed with sustainability in mind also benefit water resources. They demonstrate best-practices in water conservation through the use of drip irrigation systems and recycled water, the planting of low-water-use plants, and the capturing and filtering of stormwater runoff through green infrastructure, such as bioretention areas, to increase the percolation of runoff into local groundwater aquifers. Further, the capture of stormwater runoff within these parks and open spaces reduces flooding potential¹⁸.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Parks are not isolated spaces, and park planning cannot be done effectively or holistically without considering the social, economic, political, and physical context in which parks are located. Highlighted below are various important issues and topics that are outside the scope of the PNA+ but must be addressed to advance equity and improve the quality of life of all Los Angeles County residents, especially the most vulnerable.

CLIMATE CHANGE

As land managers, Park agencies are key stakeholders in addressing the effects of climate change. From reducing the urban heat island effect through the creation of new parks and tree plantings to protecting water resources through green infrastructure practices, park agencies and the parks we operate play a vital role in building climate-resilient communities. The continued impacts of changing climate will intensify some of the adverse conditions identified in PNA+. Many of the most environmentally burdened communities are also the most park poor per the 2016 PNA and the most climate-vulnerable per the County Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Specifically, many of the most vulnerable communities identified in this report are more likely to be adversely impacted by the urban heat island effect, the lack of shade (shade equity), poor water quality and availability, sea level rise, wildfire threat, and other climate change-related effects. The Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan and Park and Recreation's Sustainability Roadmap offer more in-depth analysis and recommendations in this regard. DPR is not only taking significant steps to reduce its impacts on the

environment through operations, maintenance, design, and administration practices but to also develop strategies and implement actions that leverage the intersectional synergies between responsible management of our parks with notions of equity, sustainability, climate resiliency and environmental justice.

GREEN GENTRIFICATION

Parks and open space provide a wealth of benefits to the communities they are located in and the people who use them. Low-income communities and communities of color are commonly areas of LA County that have less access to parks and recreation and that disparities also exist in the quality of park space. As parks are improved and/or developed, gentrification may occur. Research has shown that greening initiatives such as new parks might be disproportionately located in disadvantaged neighborhoods that are gentrifying as opposed to disadvantaged neighborhoods experiencing continued disinvestment.¹⁹ Recognizing this, the Measure A Grants Administration Manual includes a "Displacement Avoidance Strategy" (Appendix B) that outlines five goals intended to lessen the likelihood of displacement/gentrification as a result of park enhancement projects. The report also acknowledges that parks and open space should not be understood merely as recreational resources but as vital elements of a community's public health infrastructure, noting that members of historically disadvantaged groups sometimes report feeling unwelcome in public parks, an additional barrier to be addressed.

1.0 Introduction

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a significant issue in many parts of the U.S., including Los Angeles County. As part of the PNA+, some park patrons reported that they avoid using certain parks, including those closest to their home, because the presence of unhoused individuals there makes them feel unsafe and uncomfortable. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are staying at parks, sidewalks, and other public spaces for various reasons. In collaboration with cities, service providers, civic leaders, faith-based institutions, and the public, Los Angeles County is addressing homelessness through a major expansion of outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and benefits advocacy for homeless disabled adults. The County also recently updated the Housing Element of its General Plan and is working to proactively address the issues of homelessness and affordable housing shortage

TRANSPORTATION

While transportation was studied as a means to accessing parks and open space, the PNA+ was not able to look at frequency of public transportation or connectivity and the number of connections and/or modes of transportation needed to reach these areas. Lack of service or frequency of service is a significant barrier to many. For instance, it can take over 2.5 hours one-way for Antelope Valley residents to reach an ocean beach via public transit. The expansion of transit to parks efforts, along with other interventions to remove transportation barriers and improve connectivity, involving collaboration between transportation and park agencies and community-based organizations, are critically important as an aspect of park equity.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Funds for operation and maintenance of park and recreational facilities is typically limited; it is often easier to secure funding for planning and construction of new amenities than for ongoing operations and maintenance needs. As part of the PNA+, DPR received significant public input about the need to better operate and maintain existing parks and recreational facilities. It is vital that park agencies have the resources to improve, rehabilitate, and maintain the facilities we operate. DPR, for example, is in the process of making some much-needed park upgrades with the help of funding from the State of California's Recreational Infrastructure Revenue Enhancement (RIRE) and Proposition 68 Per Capita grant programs. More programs like these are needed. Maintenance needs may also partially be addressed by volunteers and by park visitors adopting a green ethic of stewardship, i.e., leaving a place better than they found it, including not leaving trash, drawing graffiti, killing or destroying flora and fauna.

-
- ³ Sherer, P.M. "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space"
 - ⁴ Rigolon, A. "A Complex Landscape of Inequity in Access to Urban Parks: A Literature Review"
 - ⁵ Cordes, K. and Hutson, G. "Outdoor Recreation: Enrichment for a Lifetime"
 - ⁶ Gibson, S., Loukaitou-Sideris, A., and Mukhija, V. "Ensuring Park Equity: a California Case Study"
 - ⁷ Rigolon, A. "A Complex Landscape of Inequity in Access to Urban Parks: A Literature Review"
 - ⁸ Christensen, J., Rigolon, A., Robins, S., and Alemán-Zometa, J. in "California State Parks: A Valuable Resource for Youth Health"
 - ⁹ Yañez, E. "Why we Need Park Equity"
 - ¹⁰ Gies, E. "The Health Benefits of Parks: How Parks Help Keep Americans and Their Communities Fit and Healthy"
 - ¹¹ WeConservePA, "Economic Benefits of Parks"
 - ¹² Harnik, P. and Wille, B., "Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System"
 - ¹³ Sherer, P.M. "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space"
 - ¹⁴ Lau, C. "Nurturing Neighborhoods"
 - ¹⁵ Clarke, Matthew and Vest, Geneva, "The Toolkit for Health, Arts, Parks & Equity"
 - ¹⁶ Schottland, T. "Parks as a Solution to Climate Change"
 - ¹⁷ Lau, C. "Nature-Based Solutions"
 - ¹⁸ Lau, C. "Nature-Based Solutions"
 - ¹⁹ Rigolon, Alessandro, Collins, Timothy, "The Green Gentrification Cycle"
 - ²⁰ Lau, C. "Nature-Based Solutions"
- * Gentrification is a process in which cleaning up pollution or providing green amenities increases local property values and attracts wealthier residents to a previously polluted or disenfranchised neighborhood. Green amenities include green spaces, parks, green roofs, and gardens and can heal many environmental ills and beautify urban landscapes. However, if accompanied by gentrification, these amenities can have adverse social impacts. For example, if lower income households are forced to pay higher housing costs or displaced.

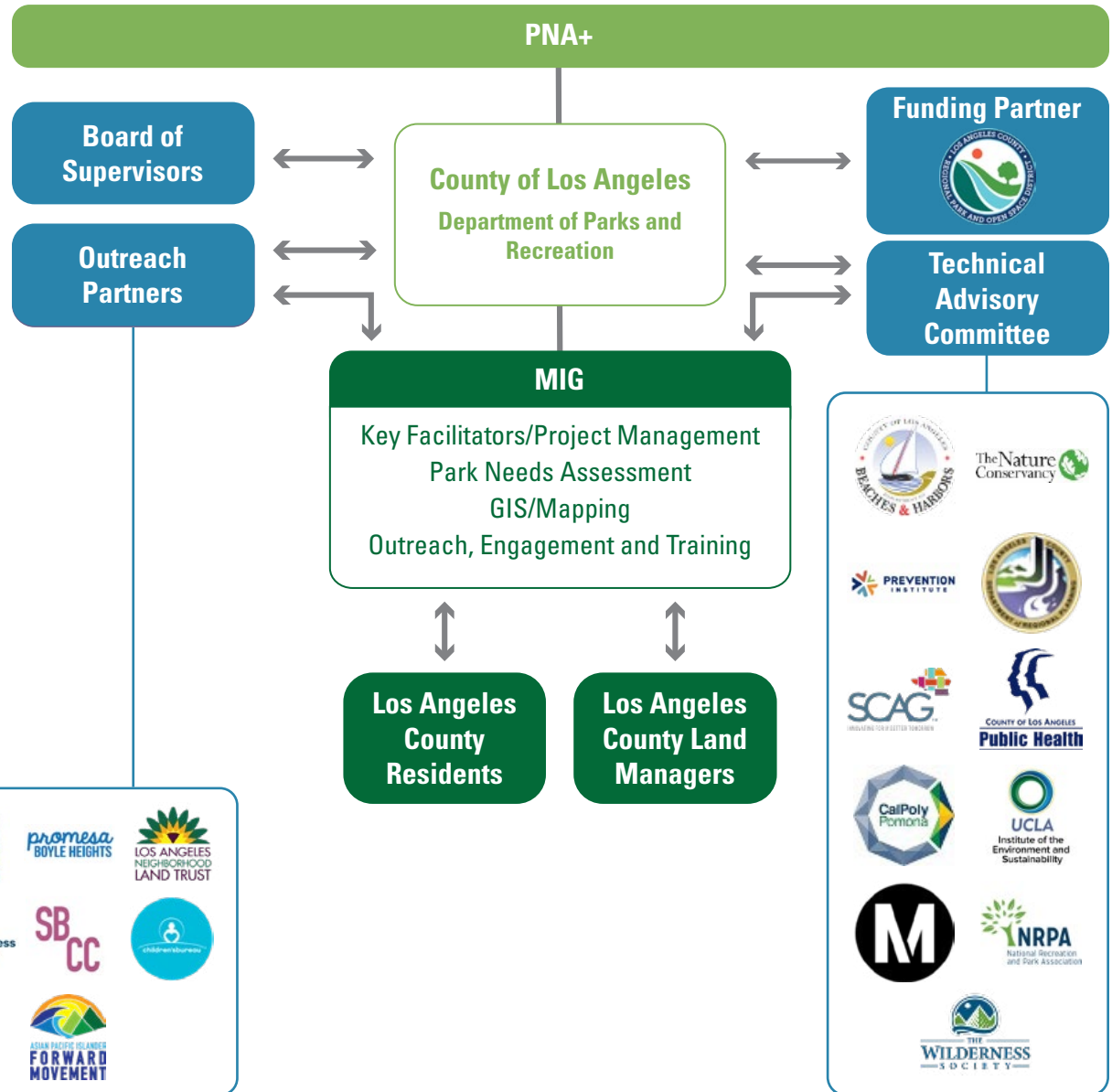
1.4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The preparation of this report involved extensive community engagement and outreach, required collaboration and coordination with many different agencies that operate throughout the County and included guidance and input from the Board of Supervisors and a Technical Advisory Committee (see Figure 1-6: Organizational Chart).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RESIDENTS

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)'s commitment to determining equitable park and open space access and benefits starts with making sure the engagement process is equitable and inclusive. The community engagement program for the PNA+ was designed to reach and involve Los Angeles County residents, both parks users and non-users, to learn about and participate in the process of determining the County's needs for regional and rural parks and recreational facilities. DPR partnered with over 20 community-based organizations to conduct community outreach and engagement activities, resulting in thousands of residents participating in surveys, online workshops, and other engagement activities.

Figure 1-6: Organizational Chart



1.0 Introduction

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Board and their staff have provided support and guidance throughout the duration of the project.

District 1, Hilda L. Solis

District 2, Holly J. Mitchell

District 3, Lindsey P. Horvath

District 4, Janice Hahn

District 5, Kathryn Barger

The Board’s recognition of the importance of parks and recreation in Los Angeles County is well-documented and reflected in its many actions in support of individual park projects across the county as well as broader park policy and funding decisions, including (but not limited to):

- » Adopting the 2016 Los Angeles Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment;
- » Approving the inclusion of the Los Angeles County Safe, Clean Neighborhood Park, Open Space, Beaches, River Protection and Water Conservation Measure of 2016 (Measure A) on the November 2016 ballot; and
- » Adopting a Board motion in 2019 to complete an assessment to study and document regional and rural park needs (PNA+).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is the lead agency charged with completing updates to the Parks Needs Assessment. DPR staff worked closely with the project consultants to complete the PNA+, ensuring adherence to the project’s goals and the department’s mission, vision and values.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) funded this study per direction from the Board of Supervisors and the Measure A Grants Administration Manual. RPOSD was established to promote and protect park and open spaces, including thousands of parks, recreation and community centers, beaches, senior centers, arboreta and botanic gardens and wildlife lands, in Los Angeles County for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Since its formation in 1992, RPOSD has awarded more than \$1.5 billion in Proposition A and Measure A grants, which have been used for hundreds of projects including the development and maintenance of walking, biking and hiking trails, senior centers, tree planting programs, playground and fitness equipment as well as the restoration of our rivers, streams and beaches. The results of the PNA+ will help inform the direction of future RPOSD funding.

Figure 1-7: Technical Advisory Committee Meetings

<p>MEETING 1</p> <p>Project Overview</p> <p>December 3, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed Project Purpose and Equity Framework Reviewed Study Area Boundaries Presented Community Engagement Overview
<p>MEETING 2</p> <p>Rural Recreational Analysis</p> <p>January 12, 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed Rural Study Area Boundaries and Parks Discussed Unique Considerations for Rural Needs Analysis Presented Recommendations for Rural Needs Analysis
<p>MEETING 3</p> <p>Regional Recreational Analysis</p> <p>January 26, 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed Regional Needs Assessment Considerations Reviewed Regional Parks and Facilities Presented Draft Classification System for Regional Parks and Facilities Discussed Regional Park and Facility Amenities and Characteristics Presented Recommendations for Regional Needs Analysis
<p>MEETING 4</p> <p>Regional Trails and Conservation</p> <p>February 11, 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed Trail Needs Assessment Considerations Reviewed Available Regional Trail System Data Presented Recommendations for Trails Needs Analysis Discussed Conservation Area Assessment Considerations Recommendations for Conservation Area Analysis

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DPR convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to help inform and guide the process of data collection and analysis, development of metrics, community engagement and outreach, and other key aspects of the project (see Figure 1-7: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Process Graphic). The TAC included representatives from a broad range of agencies and organizations with expertise in beaches, parks, public health, regional planning, transportation, open space and conservation, sustainability, and geographic information systems (GIS).

- » Scott Chan, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- » Jon Christensen, UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
- » Pat Hachiya, Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
- » Mark Herwick, Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
- » Elizabeth Hiroyasu, The Nature Conservancy
- » Clement Lau, Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation
- » Katie Lemmon, LA Metro
- » Weimin Li, Cal Poly Pomona
- » Jacob Lieb, LA Metro
- » Yvette Lopez-Ledesma, The Wilderness Society

- » Warren Ontiveros, Los Angeles County Department of Beaches & Harbors
- » Kevin Roth, National Recreation and Park Association
- » Tom Vo, Southern California Association of Governments
- » Sean Woods, Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation
- » Elva Yañez, Prevention Institute

LAND MANAGING AGENCIES

Participation by the wide range of agencies that manage regional-serving facilities was a critical component of the PNA+. These agencies dedicated considerable staff time and resources to verify and update the regional facilities inventory, an important aspect of ensuring accurate analysis of regional park need throughout the County. Cities and other land managing agencies that were contacted for data verification are listed below in alphabetical order:

- » Agoura Hills
- » Arcadia
- » Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy
- » Avalon
- » Azusa
- » Bellflower
- » Beverly Hills
- » Bradbury
- » Burbank

- » Calabasas
- » California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- » California Department of Parks and Recreation
- » California State Lands Commission
- » Claremont
- » Diamond Bar
- » Duarte
- » El Monte
- » Fond Land Preservation Foundation
- » Glendale
- » Glendora
- » Hermosa Beach
- » Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens
- » Industry
- » Irwindale
- » La Cañada Flintridge
- » La Mirada
- » La Verne
- » Lakewood
- » Lancaster
- » Littlerock Creek Irrigation District
- » Long Beach
- » Los Angeles County - Department of Beaches and Harbors

1.0 Introduction

- » Los Angeles County - Department of Parks and Recreation
- » Los Angeles, City of
- » Los Angeles, Port of
- » Lynwood
- » Malibu
- » Manhattan Beach
- » Monrovia
- » Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
- » Palmdale
- » Palos Verdes Estates
- » Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
- » Pasadena
- » Pomona
- » Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority
- » Rancho Palos Verdes
- » Redondo Beach
- » Rolling Hills Estates
- » Rolling Hills
- » San Dimas
- » San Gabriel
- » Santa Catalina Island Conservancy
- » Santa Clarita

- » Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- » Santa Monica
- » Sierra Madre
- » Signal Hill
- » South Pasadena
- » The Nature Conservancy
- » Torrance
- » Tree People Land Trust
- » United States Bureau of Land Management
- » United States Forest Service
- » United States National Park Service
- » University of California
- » Walnut
- » Watershed Conservation Authority
- » West Covina
- » Westlake Village
- » Whittier

- » Active SGV
- » Amigos de los Rios
- » Antelope Valley Community Organizing Alliance
- » Antelope Valley Partners for Health
- » API Forward Movement (APIFM)
- » Children’s Bureau
- » Community Health Councils
- » Day One
- » Koreatown Youth and Community Center (KYCC)
- » Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT)
- » Mujeres de la Tierra
- » Nature For All
- » Promesa Boyle Heights
- » Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
- » Strength Based Community Change
- » The River Project
- » The Wilderness Society
- » Trust for Public Land
- » United American Indian Involvement (UAI)
- » Willowbrook Inclusion Network

CONSULTANT TEAM

MIG, Inc. was the lead consultant on the PNA+. In coordination with DPR, MIG contracted with the following community-based organizations (community partners) to extend and deepen the community engagement and outreach program:

1.5 PROCESS OVERVIEW

The PNA+ process was initiated in February 2020, but the effort was put on hold shortly thereafter due to COVID-19 and the prioritization and realignment of DPR’s resources to address the impacts of the pandemic. Following a five-month hiatus, the project resumed in August 2020 and continued through 2022. During the first phase of the project, background documents and precedents

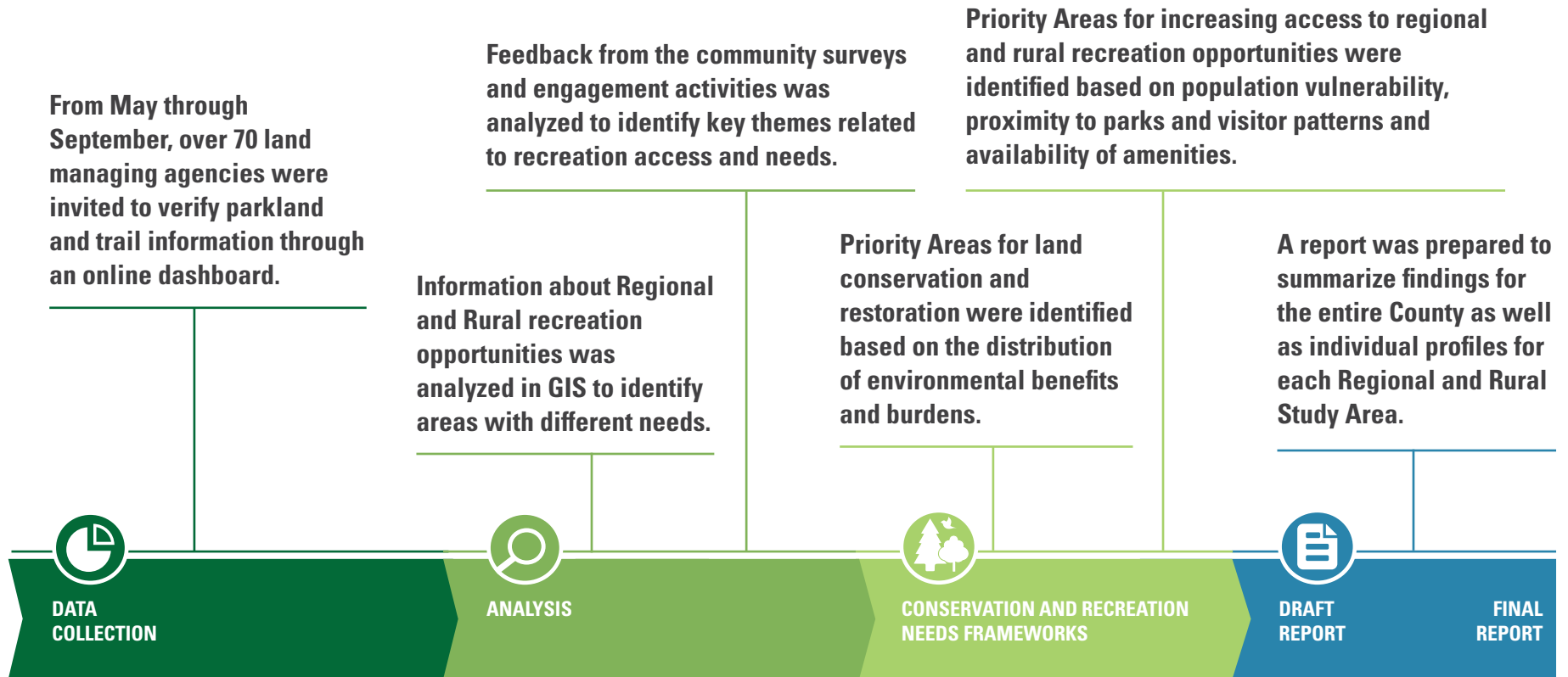
were reviewed and an initial approach to the study was developed with the Technical Advisory Committee (see Figure 1-8: Project Timeline). Regional site and trail data was collected and verified with land managing agencies while the project website and community surveys were publicized and distributed. Community partners continued

to engage the public in discussions about park needs while initial site and trail data was analyzed by the project team. Insights gathered through both the community engagement and data collection and analysis processes were combined to inform the final report.

Figure 1-8: Project Timeline



FEBRUARY 2020



DECEMBER 2022

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: ROLE OF PARKS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

In order to curtail the spread of COVID-19, many indoor settings where people typically gathered to work, socialize and exercise were subject to temporary capacity restrictions or closure in compliance with public health orders. As research revealed that the likelihood of transmitting the virus in outdoor spaces was limited, many parks across the County re-opened and experienced increased visits and pressure, and new patterns of use emerged as people limited travel and stayed closer to home. In addition, parks and outdoor facilities throughout Los Angeles County have played a critical role during the ongoing pandemic, often serving as host sites for food distribution, testing and vaccination operations.

According to a national report published by the Outdoor Foundation¹⁹, the number of Americans who participated in outdoor recreation increased by over 7 million in 2020 (up a record 2 percent from 2019) in response to conditions related to COVID-19. However, these gains in participation have not been experienced evenly across all segments of the population. People who are traditionally underrepresented in outdoor

recreation, including those who identify as Black, Asian and Hispanic, reported activity level declines in 2020. This trend highlights the need for greater equity in park access so that everyone can have the opportunity to partake in the mental and physical health benefits of time spent outdoors.

While pressure on parks and open spaces has increased in response to the pandemic, the cancellation of recreation programs and activities has resulted in significant loss of revenue for park agencies across the state and nation. While these events have been unprecedented, they have heightened awareness of the important role that parks and open spaces play in supporting health and well-being and have revealed the need for increased investment in order to develop and maintain these valuable public lands.

Although uncertainties related to COVID-19 persist, the PNA+ examines core conditions and trends that will provide relevant direction and guidance well into the future.

¹⁹ Outdoor Foundation, "2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report"

PROJECT STEPS

The PNA+ included two concurrent assessments: 1) evaluating the need for regional recreation facilities, and 2) revisiting the needs of rural communities initially assessed as part of the PNA. Both assessments were informed by a comprehensive community engagement program described later in this chapter. The process of completing the assessments included the following steps (see Figure 1-9: Process Summary):

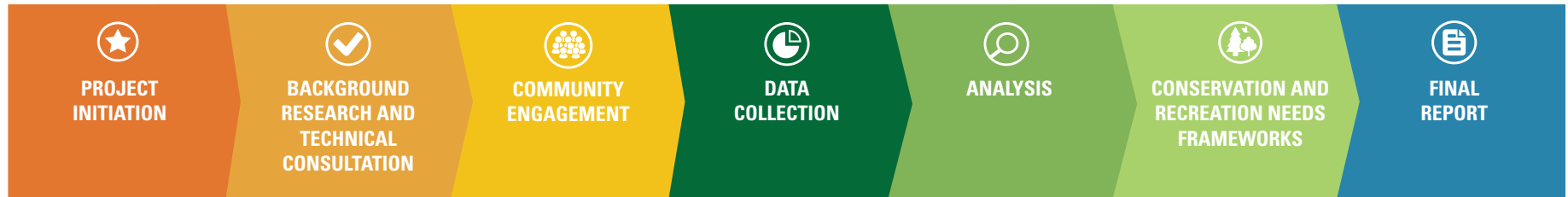
REVIEWING PREVIOUS STUDIES

As part of the project initiation, a comprehensive review of existing policies, plans, research documents, and inventories was conducted. Key components of these were identified which relate to regional and rural recreation goals and recommendations and provide details about regional and rural recreational amenities and use. Metrics that could be helpful in determining regional need, and offer specific guidance related to planning for more equitable regional recreation outcomes, were highlighted. This effort resulted in a comprehensive annotated bibliography and provided a foundation for data collection, inventory, and analysis.

IDENTIFYING STUDY AREAS

To determine the appropriate study areas for the analysis of regional and rural park needs, we first examined and compared the PNA study areas, Los Angeles County General Plan Planning Areas, DPR's Recreation Districts, councils of government boundaries, and "visitorsheds" by various modes of transportation.

Figure 1-9: Process Summary



DPR determined that the eleven (11) General Plan Planning Areas were the most appropriate for the regional analysis. Relative to the other study area boundaries considered for this analysis, the General Plan Planning Areas display general alignment with the existing PNA Study Area boundaries and are divided into an adequate number of regions to allow for a robust assessment of park needs across Los Angeles County. Further, the General Plan Planning Areas are used to identify deficits in local and regional parkland in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan. Thus, using the same boundaries as the basis for the Regional Study Areas will also provide relevant information to inform future updates of the Parks and Recreation Element.

Rural Study Areas were established following an analysis of the PNA study area boundaries, rural land use categories from the General Plan and other land use plans, and community standards districts and Rural Outdoor Lighting District boundaries as detailed in the Zoning Code. The 14 Rural Study Areas established for the project include rural communities in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island.

DEVELOPING CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

As part of the project, the PNA definitions and classification system for regional parks and open spaces are further delineated to allow for more detailed analysis of these resources. Regional parks, open spaces, and special use facilities cover a broad range of amenities reflecting the many unique assets that are managed by DPR and other agencies in Los Angeles County. Further classification was needed so that amenities could be grouped based on the following characteristics related to their recreation or conservation value: 1) specialized recreation focused, 2) nature-based recreation and education focused, and 3) conservation focused.

CONSULTING TECHNICAL EXPERTS

Over the course of four meetings held by videoconference between December 2020 and February 2021, and through numerous follow-up conversations, members of the TAC provided guidance and input that helped inform the study areas and definitions, identify metrics, and refine the community engagement and outreach strategy.

INFORMING AND ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

A critical component of this effort was to inform, engage, and gather input from Los Angeles County residents. To anchor our engagement efforts, we established a “home base” through a project website—lacountyparkneeds.org—where constituents were able to learn about the background and basics of the PNA+ and discover ways to provide personal input through online surveys and community workshops.

DPR also established an ongoing social media presence on three platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter - @lacparkneeds - to engage the public. Social media posts focused on promoting the benefits and beauty of park facilities, educating residents about the resources already available to them, starting conversations about park needs, and encouraging participation in online surveys and community workshops.

Further, the project built upon the engagement practices developed as part of the PNA, by partnering with over 20 well-respected and trusted community-based organizations (community partners) located in different parts of the

County. These organizations coordinated education and outreach efforts to inform the public about the project, and facilitated participation in surveys, workshops and other discussions about regional and rural park needs.

Each community partner prepared and implemented an outreach plan to meet the unique needs of the specific communities and demographics they serve. Outreach materials, including flyers, fact sheets, and paper surveys, were provided to community partners and translated into multiple languages so that they could in turn share them with their constituents electronically and/or through in-person events.

From July through October 2021, partners reached over 110,000 people living in communities across the County. Over five thousand people participated in surveys which were made available both online through the project website and in-person through community partners. Community members also joined the project team and partners in discussions about park needs during partner organization meetings and events.

In addition, the project team organized a set of eleven (11) regional online workshops to gather input about regional and rural park use and needs. Hundreds of County residents participated in these workshops.

CONSULTING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

DPR made a concerted effort to inform and engage Native American stakeholders as part of the process. DPR first reached out to over 30 Native American tribes, providing background information about the project and offering the opportunity to meet. Contact information for tribes was compiled by consulting the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (NAIC), and the Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office (CSO), which has been engaging Native American stakeholders as part of efforts to implement the *OurCounty* Sustainability Plan. Several tribes responded and DPR met with those who wanted to learn more about the project and provide input.

DPR also worked with Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous-led, community-based organization, which conducted focus groups and developed a survey designed specifically to gather input from Native American stakeholders. The survey was made available online and on paper. Distribution of paper surveys was greatly aided by United American Indian Involvement, Inc. (UAI) through its annual American Indian Day held on September 11, 2021 at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and other events. UAI is the largest provider of human and health services for American Indians/Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) living in Los Angeles County. In addition, the NAIC supported this effort by sharing the link to the online survey on its website and social media platforms, as well as with its network of stakeholders.

COLLECTING DATA

The regional site inventory consisted of over 1,400 sites identified in the PNA as “regional recreation parks,” “regional open space,” and “natural areas.” Additional public land use databases were reviewed, and relevant parcels that met the regional site definitions were incorporated into a GIS database. In total, over 1,500 regional sites encompassing nearly one million acres were inventoried and re-categorized for the PNA+.

Information about site characteristics and amenities for all Regional Recreation Parks and Nature-Based Recreation Areas was collected from publicly accessible sources and entered into an online database and shared with land managing agencies for review and verification. A parallel data collection effort was also undertaken to build an inventory of Regional Trails.

In addition, cellphone generated human mobility data was procured for 41 sample regional recreation sites, including all Regional Recreation Parks, in order to gain insights into visitor trends for these sites in 2019 and 2020.

ANALYZING DATA

Once data collection and verification efforts were complete, GIS software was used to map and analyze the geographical distribution of Regional Sites, Regional Trails and Rural Sites, as well as their associated amenities, throughout the County and by Study Area.

1.0 Introduction

Countywide roadway and transit networks were also incorporated and analyzed to determine the level of access that residents have to each recreation area included in the site and trail inventories.

In addition, population vulnerability data from the California Healthy Places Index was analyzed to identify areas of the County that experience high levels of health and environmental vulnerability as well as social and transportation barriers to accessing regional and rural recreational opportunities.

Community feedback that was received through the public engagement and outreach efforts described above was also analyzed systematically in order to identify key themes.

PREPARING AND SHARING THE REPORT

Upon completion of the analysis, major findings are summarized and presented in this report. The final version of the report is available for download on the project website.

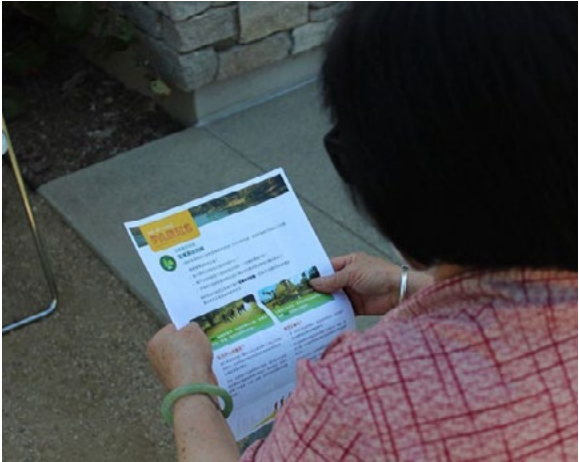




2.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.0 Community Engagement

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)'s commitment to providing equitable park and open space access starts with ensuring that the community engagement process is expansive and inclusive. Community engagement for the PNA+ was designed to involve all Los Angeles County residents (including those who do not currently visit parks) and other stakeholders in learning about and participating in the process of identifying the County's needs for regional and rural parks and recreation activities. The engagement activities were structured to match the two concurrent assessments and to accommodate evolving health guidance about in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. From February through October 2021, the project team worked with community partners to implement educational and outreach campaigns to publicize the project and expand awareness, and to provide opportunities for community input through surveys, workshops, events and other activities.



- The engagement program for the PNA+ included the following six key objectives:
- 1. Build awareness and capacity to contribute** among residents, communities, and other stakeholders.
 - 2. Ensure key stakeholders understand and participate** in the process, and make sure all stakeholders have **equitable access to the resources** to express their park needs.
 - 3. Create an accessible process** with a variety of engagement options (time, location, language) to encourage participation in the project, including capacity and relationship building where necessary to ensure equitable participation.
 - 4. Develop input on needs and priorities from a cross-section of audiences and stakeholders** (including age, gender, socioeconomic status, language, racial and ethnic backgrounds, dis/ability, and geography) throughout the County, focusing special attention on historically underserved communities in the region.
 - 5. Demonstrate transparency** through open and ongoing interaction with the community throughout the project and clear communication about how public input will be incorporated into the needs assessment and project outcomes.
 - 6. Ensure project outcomes reflect the needs of and prioritize benefits to historically underserved communities.**

2.1 OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

Building on the community engagement strategies that were successful during the Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) was a key goal of this effort. In 2016, DPR developed a website with local park information, maps, and data for all 188 study areas, informational materials about the assessment, a facilitator’s guide for those leading study area community workshops, and a survey to gather community input about the types of projects to include in community workshop discussions. To make sure that the PNA gathered input from communities experiencing historical inequitable parks access, DPR partnered with community-based organizations to develop workshops in underserved communities to discuss their local park needs.

The PNA+ expanded on this work, providing additional informational materials, input opportunities and outreach activities with community partner organizations. The first phase of engagement, an education and awareness campaign, included the launch of an updated website, several new social media accounts @lacparkneeds, and informational sheets about the needs assessments. The second engagement phase focused on outreach and input opportunities, including online workshops, several surveys to collect community input about park needs, and partnerships with community organizations across the County to expand the reach of the assessment in underrepresented and high park need communities.

COUNTYWIDE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS (Launched February 2021)

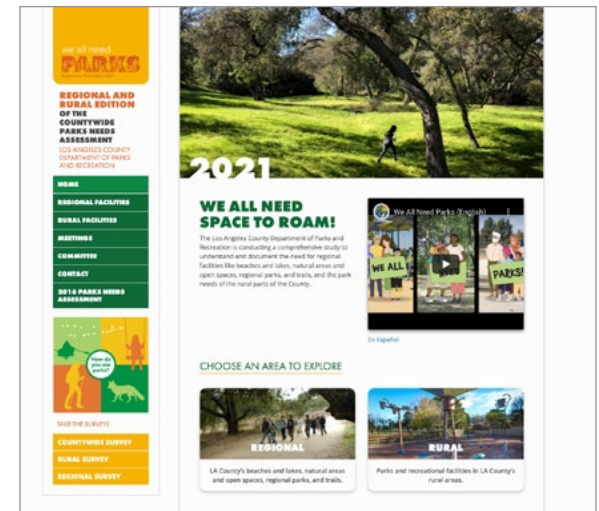
The first stage of community engagement focused on building awareness of the needs assessment project, including questions like what is it and why is DPR conducting a new study, and educating County residents and other stakeholders about regional parks and resources. The project team did the following to accomplish this:

- » Expanded the content on the existing PNA website
- » Created new social media accounts for the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment (@lacparkneeds)
- » Built a social media campaign to expand awareness
- » Prepared several press releases to publicize the project and online surveys and workshops
- » Developed several fact sheets in multiple languages to inform the public about the effort
- » Produced a video about the importance of meeting the growing and diverse local and regional park needs of County residents

WEBSITE

The 2016 PNA project team developed a website, www.lacountyparkneeds.org, which houses final materials from the initial Countywide Park Needs Assessment. The project team added a new link to the home page for the 2022 effort, which takes users to a project landing page with background information about the PNA+ including goals and timeline, links to workshops and online surveys, and an informational video regarding the importance of addressing park needs across the County. The final report, including maps and underlying data for the PNA+, will be available for viewing and downloading on the website following approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Figure 2-1: PNA+ Website



2.0 Community Engagement

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful engagement tool that can spark conversations, build a better understanding of community needs, gather direct input from residents, and help increase residents’ awareness of the resources already available to them.

The project team used social media—@lacparkneeds on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—to promote participation in the PNA+ among Los Angeles County residents, often targeting residents of rural communities. To build these project feeds, the project team created content that sought to cultivate a new way of understanding and thinking about parks, emphasize community events, and provide basic nature education intended to enhance readers’ sense of place in Los Angeles County. These posts worked to create a forum for open communication among viewers, building awareness and participation in the process of developing the project.

PNA+’s social media content focused on the following themes: *Tell Us About It*, *Nature Appreciation*, *Get Out & Go*, and shared upcoming DPR events. Social media posts also promoted the project’s online surveys and community workshops.

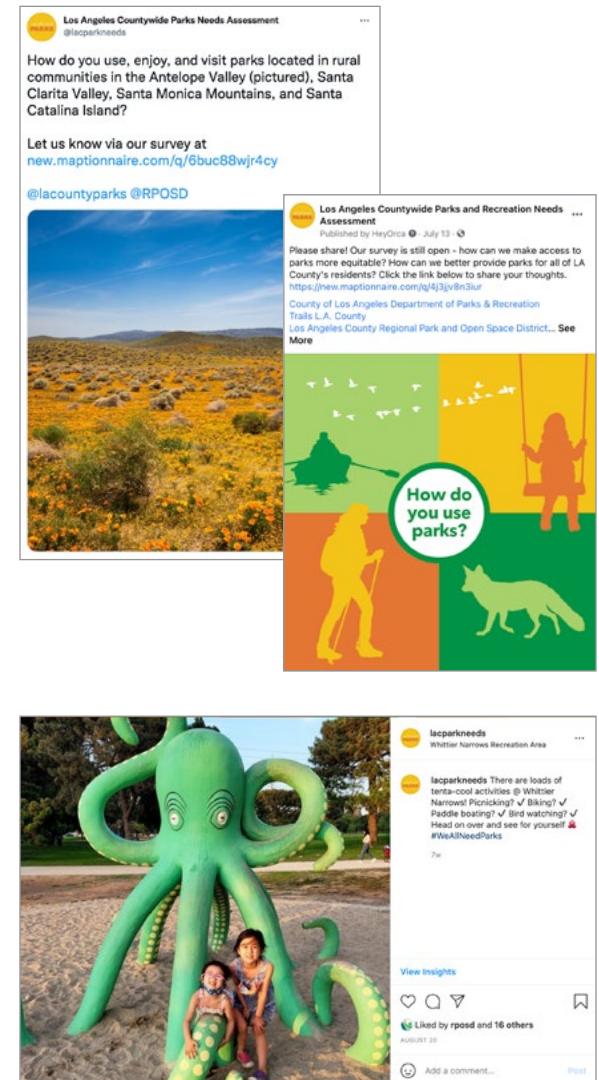
From May through August 2021—the most intensive community engagement period—the organic social media presence garnered a total of nearly 63,000 impressions across the three platforms. In addition, through two post boosts and one digital marketing campaign, an additional 5,780 impressions and 644 clicks from viewers through to the project’s online surveys were garnered.

Through this social media investment, there were a couple of key strategies that catalyzed awareness and engagement. First, the use of hashtags and @mentions were successful in broadening the PNA+’s reach—as this connected the project across multiple account. Some examples are #WeAllNeedParks, #ParksMakeLifeBetter and #DiversifyOutdoors. Similarly, tagging or @mentioning partner accounts was very effective in leveraging the larger followings of our partners—accounts such as Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Trails LA County, Regional Parks and Open Space District, Catalina Island Conservancy, and those of the Los Angeles County of Board of Supervisors.

The project team also connected directly with partners like the Wilderness Society, Trust for Public Land and other community and parks organizations, providing content for them to publish and a schedule of project posts to share, retweet and promote. In addition, the team supplied sample content to project community partners, some of whom developed their own parks related posts as well as sharing posts from @lacparkneeds. Partners social media posts garnered an additional 129,000 impressions across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Figure 2-2: Sample Social Media Posts



EARNED MEDIA

DPR issued two press releases in 2021 to inform the public and media outlets about the project. A first press release in March advertised the launch of the PNA+ and invited the public to visit the website and take a survey about countywide regional park needs. A second press release in August invited the public to sign up for upcoming online community workshops via Eventbrite or the project website, and also publicized the surveys on the website. According to Meltwater and Critical Mention media monitoring services, a total of 18 outlets, including the Los Angeles Sentinel and Antelope Valley Times, shared the first and/or second press release, with a combined potential audience of 1.1 million viewers, readers, and listeners.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The project team developed informational materials to share with the community. These included one- page fact sheets about the PNA+, maps highlighting key Regional Recreation Parks in each Regional Study Area, and a video to describe the project and the broader work of DPR.



Fact Sheets

Project fact sheets in English, Spanish, Korean, Armenian, and Chinese were created to explain the purpose and the process of the project. Additional translated versions were developed in Vietnamese, Thai, Samoan and Tongan at the request of community partner organizations. These fact sheets described the reasoning behind the current update to the 2016 PNA, explained the study's focus on equity outcomes, defined the types of regional parks and facilities included in the PNA+, and displayed a map of the Regional Study Areas included in this analysis.

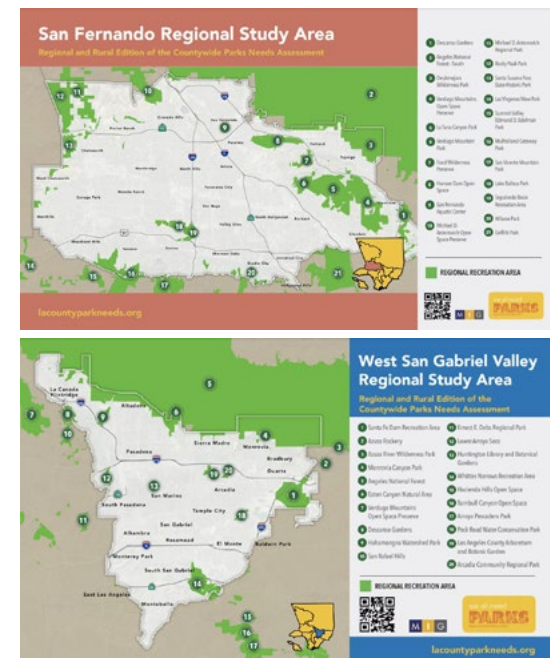
A separate fact sheet was developed for the Rural portion of the update, which described the reasoning behind an updated approach to assessing park needs in rural Los Angeles County and defined the communities at the focus of this analysis. This fact sheet included a map of the Rural Study Areas.

Figure 2-3: Regional and Rural Factsheets

Study Area Maps

The project team created eleven regional study area maps for online community workshops (described below), which highlighted key regional parks and recreation facilities in each study area. These included regional recreation parks, specialized recreation facilities, trails, beaches, and natural and open spaces operated by DPR, as well as others managed and operated by other public and private agencies, including the State of California, the National Forest Service, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, local botanic gardens, and others. An example of these maps, for the San Fernando study area, is provided below.

Figure 2-4: San Fernando and West San Gabriel Valley Study Area Maps



2.0 Community Engagement

Video

The project team created a short video to highlight the importance of addressing the growing and diverse local and regional park needs of Los Angeles County. The video shared several fictional examples of young people unable to access parks and open spaces in their communities—in urban, suburban and rural community settings. The video showcased how DPR is working with its many partners to ensure equitable parks and open space countywide to improve access for residents in all types of neighborhoods and communities. The video is available in English and Spanish on DPR's Youtube channel.

Figure 2-5: Selected Screens from Video



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INPUT (launched July 2021)

The project team pursued an inclusive, accessible, and transparent process for public engagement, decision-making, collecting input and sharing results. In addition to providing informational and educational materials about the assessment and regional parks, the PNA+ expanded the engagement framework created during the PNA in 2016 by collaborating with community organizations to help design and lead outreach activities, and collect input via surveys, workshops, and other events.

Feedback from PNA partner organizations and other key allies, as well as ongoing pandemic health mandates, all helped to inform an engagement framework. It included a broader and more flexible set of activities which could both meet the needs and resources of community partner organizations and broaden the scope of feedback collected from County residents, especially those in historically underserved communities with high park and open space needs and environmental burdens.

The sections below describe the community partner program and engagement and input opportunities, many of which took place in a digital format due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and safety precautions. Several community partners conducted in-person outreach events to reach members and residents unable to participate online or who needed additional support to provide feedback about park needs.

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

More than five thousand people, representing every zip code in the County, responded to community surveys, either online or via paper surveys collected by community organization partners. The surveys included questions aimed at orienting the public to the types of parks and recreation facilities centered in this study and collecting input about how County residents and other stakeholders use or do not use regional and/or rural parks and facilities, and what barriers they experience to their use. Demographic questions regarding age, race and ethnicity, gender and languages spoken at home were included and tracked to determine whether responses were representative of the County population. Results from these surveys are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and in study area appendices. The project team used social media, emails to community contacts, flyers advertising the surveys with QR codes and links, and connections through community organizations, NGOs, and parks and agency partners to spread the word about the surveys.

Figure 2-6: English and Korean Survey Flyers




Online Surveys

The project team created three online surveys accessible via the project website, and available in five languages—Armenian, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), English, Korean and Spanish. The first survey (Countywide Survey) asked residents about their recreation preferences and whether they used different types of regional parks and facilities. This survey included visual examples to guide respondents through several questions, such as: “What does recreation mean to you,” and “What types of places do you like to visit when you spend time outdoors?”


Figure 2-7: Sample of Original Countywide Survey

Special Places
What types of places do you like to visit when you spend time outdoors? (Check all that apply)


Arboreta and botanical gardens




Deserts



Forests



Lakes



The second online survey focused on the needs of rural communities (Rural Survey). Through an online community engagement platform called Maptionnaire, this survey asked residents to pin their home location on a map, and then asked County residents questions about the activities they like to do outside, how far they were willing to travel to do certain types of recreation activities, and about the local parks needs of their community. Questions included: “What are the greatest needs in your community,” and “What keeps you from doing more fun and healthy activities?”

A third survey launched in September 2021 as the Regional

Figure 2-8: Sample of Rural Survey

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE?
What do you and your household like to do? Check all that apply

Play

Exercise

Relax

Experience nature

Go off roading

Learn

Gather with friends or family

Compete (team or individual sports)

Eat

Attend events

Volunteer

I don't do any of these activities

What other activities do you like to do?

Where do you do any of the fun activities you mentioned above? Check all that apply

At home

Around my neighborhood


At a place of worship

At a school

At a park or trail (use the button below to show us where)

At another specific place (use the button below to show us where)

Click the button below and mark any specific places you like to go for fun.

Fun Places 

Use this button as many times as you like

Survey, with the goal of collecting input regarding how County residents use regional park amenities, what amenities they wish they could use, and the barriers they experience to using regional parks and facilities. The survey included icons to represent different types of amenities, such as campsites, picnic areas, outdoor event spaces, swimming areas and visitor centers. Depending on the choices made to initial questions about what amenities respondents use or wish they could use, respondents were asked follow-up questions, such as “Why don't you currently use this amenity,” “What would make it more likely for you to use this amenity,” and “How would you improve this amenity in your part of LA County?”

Figure 2-9: Sample of Regional Survey

NEEDS
Of the amenities commonly found in regional parks and open spaces,
Choose amenities from the list that you WOULD LIKE TO USE, BUT DO NOT CURRENTLY USE:
(You will be asked additional questions about each selection)

 Arboreta and Botanical Gardens	 Archery Ranges	 Boating/Waterport Facilities
 Campsites	 Concessions	 Equestrian Staging Areas
 Fishing Areas	 Golf Courses	 Indoor Event Spaces
 Nature Centers	 Off-Road/Highway Vehicle Areas	 Outdoor Event Spaces
 Picnic Areas	 Rock Climbing Areas	 Shooting Ranges
 Snowsport Facilities	 Swimming Areas	 Trails
 Visitor Centers	 WaterPort Access Areas	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't use any of these amenities



2.0 Community Engagement

Tribal Needs Survey

DPR worked with Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous-led, community-based organization, which conducted focus groups and developed a survey designed specifically to gather input from Native American stakeholders. The survey was made available online and on paper. Distribution of paper surveys was greatly aided by United American Indian Involvement, Inc. (UAI) through its annual American Indian Day held on September 11, 2021 at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and other events. UAI is the largest provider of human and health services for American Indians/Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) living in Los Angeles County. In addition, the NAIC supported this effort by sharing the link to the online survey on its website and social media platforms, as well as with its network of stakeholders.



UAI Survey Collection



Figure 2-10: Sample of Tribal Needs Survey Ad

Calling all LA County Native Americans!

We need your help! Please share your voice in the **LA County Regional Parks Tribal Needs Assessment Survey**

This survey is has been created as a supplement to the current LA County Regional Parks Needs Assessment Survey. It has been created to assess the specific needs of Native Americans and Indigenous Persons within the LA County area in regards to parks and rural areas.

Link: bit.ly/nativeparks

SACRED PLACES INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

SACRED PLACES INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

LA County Regional Parks Tribal Needs Assessment Survey

This survey has been created as a supplement to the current LA County Regional Parks Needs Assessment Survey. It has been created to assess the specific needs of Native Americans and Indigenous Persons within the LA County area in regard to parks and rural areas. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Thank you!

- Do you identify as Native American or Indigenous?
 - Yes No
- Do you currently live within your ancestral homelands?
 - Yes No
 - Other: _____
- Recreation means different things to different people. When you think of recreational parks, does the idea resonate with you? Please use the "other" option if you'd like to explain.
 - Yes No
 - Other: _____
- What sacred spaces do you need access to for ceremonial purposes? (Check all that apply)
 - Arboreta/Gardens Deserts
 - Forests Lakes
 - Nature Centers Natural Areas
 - Oceans/Beaches Parks
 - Rivers Trails
 - Wildlife Sanctuaries
 - Other: _____
- Has the Covid-19 pandemic affected how you spend your time in natural spaces? Please use the "other" option if you'd like to explain how.
 - Yes No
 - Other: _____
- Has the Covid-19 pandemic affected how you gather for ceremony? Please use the "other" option if you'd like to explain how.
 - Yes No
 - Other: _____
- Which mode of transportation do you use MOST OFTEN to get to natural spaces or be in nature? (Check all that apply)
 - Drive on my own
 - Get a ride with other
 - Use public transit (bus, train, etc.)
 - Under my own power (walk, bike, roll, etc.)
 - I don't spend time outdoors or in nature
 - Other: _____

Continue to page 2

Page 1 of 3

Figure 2-11: Tribal Needs Survey

In-Person Surveys

To ensure the effort was gathering input from County residents in underserved communities and among those who might not have access to the internet, the project team developed paper versions of the Countywide and Rural online surveys. These surveys were shared by community organization partners with members and in their communities. A first survey included questions from the online Countywide survey, to gather information about residents' recreational preferences and barriers, what types of parks and places they like to visit, and how they get there. A second survey focused on rural communities, and asked about their personal recreation activities, what were the greatest park needs in their local communities, and how far they would be willing to travel to do certain types of activities.

These surveys were shared by partners during tabling and canvassing events held by organizers, promotoras, and member leaders, at member meetings and at organization events. More than 1,500 people filled out a community survey with 59 percent of respondents using translated versions of the surveys in Chinese, Korean, Samoan, and Spanish. At the request of partners, surveys were translated into four additional languages: Armenian, Thai, Tongan and Vietnamese.



Promesa Promotoras Survey Collection

Regional and Rural Edition of the Los Angeles Countywide Parks Needs Assessment

Community Survey 2: Rural Focus

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation is doing a study to better understand regional and rural park needs. As part of the study, the Department is focusing on park and recreation needs in rural communities in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island. Please take a little time to share your thoughts and ideas about local park and recreation needs in your areas.

1. What do you and your household do for health and wellness? (Check all that apply)

Stretch, yoga, Pilates, etc. Ride a horse Get together or talk with friends and family

Walk Play at parks and/or playgrounds Don't do any of these activities

Jog or run Lift weights, strength training, cross fit, etc. Other _____

Ride a bicycle Sit quietly, meditate _____

2. What other activities do you or your household do for health and wellness?

3. What are the greatest park and recreation needs in your community? (Choose your top 3 needs)

A place to have a picnic or gather outside with friends and/or family A place to be surrounded by nature A place to swim

A heated and/or cooled place to gather, have meetings, hold events A place to drop in and play sports A place to take my dog for exercise and play

A place to play or take kids to play A place to attend health or fitness classes A place for cultural activities

A place to enjoy green lawn and trees A place for events such as movies or music Other need you would like to add or clarify _____

4. When you go to parks, who do you typically go with? (Check all that apply)

go alone go with friends go with a group or organization group name?

go with family _____

Organization _____ Survey # _____ Community Survey 2

地区别村庄 郊区和农村需求评估

社区调查

洛杉矶县公园和娱乐部正在做一项研究,以更好地了解农村地区对公园的需求。请花一点时间分享您对当地公园和休闲需求的想法和想法。调查区域包括安托普谷、圣克拉里塔谷、圣莫尼卡山区和圣卡塔利娜岛。

1. 您和您家的人通常进行哪些户外活动以促进健康和福祉? (勾选所有适用项)

拉伸/瑜伽 骑马 与家人或朋友交谈

散步 在公园和/或游乐场玩耍 不做任何这些活动

慢跑/跑步 举重/力量训练/交叉训练等 其他 _____

骑自行车 静坐/冥想 _____

2. 您家还有什么其他促进健康和福祉的活动?

3. 您所在社区最大的公园和休闲需求是什么? (勾选所有适用项)

野餐/烧烤 森林 花园 湖泊/池塘

游泳池 公园 河流 小径

野生动物保护区 其他 _____

4. 这些地点对我来说特别重要,因为它们提供(新鲜空气、自然、聚会、聚会、外出等):

5. 您希望下列类型的公园。(勾选所有适用项)

区域休闲公园,如博内利公园,有自然整体休闲区。 区域小径

城市休闲公园,如博内利公园,有自然整体休闲区。 海洋海滩

专门区域休闲公园,如博内利公园,有自然整体休闲区。 湖泊/池塘

具有历史意义的公园,如博内利公园,有自然整体休闲区。 具有教育意义的公园

自然区域或保护区,如博内利公园,有自然整体休闲区。 我不在这些地方是目的

Organization _____ Survey # _____

Edición Regional y Rural de la Evaluación de necesidades de parques en todo el Condado de Los Angeles

Encuesta Comunitaria

El Departamento de Parques y Recreación del Condado de Los Angeles está realizando un estudio para comprender mejor las necesidades de los parques regionales y rurales. Tómese unos momentos para compartir sus pensamientos e ideas sobre las instalaciones de los parques y de otros servicios, tales como los playas y lagos, áreas naturales y espacios abiertos, parques regionales, senderos y parques locales en áreas rurales.

1. ¿Qué tipo de actividades al aire libre realiza (hacer ejercicio, caminar, disfrutar de la naturaleza, jugar, etc.)?

2. ¿No realiza actividades al aire libre porque (Marque todo lo que corresponda)?

No me interesa No puedo acceder a los lugares al aire libre

Estoy demasiado ocupado con el trabajo Quisiera mucho

No tengo transporte Otro _____

3. Me gusta visitar estos lugares cuando puedo estar al aire libre. (Marque todo lo que corresponda)

Desiertos Bosques Jardines Lagos/Playas de lagos

Playas marítimas Parques Ríos Senderos

Sentimientos de vida silvestre Otro _____

4. Estos lugares son especiales para mí porque me gusta (el aire puro, la naturaleza, las reuniones, escapar de la ciudad, etc.):

5. Visito los siguientes tipos de parques. (Marque todos lo que correspondan)

Parques recreativos regionales, como Bonelli Park, Kenneth Hahn Recreation Area, Griffin Park y otros. Senderos regionales

Parques recreativos locales, como los parques de la ciudad. Playas marítimas

Sitios de recreación regional especializados, como campos de golf, centros ecuestres o sitios históricos. Lagos o ríos

Áreas naturales o áreas de conservación ecológicas, como Devil's Punch Bowl o Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve. Parques cerca de mi casa

No visito ninguno de estos parques

Organization _____ Survey # _____

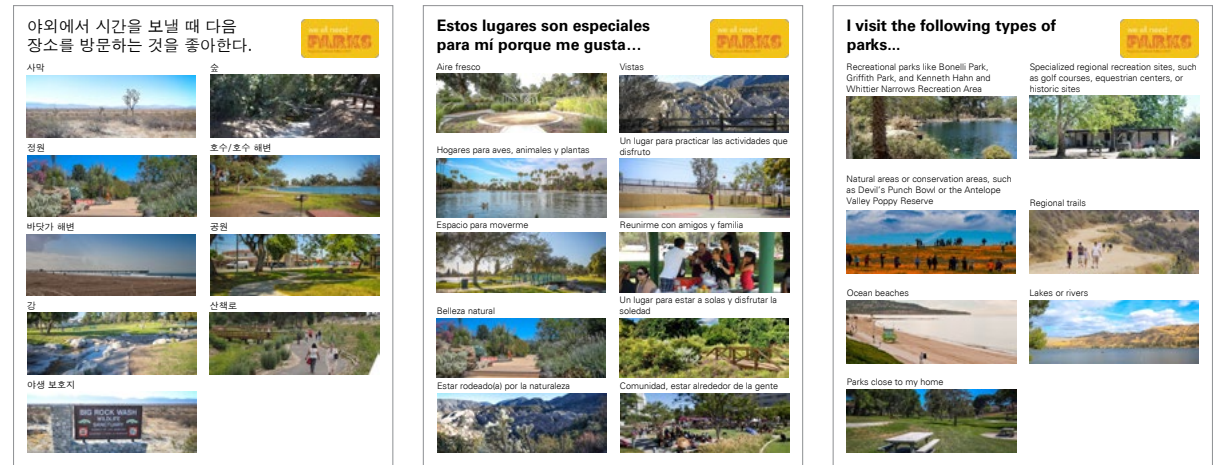
Figure 2-13: English, Chinese and Spanish In-Person Surveys

2.0 Community Engagement

Visual Surveys

Community organization partners helping to collect input suggested providing visual versions of the community surveys to help collect responses from County residents with low vision or literacy capabilities. The project team created four visual survey question pages for community partners to share, with photo captions available in English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese, centered on key questions of the community survey and of the broader needs assessment. These visuals included photo examples for the following questions: “What types of outdoor activities do you enjoy doing?” “I like to visit these places when I spend time outdoors...” “These places are special to me because I like...” and “I visit the following types of parks.”

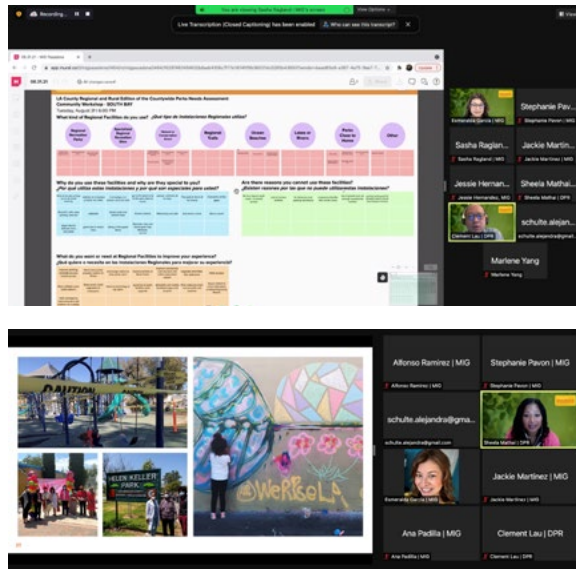
Figure 2-14: Visual Surveys in Korean, Spanish, and English



MEETINGS AND WEBINARS

In addition to surveys, the project team participated in community organization and Rural Town Council meetings to hear from residents about regional and rural park needs and organized a set of online workshops to gather community input in each Regional Study Area. Initially, the team planned for several rounds of in-person and online workshops, but due to COVID restrictions, decided to implement a longer, focused online workshop for each Regional Study Area. Additional events and workshops were created by community organization partners and facilitated by project team members to gather more feedback on park needs from County residents in historically underserved communities.

Figure 2-15: Online Community Workshops



Online Community Workshops

(August and September 2021)

In online community workshops organized by the project team in August and September, the project team facilitated discussions for Los Angeles County residents to share how they use regional and rural parks and facilities, and what could be done to improve access where barriers exist.

A total of eleven online workshops were conducted, one for each Regional Study Area, to better focus on the specific park needs of subregions of the County. An additional focus group was held in late September for Santa Catalina Island to gather additional feedback from residents, users, parks facilities staff and others, since participation was low at the initial workshop. Also, the Santa Clarita Valley workshop was rescheduled due to technical difficulties. In addition, focus groups were held in coordination with Promesa Boyle Heights and Willowbrook Inclusion Network, two of the community partners, to specifically collect input from residents from Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles and Willowbrook/Watts in the Metro Regional Study Area, two historically underserved communities.

The following is a list of online workshops and focus groups by Regional Study Area or community of focus:

- » East San Gabriel Valley - Tuesday, August 17th, 2021
- » Westside – Wednesday, August 18th, 2021
- » Gateway – Thursday, August 19th, 2021
- » Antelope Valley – Saturday, August 21st, 2021
- » Metro – Tuesday, August 24th, 2021
- » West San Gabriel Valley – Wednesday, August 25th, 2021
- » Santa Clarita Valley – Thursday, August 26th, 2021
- » San Fernando Valley – Saturday, August 28th, 2021
- » Santa Clarita Valley (Rescheduled) – Monday, August 30th, 2021
- » South Bay – Tuesday, August 31st, 2021
- » Santa Monica Mountains – Wednesday, September 1st, 2021
- » Santa Catalina Island – Thursday, September 2nd, 2021
- » Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles Focus Group – Wednesday, September 22nd, 2021
- » Santa Catalina Island Focus Group – Tuesday, September 28th, 2021
- » Willowbrook/Watts Focus Group – Wednesday, October 28, 2021

2.0 Community Engagement

Outreach

To publicize the workshops and reach a wide range of communities and County residents, the project team used several channels for outreach. The team sent out a press release and created flyers to publicize the workshops, which included links to an Eventbrite registration site with details about the workshops, and how to register and participate. The project team also organized a Mailchimp email campaign to invite PNA and community contacts, city officials and staff, land and trail-managing agencies, community and parks organizations and other County residents to the workshops. The @lacparkneeds social media sites shared posts about the meetings and reminders to register and attend. Community organization partners also helped to publicize the workshops with their members and in their communities, through email blasts, phone calls, social media posts, and flyers.

Figure 2-16: Twitter and Facebook Workshop Posts

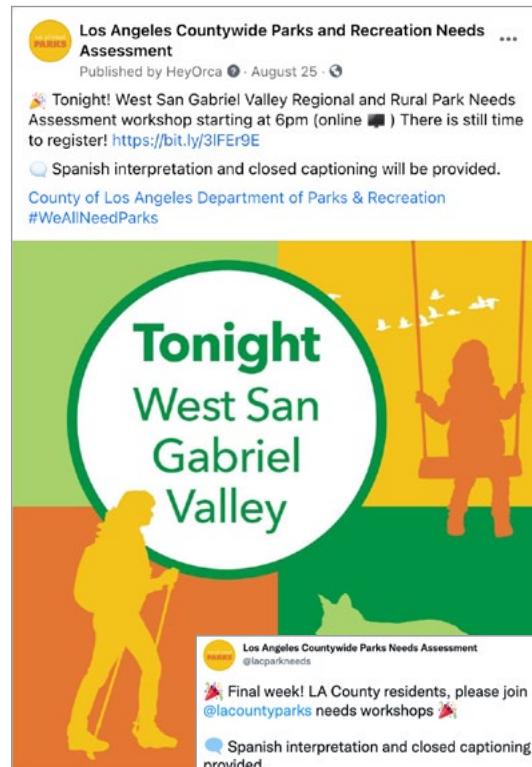
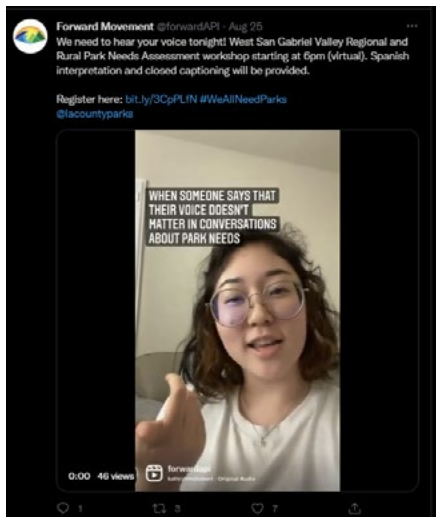


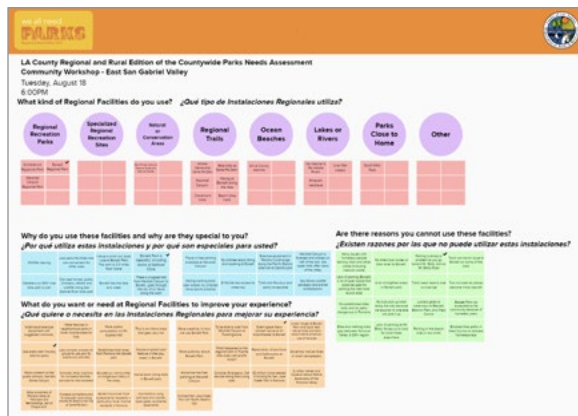
Figure 2-17: English and Vietnamese Workshop Flyers



Format and Process

Each workshop was conducted and recorded over Zoom with Spanish interpretation and closed captions available to participants. To engage participants and gather input during the workshop, the facilitation team used a polling application called Mentimeter, and a virtual whiteboard, Mural, to take and display notes during the meeting. Participants were also encouraged to provide comments in the chat, and to ask questions or make comments verbally.

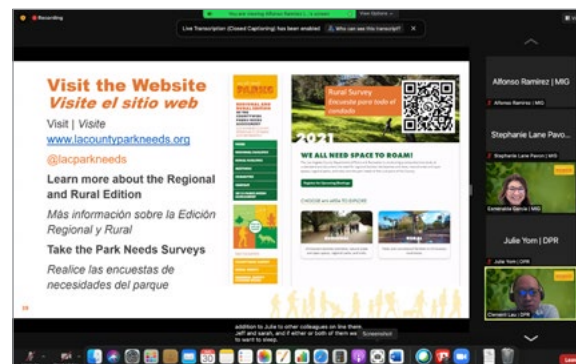
Figure 2-18: Mural notes and Mentimeter poll



A staff member from DPR gave a presentation at each workshop which discussed the project, including background information on the 2016 PNA, the reasons for this current update and explanations of the types of regional parks and open spaces included in this analysis.

A project team member from MIG served as the facilitator during the workshops. After a brief overview of the workshop format, the workshop facilitator led a discussion about the types of regional parks participants use and why they are important, what barriers exist to using regional parks and facilities, and what is needed to improve the user experiences in these spaces. Additional discussions about local parks needs were incorporated in workshops that focused on study areas which include rural communities. The facilitation team included several MIG staff, who helped to collect input during the meeting, including coordinating Mentimeter poll questions, taking notes on the Mural whiteboard, and answering questions in the Zoom chat.

Figure 2-19: Zoom Workshop



During the workshops, participants were asked to respond to several questions regarding their use of regional and local rural parks:

Rural community local parks discussion questions:

- » What kind of outdoor activities do you enjoy doing?
- » What kind of parks and other outdoor places do you use in your community?
- » Why are they special to you?
- » How do you get to these facilities?
- » What makes it hard to use or access these facilities in your community?
- » What is missing and what are additional park needs in your community?

Regional Parks and Open Spaces discussion questions:

- » What kind of Regional Facilities do you use?
- » Why do you use these facilities and why are they special to you?
- » Are there reasons you cannot use these facilities?
- » What do you want or need at Regional Facilities to improve your experience?

2.0 Community Engagement

Outcomes

Over 400 people participated in these workshops and focus groups. Input from residents touched on themes related to access, why parks are special to users and their families, and what DPR might do to make parks and facilities more accessible, safe, and welcoming for all County residents. More about these themes can be found in Chapters 4 and 5, and the study area profiles located in the appendices.

Online Town Councils

(April - November 2021)

Project team members attended and presented an overview of the needs assessment effort at numerous rural Town Council and homeowner and park organization meetings. Attendees were encouraged to share information and spread word about the online survey efforts and to share feedback regarding their communities' park and recreation needs.

Listed below are online meetings in which team members participated and presented:

- » Juniper Hills Town Council - Wednesday, April 7th, 2021
- » Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation - Thursday, May 13th, 2021
- » Castaic Town Council – Wednesday, June 16th, 2021 and July 21, 2021
- » Lake Los Angeles Town Council – Tuesday, June 22nd, 2021
- » Littlerock Town Council – Thursday, July 8th, 2021
- » Lake Los Angeles Park Association - Tuesday, July 13th, 2021

- » Agua Dulce Town Council – Wednesday, July 14th, 2021
- » Association of Rural Town Councils – Wednesday, July 28th, 2021
- » Leona Valley Town Council – Monday, August 9th, 2021
- » Stevenson Ranch Homeowners Association – Tuesday, September 21, 2021
- » Acton Town Council, Wednesday, October 20th, 2021
- » Friends of Acton Park, Thursday, November 4th, 2021

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

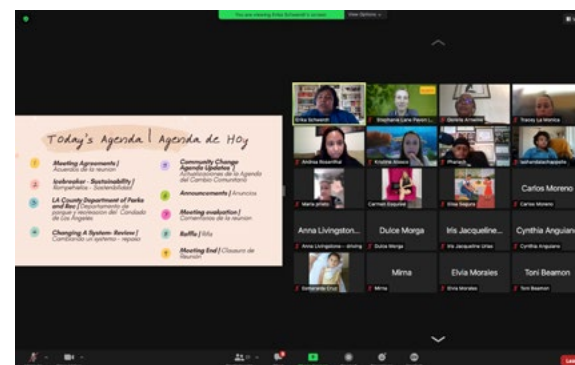
During summer and fall 2021, community partners held discussions with organization members and leaders during monthly meetings and other events scheduled during our outreach period. The project team attended several of these meetings and facilitated discussions with members

about regional and rural community members' park use, access, and needs. Details of the input from these discussions can be found in the chapters which follow.

“WE ALL NEED SPACE TO ROAM” EMAIL CAMPAIGN

The project team developed a month-long email campaign to promote the online workshops and surveys, using the theme of the PNA+, “We all need space to roam.” The team added to DPR’s contact list from the PNA and compiled a set of 2,800 contacts from community and parks organizations, area city officials and staff, public and land management agencies, survey respondents, and others to connect with on a weekly basis to remind and share information about the project and opportunities to provide input at the study area workshops and via the online surveys. More than 12,000 emails were sent out during this time, in addition to emails sent to the 200,000 people on DPR’s email list.

Figure 2-20: Zoom Community Meeting



COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM

Twenty community-based organization partners that work throughout the County helped to ensure that participation represented the broad diversity of residents, needs, and park use opportunities in the region. Over several months during summer and fall 2021, community partners held outreach events and gathered input via community surveys and meetings about park needs. In all, more than 120,000 people from communities across the County were reached during partner outreach activities, through text messages, emails, social media, presentations and discussions at membership meetings, tabling at parks, farmers markets and other events, and community canvassing activities. At least 2,300 people participated in a survey, either in person or online thanks to referrals from partner organizations.

PROCESS

The 2016 PNA included a community-led engagement process where community organizations, city officials and staff, and other partners were charged with leading outreach and facilitating study area workshops to gather community input about local park needs. DPR also contracted with seven well-respected community-based organizations to focus additional outreach in historically underserved communities in the County.

Looking to build on the successful engagement strategies from the PNA, the project team spoke with PNA+ TAC members, 2016 community organization partners and others who supported and recruited for study area workshops. Feedback from these conversations, as well as the broader regional scope of the PNA+ and limitations due to the pandemic, shifted the goals for partners from

developing and organizing study area workshops to focusing on education, outreach, and organization-based opportunities for collecting input from members and the broader community.

Expanding our reach beyond the key community organizations who served as partners during the PNA, the project team and DPR built a list of several dozen organizations across the County who could help to coordinate outreach and gather input in communities from the Antelope Valley to the South Bay. The list included organizations focused on communities of color and historically underserved communities, park and health equity organizations, transit and watershed advocacy groups, First 5 and Best Start-related parent and family organizations, immigrant rights and labor organizations, native and indigenous advocates, and others. The project team made sure the list of possible partners was representative of County demographics, including race and ethnicity and language access, and covered all Regional Study Areas.

In February 2021, the team began conversations with these organizations to talk about their work, capacity, and interest in partnering with DPR to collect input about regional and rural park needs. Project team members used these conversations to gather suggestions about how best to collaborate with groups, what types of events and activities might be most successful given social distancing and other health mandates, what materials partners might need, and how to provide equitable resources and financial and technical support to do successful engagement work. Several organizations allied with countywide park equity coalitions suggested additional organizations as possible

partners. Many talked about additional work and strains on their organization posed by the pandemic and the urgent need to respond to the basic needs of members and community residents. Some community organizations contacted by the team were unable to participate in this effort due to the lack of capacity and/or focus on other important issues, including pandemic response, elections, and redistricting of political and school district boundaries.

TRIBAL OUTREACH

DPR and the project team reached out to Sacred Places Institute (SPI), a tribal advocacy organization, to collaborate on outreach to local tribal and indigenous organizations. SPI staff advised that the set of surveys and outreach materials available to the public did not reflect the unique concerns and needs of native communities. Thus, SPI assisted DPR by creating a tribal needs survey that was designed specifically to collect input from native and indigenous peoples in Los Angeles County. The United American Indian Involvement (UAI) and the L.A. City/County Native American Indian Commission then helped with the distribution of the survey via their websites, social media, and at events such as the American Indian Day at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area held on September 11, 2021.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Using feedback from initial conversations with organizations, the project team developed a more tailored approach to community engagement for the PNA+, working with each organization to develop an engagement plan based upon their capacities, experience, relationships, resources, and the communities they serve. Many organizations the team spoke to suggested looking for opportunities to connect discussions and outreach about

2.0 Community Engagement

park needs into existing organization activities, such as monthly membership meetings, events held at parks and schools, tree plantings, and food drives. The team developed an outreach plan framework with a menu of methods and activities that partners could choose from and use that best reflected their work, resources, relationships, and the needs they have identified in their communities.

The Outreach Plan included space for partners to suggest their own goals for outreach and engagement around two key outcomes: how many people partners would plan to reach to educate about regional parks and facilities, and how many people partners would plan to recruit to take part in an input activity—whether a survey, workshop, or other discussion. The team suggested engagement milestones of 100 surveys per partner and 35 to 50 people recruited to an event or workshop, with the understanding that given the range of partner capacities and resources, these goals might be easy to reach for some and out of reach for others without additional support from the project team.

The project team held an onboarding workshop via Zoom to discuss the outreach plan and proposed engagement timeline with potential community partners in April 2021. By August 2021, 14 organizations had agreed to collaborate with DPR as formal partners, and another three proposed to support the work through their networks and activities. Once the team received a community partner organization’s Outreach Plan and services agreement, which outlined the scope of work and total funding support requested by each partner, the team provided a toolkit of materials to support outreach.

Figure 2-21: Community Partner Organizations



Materials

The project team provided an outreach toolkit to partners, which included an introduction to the PNA+, fact sheets about both the Rural and Regional aspects of the needs assessment, talking points, study area maps and a broad timeline of activities. It also included background on the types of activities expected of partners, suggested metrics to track progress, details about the funding support and the plan for progress check-ins. As engagement work got underway, the team provided additional materials and technical support to partners, including graphics to use to promote the project, sample social media posts, a brief project presentation and flyers with unique organization links to online surveys.

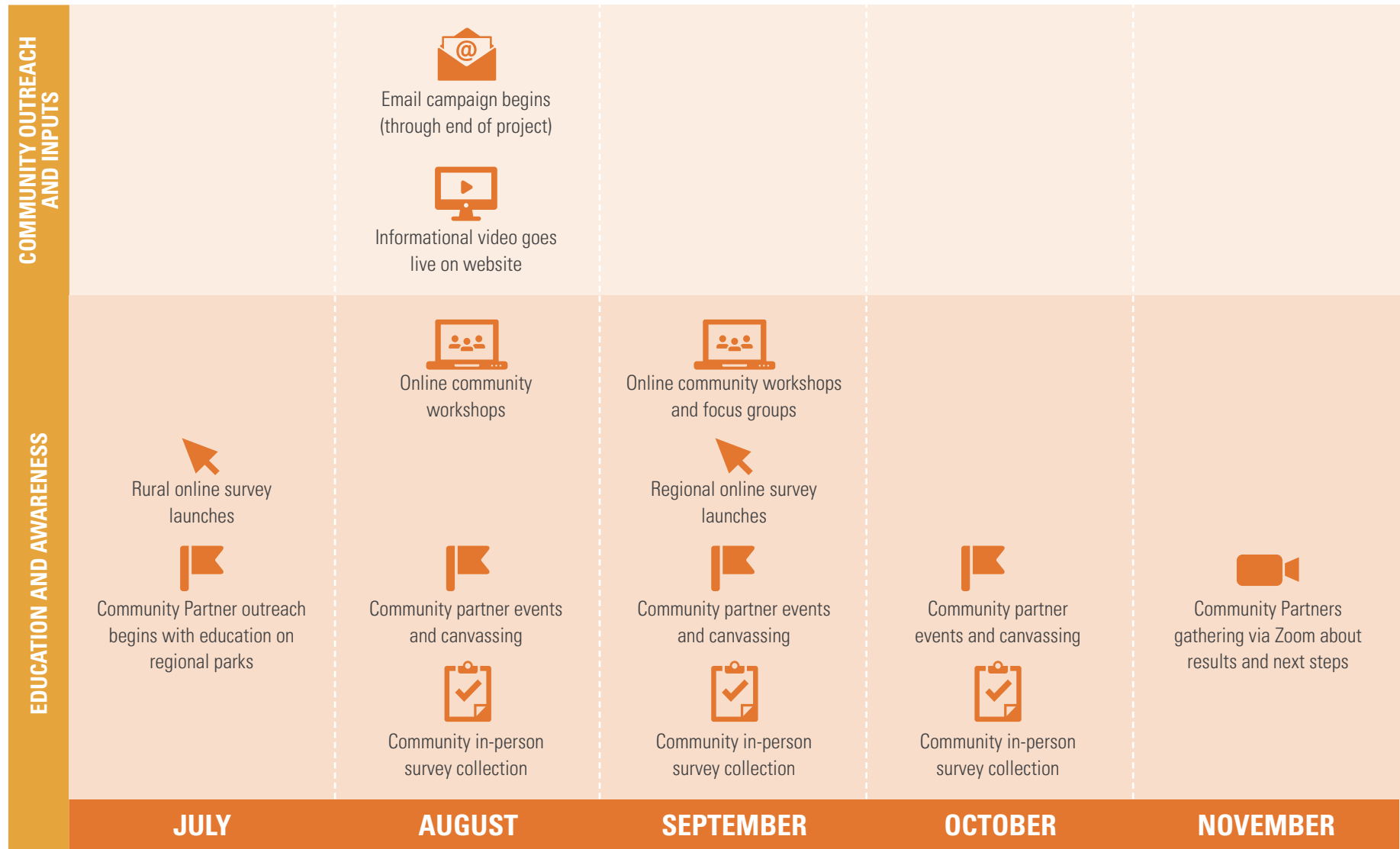
Tracking the work

Each community partner's outreach plan included a table of goals for outreach and engagement in four sets of activities: communication, media, events and activities, and education. The project team asked partners to track their

activities related to these goals and share outreach totals twice during the engagement period in an online tracking form. The team also set up a set of check in points during the engagement period to discuss progress and the need for any additional materials or support.

Figure 2-22: Community Outreach Process





Funding Support

To cover the costs of community partner staff time and materials, DPR provided funding support to each organization in the range of \$5,000 to \$10,000, which ran from July to mid-October. The first half of the funding support was provided up front to partners when they shared their Outreach Plan with the project team. A second installment of one-fourth of the total was provided after a first round of engagement work in August. The balance of the funding support was given to partners once they provided the team with a final outreach summary. Details from these summaries follow in the Outcomes and Feedback sections below.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Over the course of the four months of the engagement period, partners took part in a range of education and engagement activities to spread the word about the PNA+ and collect input about park needs. The sections below review the methods and activities used by community partners to spread the word about the PNA+, educate their communities, and gather input about park needs.

Community Partner Outreach Activities



COMMUNICATION

98,000

PEOPLE REACHED VIA
PHONE OR EMAIL



SOCIAL MEDIA

130,000

IMPRESSIONS



EDUCATION

8,600

FLYERS AND
MATERIALS SHARED



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

140+

EVENTS



9,300

PEOPLE REACHED
DURING EVENTS AND
ACTIVITIES



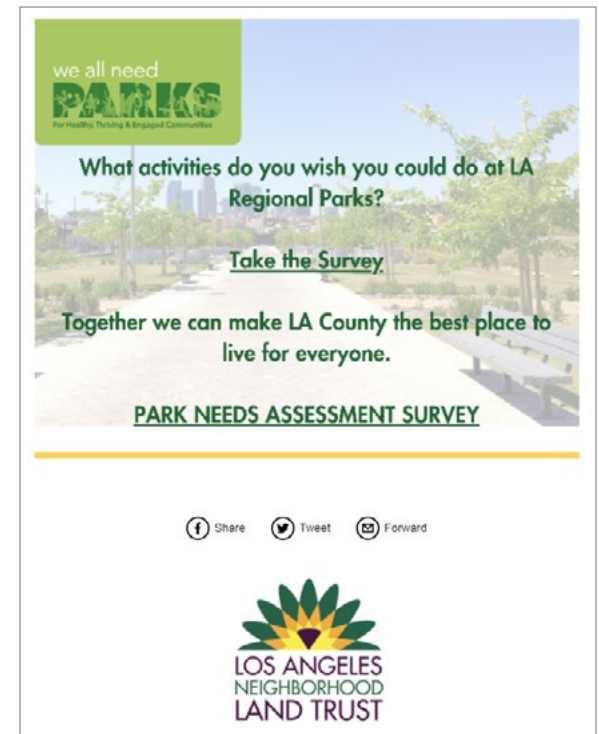
SURVEYS

2,300+

Communication

Community partners emailed, texted and/or called their members and community residents to let them know about the PNA+ and to invite them to events, including online workshops and partner-organized activities to collect input from their communities. Partner organizations sent more than 22,000 emails and 74,000 text messages over the outreach period.

Figure 2-23: Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust Email to Members



2.0 Community Engagement

Media

Many community partners have large followings on social media and used these outlets to spread the word. Partners created 60 posts about the PNA+, collecting more than 130,000 impressions. Several organizations placed Facebook ads to boost their posts, and others advertised online workshops and surveys with local and community media.

Figure 2-24: Social Media Sample



AVCOA Tabling Event.

Events and Activities

Community partners organized more than 90 tabling, canvassing and other outreach events to collect information from members about local and regional park needs in their communities and educate the community about the effort. Partners also used membership meetings and organization events, including monthly parent meetings, tree giveaways and fitness workshops in the parks to engage members and their communities. More than 9,000 people were reached during partner organized activities and events.

Highlights from these events include:

- » Amigos de los Rios tabled at several schools in the San Gabriel Valley and talked to hundreds of parents and students during drop off and pick up times.
- » API Forward Movement distributed flyers and collected surveys from community members during their bimonthly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food distribution events.
- » Day One tabled at farmer’s markets and San Gabriel Valley community festivals.
- » Antelope Valley Partners for Health included park needs outreach at health events and mobile vaccine clinics.
- » Koreatown Youth and Community Center used their tree giveaway events to introduce the needs assessment and helped Spanish and Korean-speaking residents fill out the online survey.

- » Promesa Boyle Heights promotoras canvassed their communities to ask residents and members about their park needs.
- » Nature For All ambassadors collected surveys in San Fernando Valley neighborhoods and parks.
- » SBCC engaged middle and high school students to connect their ideas about parks to larger activities around civic and community engagement.



APIFM Food Distribution Event

PARTNERS GATHERING

In November 2021, the team organized a get together for partners via Zoom to celebrate their work and collaboration, share initial results from community engagement, get their feedback about the process, and talk about next steps. Community partners shared stories from their outreach and provided lessons learned, including:

“In person works best which remains challenging given the pandemic. Virtual events and phone calls are a helpful alternative.”

“Walking around parks and talking to people was our most successful method.”

“It was great to bring back the survey to the rural areas where we already mobilized people to participate in 2016.”

“It was important we meet people where they are most comfortable and safe.”

“Lots of children translating for parents or helping with surveys.”

“Our most effective outreach method for gathering community input was utilizing the visual aid surveys... That was such a fun, creative and interactive way to engage with community members, especially those who are limited English proficient and older in age.”

“Working with trusted messengers and attending events and having conversations with people; not saying it’s a survey right off hand.”

“Really shows the need to reach people through multiple ways so we have more voices providing input.”

2.0 Community Engagement

Partners also suggested improvements and opportunities for future work:

- » Bring partners into the planning process
- » Include a longer outreach timeframe
- » Make sure materials are ready at start of engagement period and vetted/translated in all languages/forms
- » Include a simple fact sheet with parks definitions
- » Hold a training session for partners
- » Provide more community meetings and in-person opportunities
- » Create short-form surveys to catch people in a hurry
- » Allow for better outreach coordination between partners
- » More opportunities for young people, seniors, limited vision residents to provide input, including kid-friendly meetings and group discussions for seniors
- » Provide expanded language access
- » Develop a monthly roundtable for partners to talk about collaboration opportunities
- » Create a demonstration project for partners to experience how long it takes and what the barriers are to accessing regional parks

Additional recommendations and reflections about community input from partners can be found in the chapters which follow.

Figure 2-25: Community Partners Gathering via Zoom



Figure 2-26: Jam Board Notes from Community Partners Gathering





3.0

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION
AND
RESTORATION

3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

3.1 ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning, regulating, and cultural services that directly affect people and supporting services needed to maintain the other services. The Millennium Ecosystem Project is an effort initiated by the United Nations in 2001 to assess the health of natural systems on a global scale. The framework for the assessment emphasizes the many ways in which the health and well-being of all people is dependent on the ability of ecosystems to perform a range of critical services. These services are grouped into the following four categories: provisioning services, regulating services, cultural services and supporting services¹ (See Figure 3-1: Ecosystem Services).

From a regional perspective, it is especially relevant to consider the full spectrum of ecosystem services that parks and open spaces provide as many of the remaining intact areas of high ecological value are protected as public lands and their benefits extend well beyond their immediate surroundings. In Los Angeles County, these include lands managed at the federal, state, county and municipal level such as the Angeles National Forest, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Verdugo Mountains Open Space Preserve, the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve and many others.

Figure 3-1: Ecosystem Services



Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.

¹ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Los Angeles County is rich in natural beauty, with a great variety of biodiverse ecosystems including forests, deserts, mountains, waterways, islands, and 75 miles of coastline. Generally, the climate can be characterized as Mediterranean, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. The diversity of the topography results in localized climate zones that are roughly divided by the Transverse Ranges (Santa Monica Mountains and San Gabriel Mountains). These climate zones include Coastal Plain, Mountain, and High Desert. The climate zones are closely tied to geologic landforms and vary based on elevation changes and distance from the ocean. The County contains a variety of land cover types, including agriculture, desert shrub and woodland, conifer forest and woodland, hardwood forest and woodland, herbaceous, and shrub land.

Figure 3-2: Acres by Vegetation Type

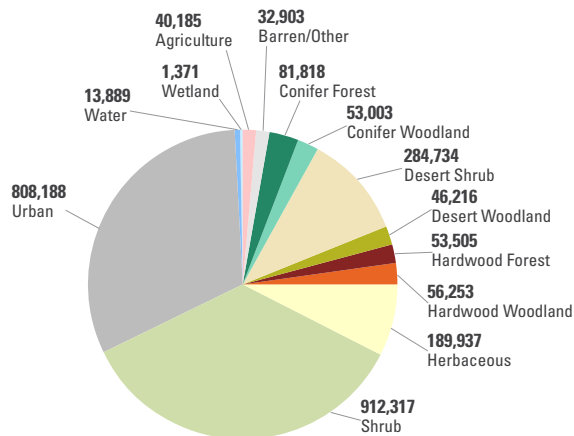
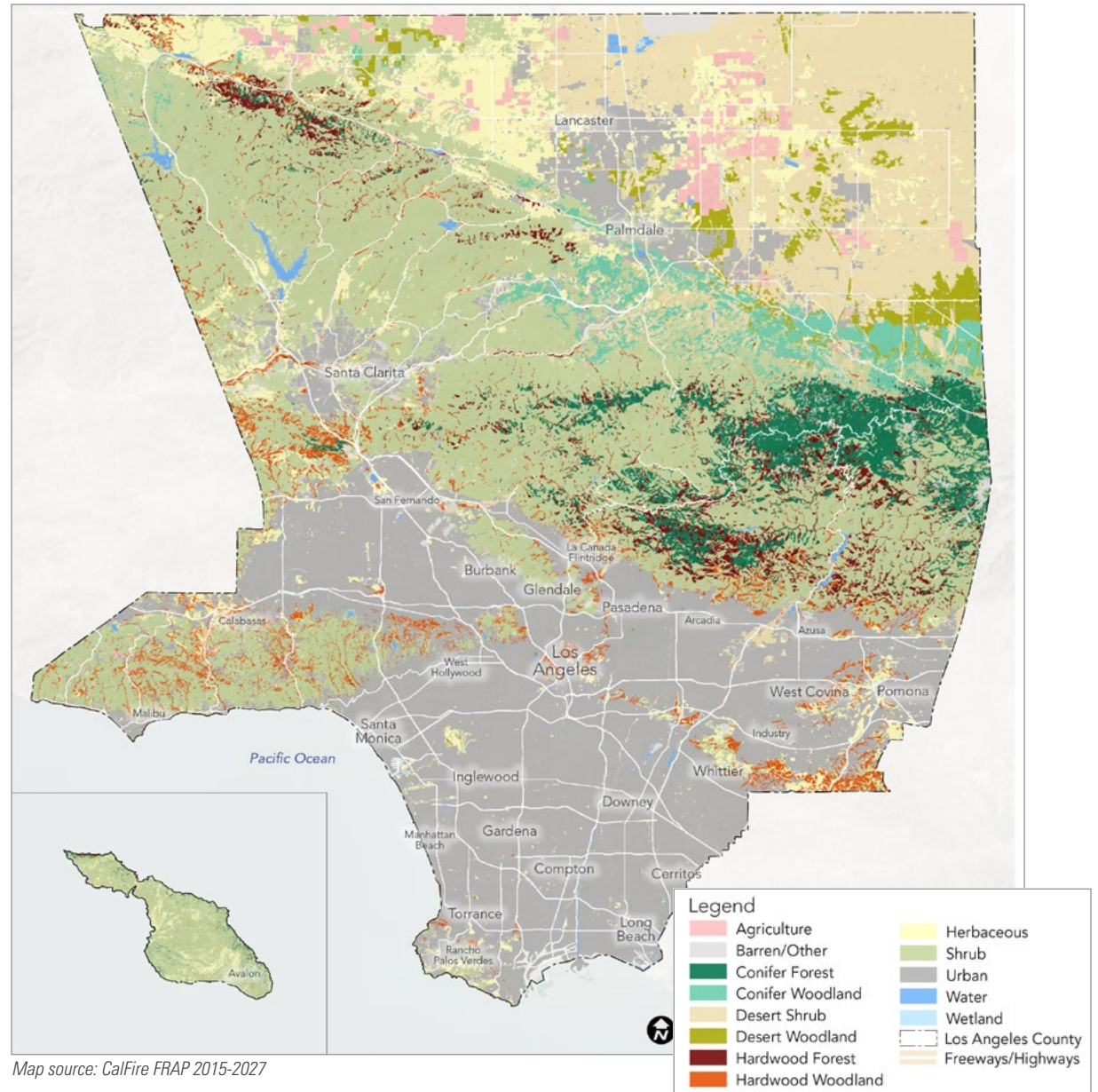


Figure 3-3: Landcover



3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

3.2 ROLE OF REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

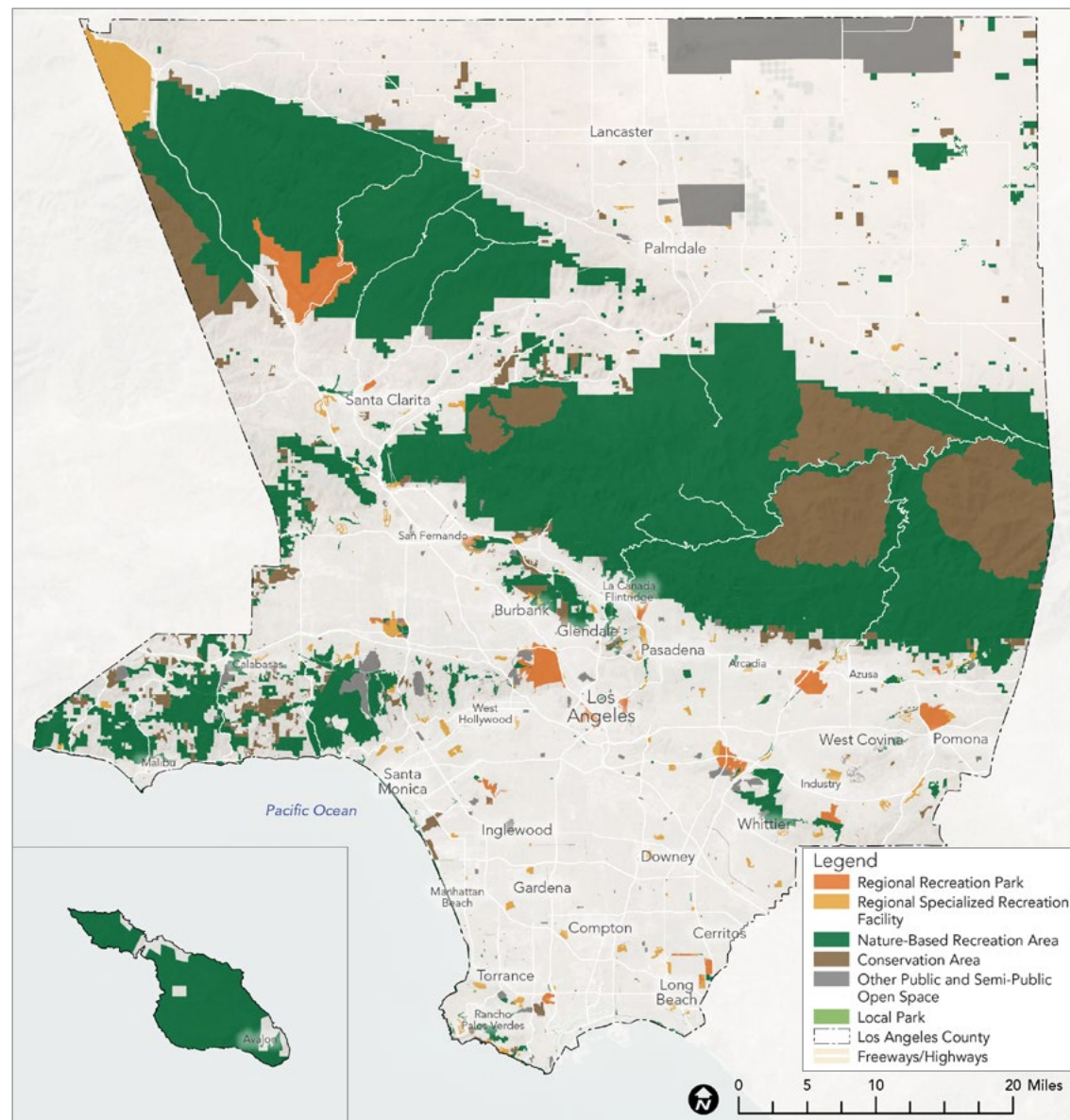
The Regional Sites that are inventoried in the PNA+ encompass nearly one million acres of land. While some of these lands are protected for conservation purposes and therefore allow limited access for visitors, others have been developed to provide opportunities for recreational and cultural activities. Ensuring that there is a system-wide approach to balancing the range of demands that people place on public lands is essential to sustaining both ecosystem health and the well-being of the County's 10 million residents.

CONSERVATION VALUE

Conservation Areas, as defined in the PNA+, are lands that have been protected from development for the purpose of preserving sensitive habitat, wildlife and/or natural and cultural resources. There are over 160,000 acres of land, comprising 6% of the total land area of the County, identified as Conservation Areas included in the Regional Site Inventory.

Recreational access to these natural areas is limited or prohibited in order to reduce negative impacts on fragile natural systems. The benefits that are derived from these lands fall largely into the provisioning, regulating and supporting ecosystem service categories as defined in

Figure 3-4: Regional Site Inventory



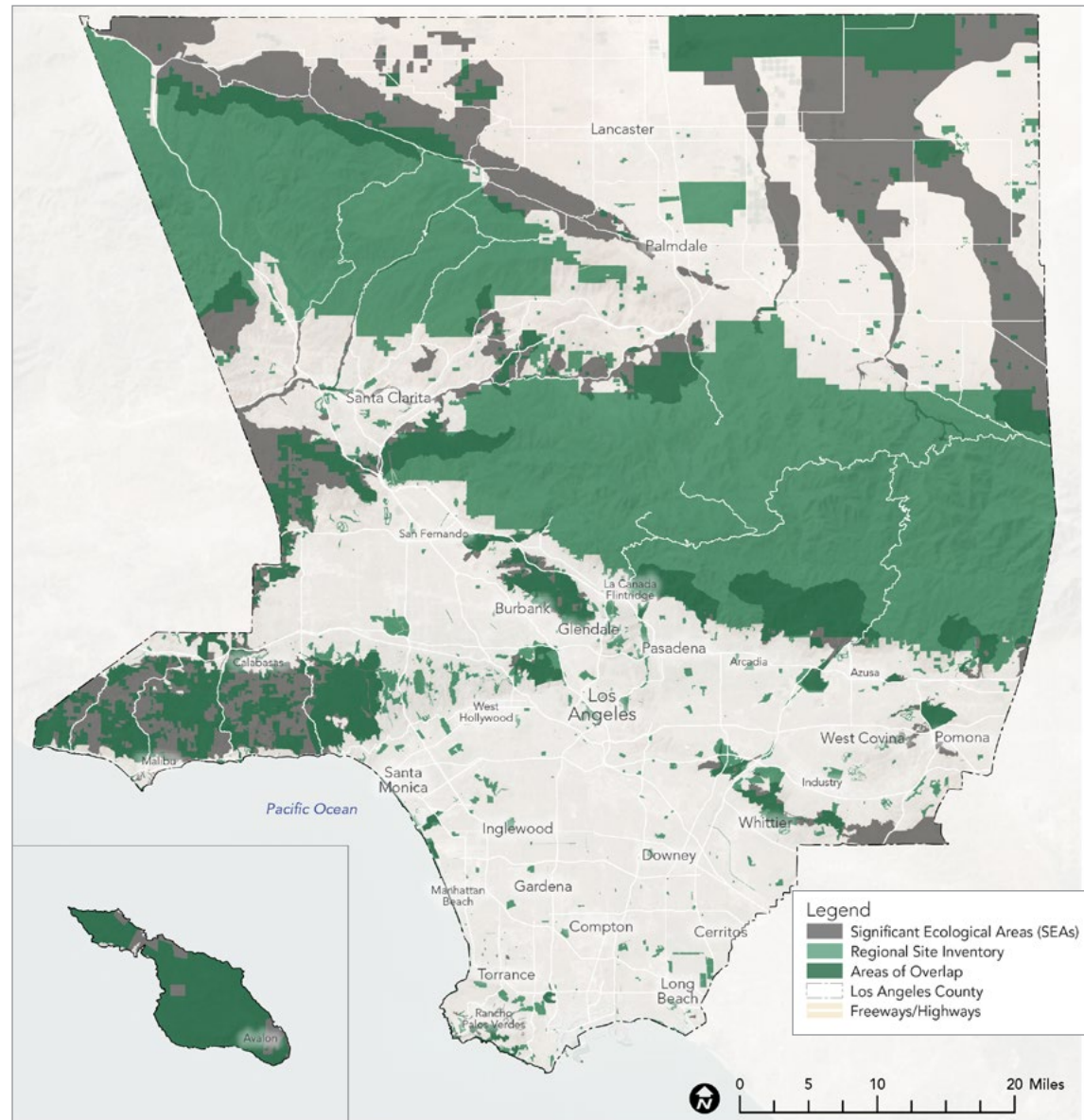
Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

preceding sections of this chapter. In Los Angeles County, a large percentage of the more than 850 Conservation Areas included in the Regional Site Inventory are managed by land trusts and conservancies, though federal, state, county and local agencies are also responsible for overseeing many of these resources.

The primary objective of Conservation Areas is to protect lands of high ecological value, though all of the categories of lands incorporated in the Regional Site Inventory provide some degree of critical regulating and supporting services. Nature-Based Recreation Areas, Regional Recreation Parks and Regional Specialized Recreation Areas are managed to balance conservation objectives with social, recreational and cultural uses at different levels of intensity. The lands categorized as Other Public and Semi-Public Open Spaces also perform ecosystem services while simultaneously supporting important public functions like providing corridors for utility infrastructure and flood protection as well as sacred spaces for burials and memorials.

Nearly 300,000 acres of the lands that are included in the Regional Site Inventory fall within a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). SEAs are officially designated areas within Los Angeles County identified as having irreplaceable biological resources. These areas represent the wide-ranging biodiversity of the County and contain some of the County's most important biological resources. Each individual SEA was configured to support sustainable populations of its component species and includes undisturbed to lightly disturbed habitat along with linkages and corridors that promote species movement.

Figure 3-5: Regional Sites Located Within Significant Ecological Areas

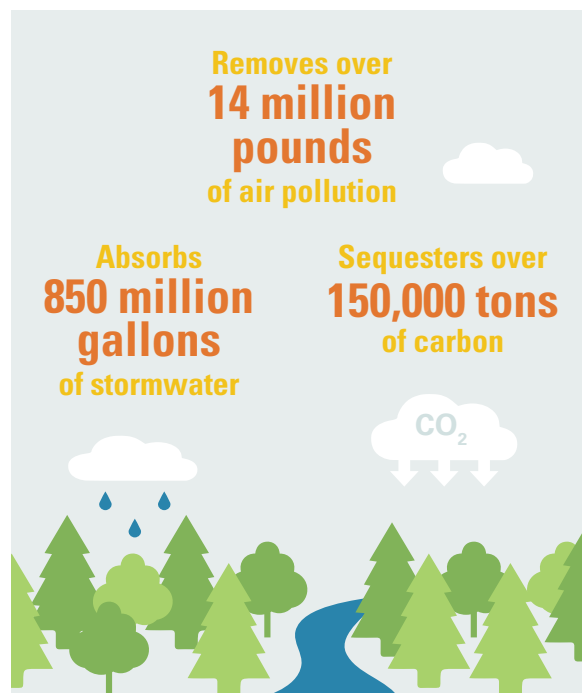


Map source: LAC DRP, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

While Los Angeles County encompasses a range of diverse ecosystems from inland deserts to coastal wetlands, much of the County has been densely urbanized and modified for industrial and agricultural production. As a result, while some lands within the County are able to provide a wide spectrum of critical environmental benefits, others bear the burdens of environmental degradation. By overlaying a series of ecosystem health and threat indicators, it is possible to identify areas of the County where these environmental benefits and burdens have accrued.

- ▶ *It is estimated that annually, LA County's tree canopy:*



Source: <https://county.treetools.org/results/California/Los%20Angeles>

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Five indicators of ecosystem health, described below, were compiled to determine the level of environmental benefit provided by lands in Los Angeles County. Raw scores for each indicator were standardized to a metric of 1 (low benefit) to 10 (high benefit). These five metrics were summed to determine the final environmental benefit score. Darker areas in Figure 3-6 represent higher scores, which indicate areas that provide a greater amount of environmental benefit.

Species Diversity². Species diversity data represent a count of the number of different species for amphibians, aquatic macroinvertebrates, birds, fish, mammals, plants, and reptiles.

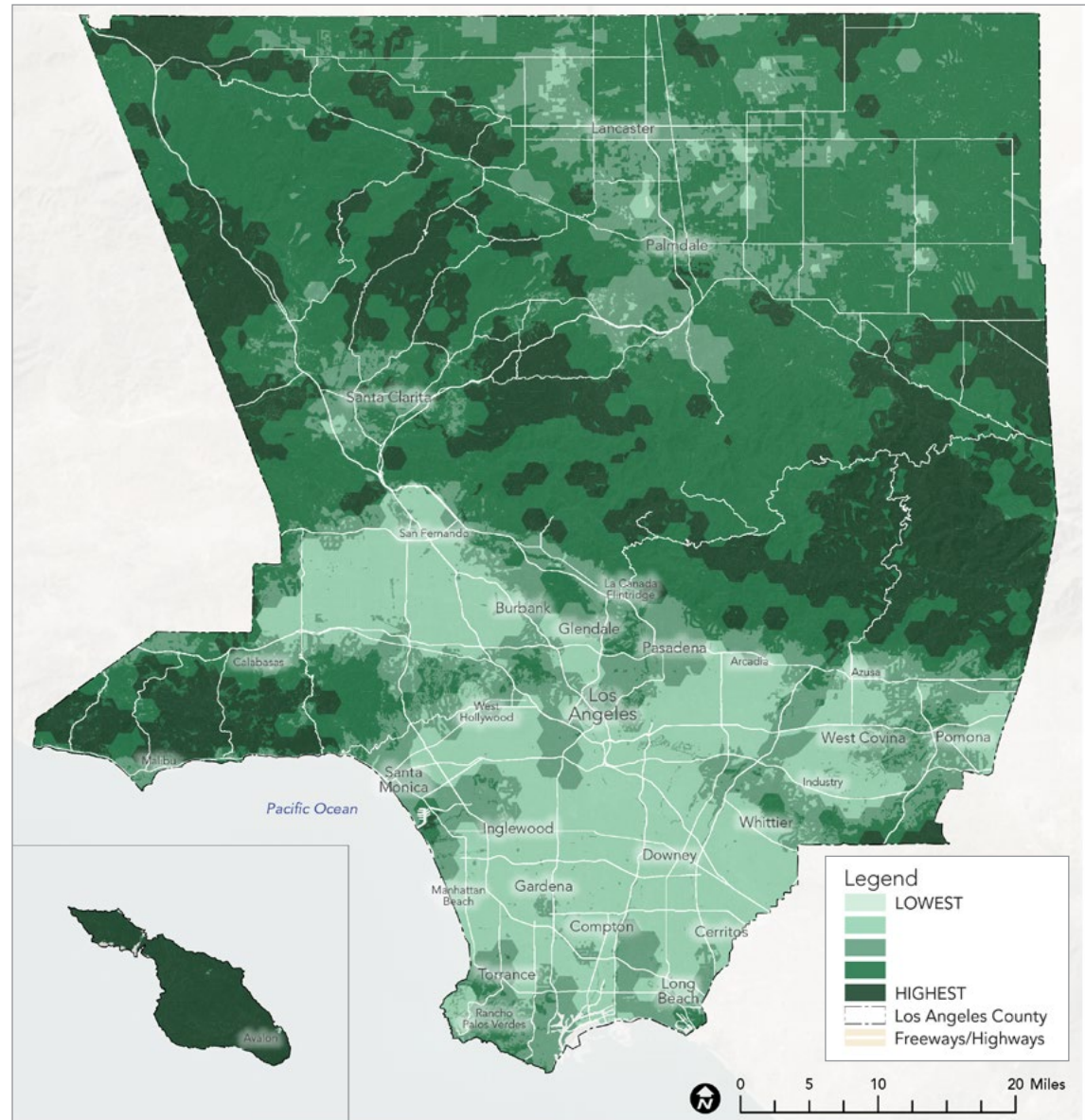
Significant Habitat³. Significant habitat values represent terrestrial habitats or vegetation types that are the focus of state, national, or locally legislated conservation laws, as well as key habitat areas that are essential to the survival and reproduction of focal wildlife species.

Habitat Connectivity⁴. Habitat connectivity values summarize information on the presence of mapped terrestrial corridors or linkages and juxtaposition to large, contiguous, natural areas.

Proximity to Waterbody⁵. Proximity to waterbody represents the distance to a water drainage network of the US. Proximity was categorized as less than 0.1 mile (highest benefit), 0.1 to 0.25 mile, 0.25 to 0.5 mile, 0.5 -1.0 mile, or greater than 1.0 mile (lowest benefit).

Habitat Type⁶. Habitat types are divided into natural vegetation (high score), agriculture/barren/other (low score), and urban (lowest score).

Figure 3-6: Concentrations of Environmental Benefits



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

ENVIRONMENTAL BURDENS

Five indicators of ecosystem impact, described below, were compiled to determine the level of environmental burden experienced by lands in Los Angeles County. All indicators were derived from CalEnviroScreen 4.0⁷, which identifies impacted communities by taking into consideration pollution exposure and its effects, as well as health and socioeconomic status. Raw scores for each indicator were standardized to a metric of 1 (low burden) to 10 (high burden). These five metrics were summed to determine the final environmental burden score. Darker areas in Figure 3-7 represent higher scores, which indicate areas that are subject to a greater amount of environmental burden.

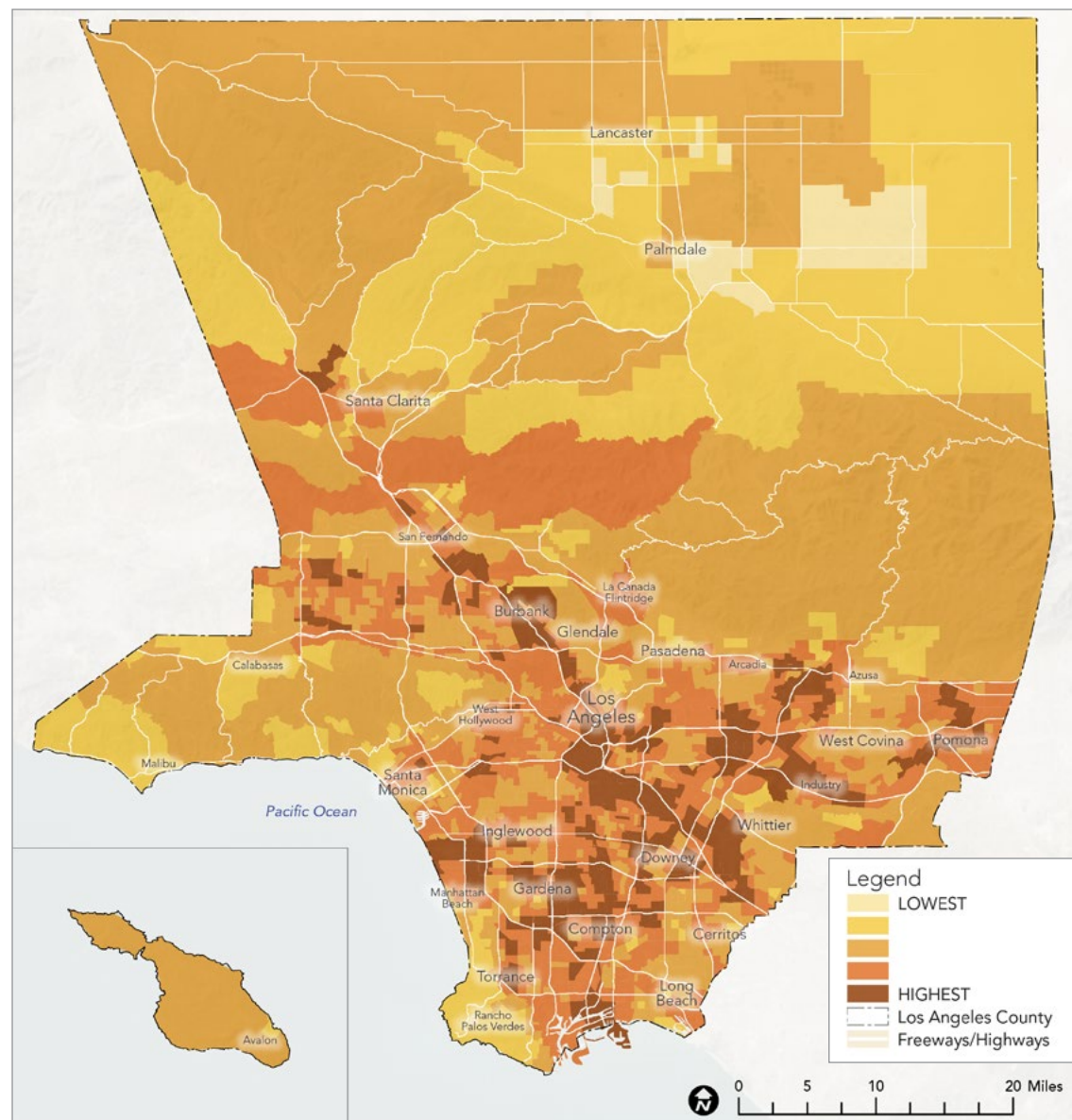
Groundwater Threat. Groundwater threats come from many sources, including storage and disposal of hazardous materials on land and in underground storage tanks, dairy farms, concentrated animal-feeding operations, and water ponds generated for oil and gas development also pose threats to groundwater reserves.

Hazardous Waste. Hazardous waste facilities and generators pose widespread concerns for both human health and the environment from sites that serve to process or dispose of hazardous waste.

Drinking Water. Drinking water contaminants are introduced into drinking water sources in many ways, including natural occurrence, accidental discharge, industrial release, agricultural runoff and certain water disinfection methods.

PM_{2.5}. Fine particulate matter (PM) that measures 2.5 microns or less in width represents a major contributor

Figure 3-7: Concentrations of Environmental Burdens



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

to air pollution and has been shown to cause significant adverse health effects, including heart and lung disease.

Pollution Burden. Pollution burden is composite indicator derived from seven exposure indicators (ozone and PM2.5 concentrations, diesel PM emissions, drinking water contaminants, children’s lead risk from housing, pesticide use, toxic releases from facilities, and traffic density) and five environmental effects indicators (cleanup sites, impaired water bodies, groundwater threats, hazardous waste facilities and generators, and solid waste sites and facilities).

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- ² California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2021a. Species Diversity - Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) [ds2769]. <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios/?tool=cnddbQuick>
 - ³ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2021b. Terrestrial Significant Habitats Summary - Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) [ds2721]. <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios/?tool=cnddbQuick>
 - ⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2019. Terrestrial Connectivity - Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) [ds2734]. <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios/?tool=cnddbQuick>
 - ⁵ US Geological Survey (USGS). 2021. National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/national-hydrography/access-national-hydrography-products>
 - ⁶ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP). 2015. FVEG dataset. <https://frap.fire.ca.gov/mapping/gis-data/>
 - ⁷ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (COEHHA). 2021. CalEnviroScreen 4.0. <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/draft-calenviroscreen-40>



3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

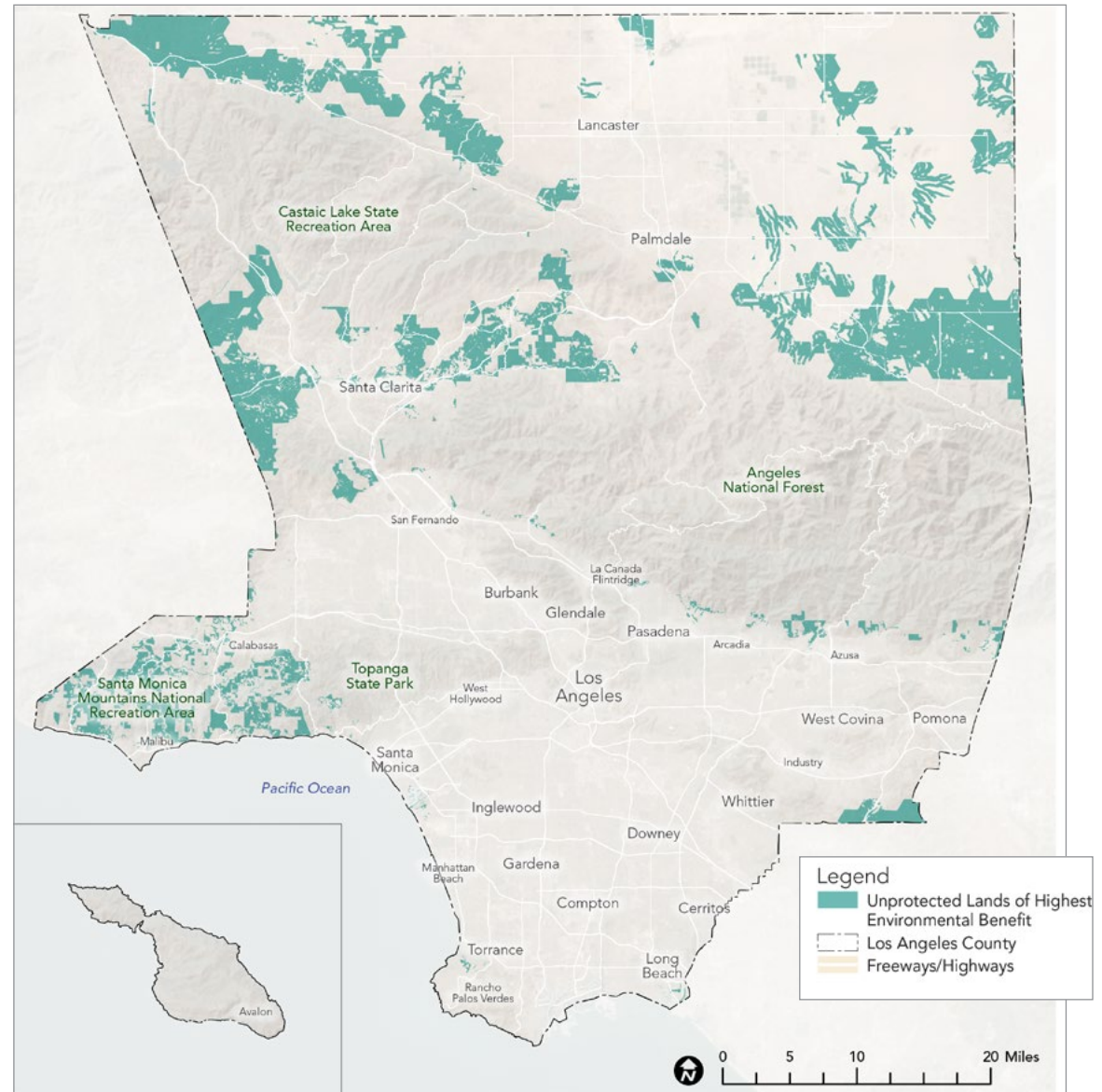
3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PRIORITY AREAS

As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, Los Angeles County's parks and open spaces perform a host of ecosystem services beyond supporting opportunities for social, recreational and cultural activities. These critical functions include the provision of fresh air and water, regulation of climate and stormwater, and the protection of wildlife and biodiversity. In order for natural systems to thrive and in turn support human well-being, it is essential to conserve areas that provide environmental benefits and to restore areas that carry high environmental burdens.

HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS: PRIORITY AREAS FOR CONSERVATION

Environmental benefit scores were derived from 5 indicators of ecosystem health: species biodiversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity, proximity to waterbody, and vegetation type. Raw scores for each indicator were standardized to a metric of 1 (low benefit) to 10 (high benefit). These five metrics were combined to determine a final environmental benefit score ranging between 5 and 50. Areas that received an environmental benefit score of 40 to 50 are considered to be high priority for conservation. Public lands that are included in the Regional Site Inventory are not shown, because they are already owned or acquired by government agencies for conservation purposes.

Figure 3-8: Priority Areas for Environmental Conservation



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

**HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL BURDENS:
PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESTORATION**

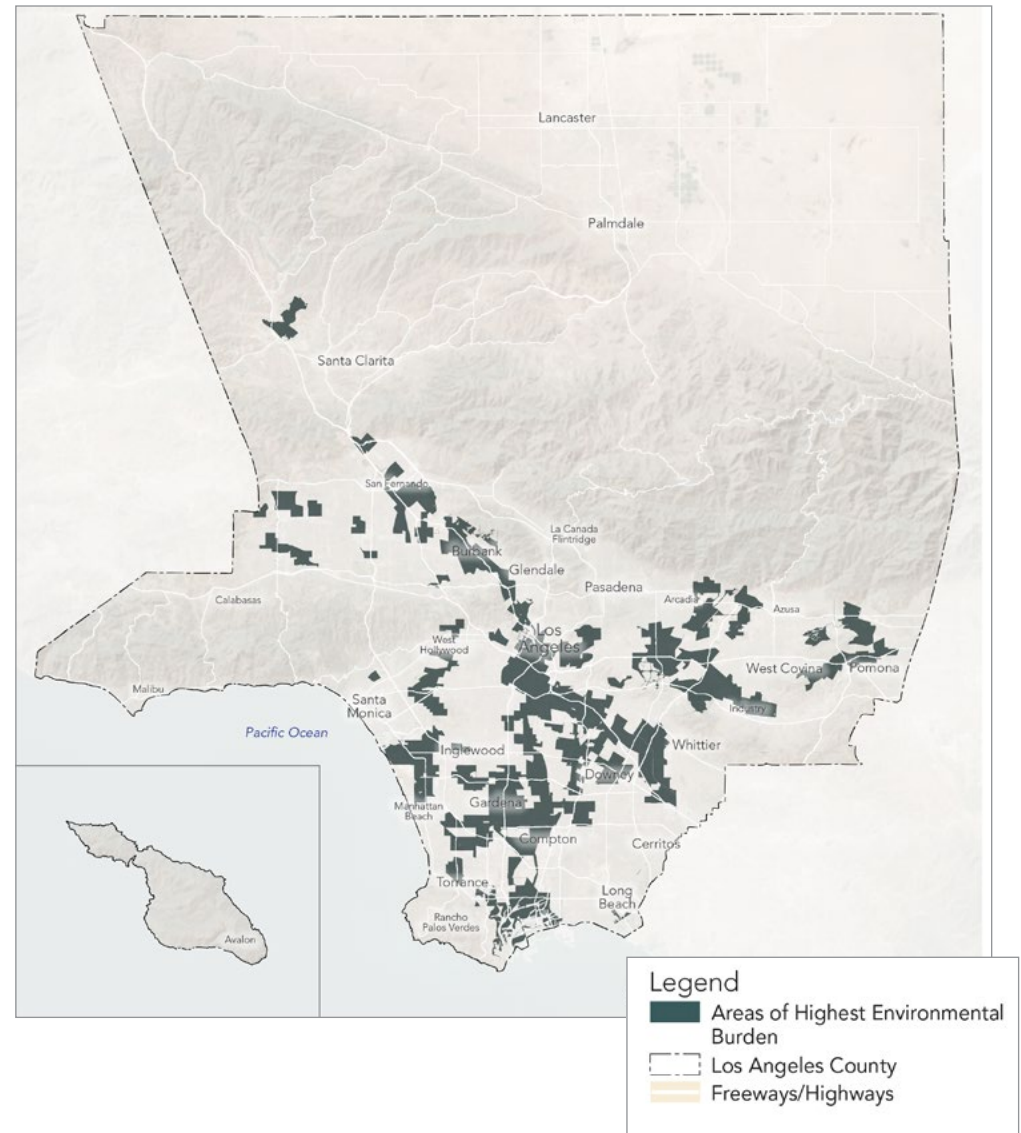
Environmental burden scores were derived from 5 indicators of ecosystem impairment: groundwater threats, hazardous waste, drinking water contamination, PM2.5, and pollution burden. Raw scores for each indicator were standardized to a metric of 1 (low burden) to 10 (high burden). These five metrics were combined to determine the final environmental burden score ranging between 5 and 50. Areas that received an environmental burden score of 40 to 50 are considered to be high priority for environmental restoration.

NOTES: In this report, environmental restoration refers specifically to the restoration of areas with high levels of environmental burdens as defined earlier in this chapter. However, this does not preclude the need for restoring lands identified as areas with high levels of environmental benefits or priority areas for environmental conservation.

The 2022 PNA+ is an informational and aspirational document. It is not a land use plan which imposes new regulations or restrictions on the use of land. Priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration are identified by overlaying and scoring based on existing publicly accessible data layers. The mapping and analysis conducted are not parcel-specific and are intended to provide countywide and region-wide perspectives on where environmental benefits and burdens are concentrated and where conservation and restoration efforts should be prioritized. As PNA+ is not a regulatory document, it will not result in additional requirements or changes to approved land use entitlements and permits. Furthermore, implementation of PNA+ will require further analyses and actions that are not within the purview of this document.

DPR recognizes that there is a need for a variety of land uses, especially new residential developments to meet the region’s housing needs, and that not all areas identified for environmental conservation and restoration will be conserved or restored for various reasons. In some of the areas prioritized for environmental conservation and restoration, there are already plans to dedicate portions of land for park and open space purposes as part of private developments. DPR supports such land dedications as well as the expansion of parklands through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration with other public agencies, conservancies, community-based organizations, the public, the development community, and other partners.

Figure 3-9: Priority Areas for Environmental Restoration



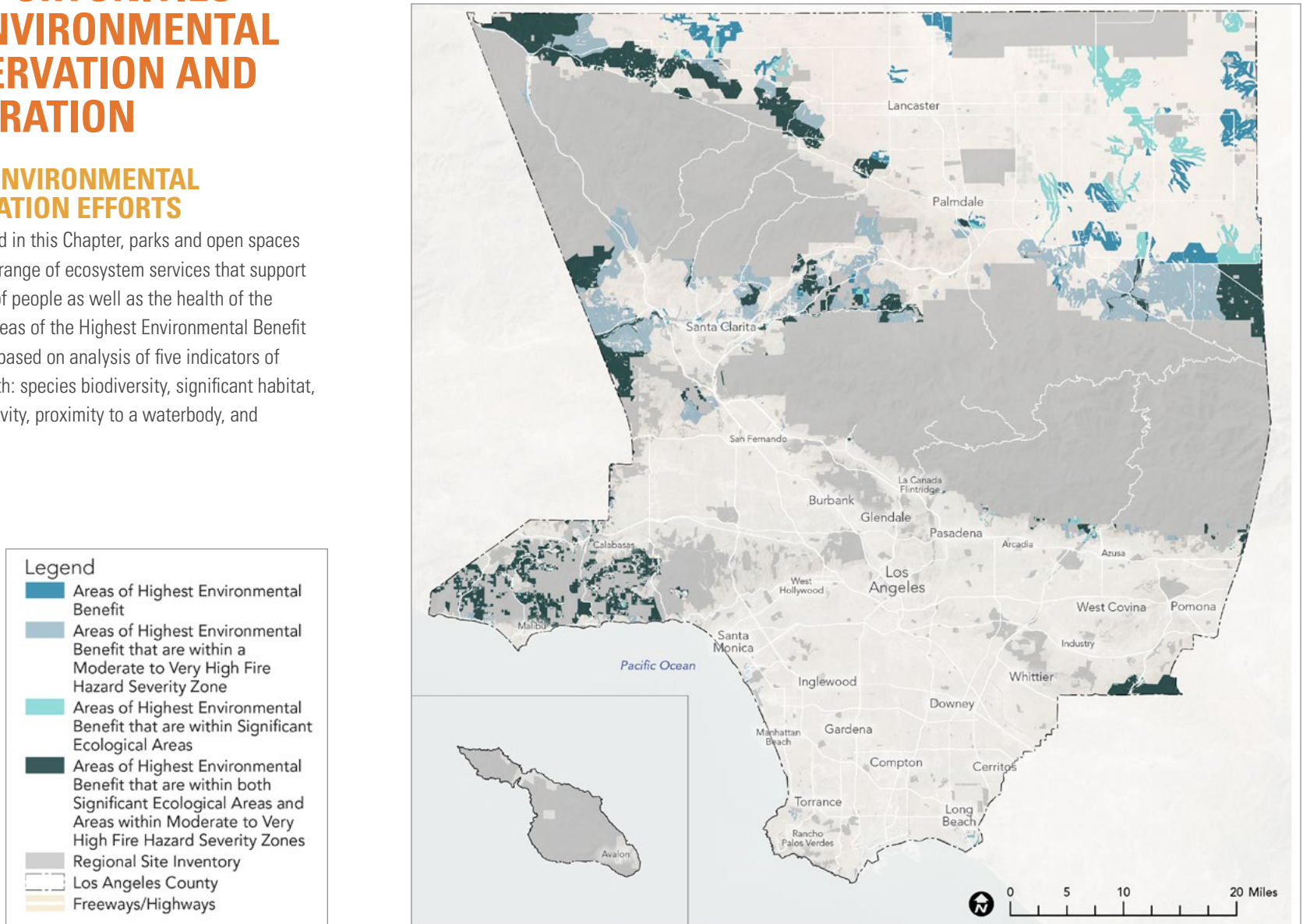
Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

3.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

EXPAND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

As demonstrated in this Chapter, parks and open spaces perform a wide range of ecosystem services that support the well-being of people as well as the health of the environment. Areas of the Highest Environmental Benefit were identified based on analysis of five indicators of ecosystem health: species biodiversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity, proximity to a waterbody, and vegetation type.

Figure 3-10: Opportunity Areas for Environmental Conservation



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

Nearly 300,000 acres of the lands that are included in the Regional Site Inventory fall within a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). SEAs are officially designated areas within Los Angeles County identified as having irreplaceable biological resources. These areas represent the wide-ranging biodiversity of the County and contain some of the County's most important biological resources. Each individual SEA was configured to support sustainable populations of its component species and includes undisturbed to lightly disturbed habitat along with linkages and corridors that promote species movement.

Thousands of wildfires occur in California each year. Many of these destructive events threaten life, public health and property. For that reason, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has established a method for identifying Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) to help guide fire risk mitigation efforts. Lands that are located within FHSZs may be more suited for conservation than for development because of the risks associated with potential wildfire activity.

Figure 3-10: Opportunity Areas for Environmental Conservation identifies areas that are: 1) of the Highest Environmental Benefit, 2) fall within Significant Ecological Areas and 3) are located within the boundaries of Moderate to Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Lands that meet these overlapping conditions present opportunities for employing conservation measures that may help to advance multi-faceted objectives related to both environmental health and public safety.

STATE AND FEDERAL 30X30 INITIATIVES

California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order N-82-20, also known as "30 by 30," on October 7, 2020 to establish a statewide effort to conserve 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by the year 2030. President Biden issued an Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad in January 2021. The Executive Order, commonly referenced as 30x30, includes a goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.

The 30 by 30 initiative intends to conserve the State's natural and working lands, including forests, rangelands, farms, wetlands, coast, deserts, and urban greenspaces, for the purposes of maintaining biodiversity, fighting climate change and strengthening climate resilience.

The conservation of California's natural and working lands would contribute to the protection of the thousands of plant species endemic to California and maintain or improve the ability of these lands to sequester carbon dioxide. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) is one of the agencies tasked with developing strategies to achieve 30x30.

In 2021, CNRA created a Conservation (Lands) Advisory Panel to help define land conservation and recommend steps towards establishing effective conservation outcomes. The panel includes representatives from Tribal, academic, agency and nonprofit institutions across California, with expertise in the many facets of conservation, from urban parks planning and community engagement to geospatial analysis and habitat restoration.

In order to ensure that the needs of Los Angeles County are represented, DPR served on the advisory panel and provided formal comments on the Draft Pathways to 30 x 30 Strategy. In the spirit of collaboration, DPR has also offered to share the data from the inventory, outreach and analysis that was conducted to prepare the PNA+.

DPR expressed concern that the Draft Pathways to 30 x 30 Strategy did not adequately acknowledge issues of environmental justice that persist in Los Angeles County. Through formal comments, DPR suggested that the State's 30 x 30 Initiative better address the needs of climate vulnerable populations by prioritizing environmental conservation and restoration efforts in park-poor communities. In many urban areas, opportunities exist for degraded lands to be transformed from longstanding environmental liabilities into multi-benefit assets that can provide a range of ecosystem services including recreation and climate mitigation, in the communities where they are most needed.

The final Pathways to 30x30 Strategy addresses some of our concerns, but still primarily focuses on conservation of natural lands. To advance park equity and environmental justice, DPR maintains that a 30x30 plan for L.A. County must include both traditional efforts that acquire and protect natural areas and the restoration and transformation of degraded lands, such as brownfields, landfills, and oil fields, especially in lower income communities of color where vulnerable populations and environmental burdens are concentrated.

3.0 Environmental Conservation and Restoration

EXPAND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION EFFORTS TO CREATE NEW PARKS

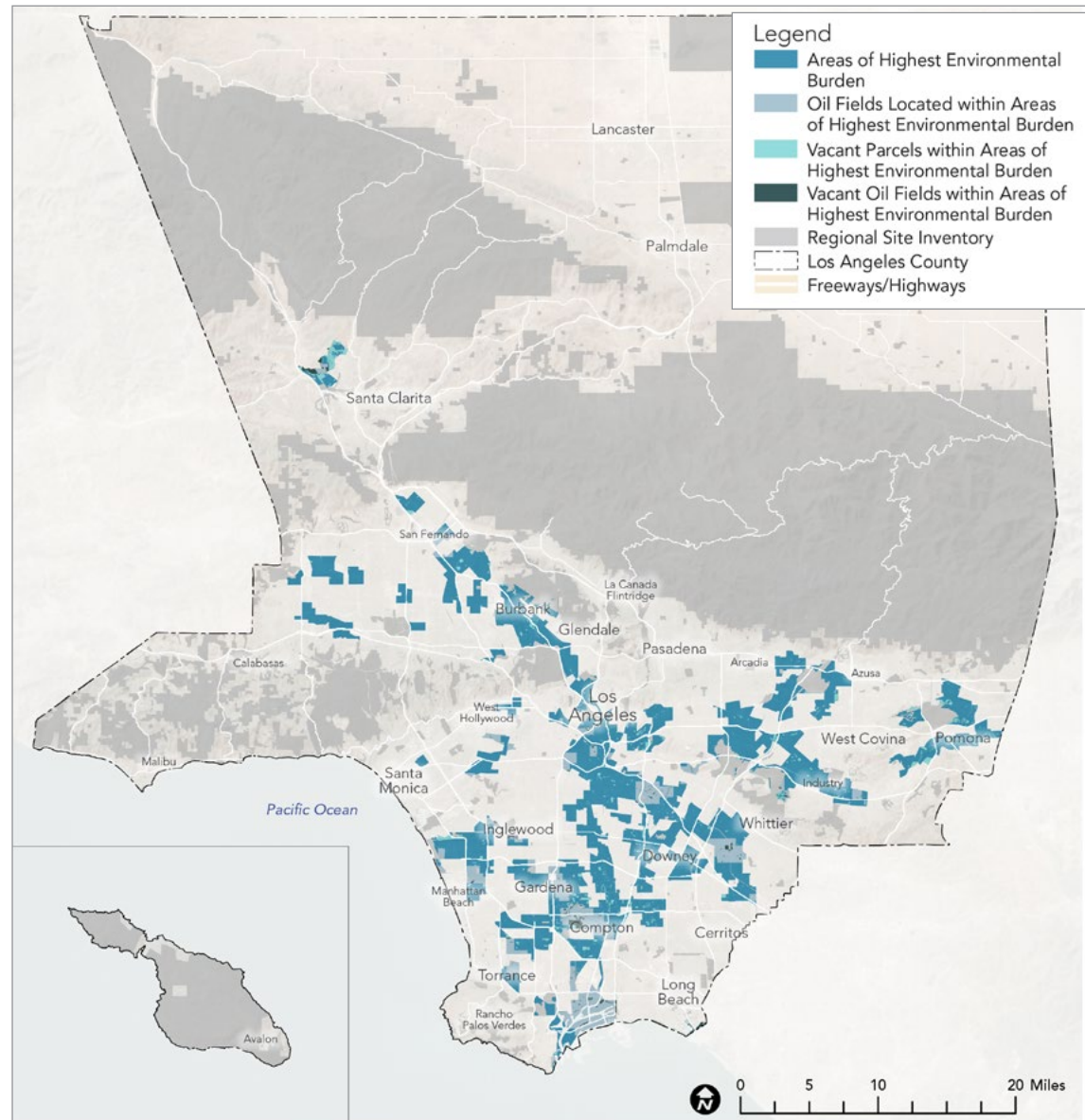
Over time, some areas of Los Angeles County have accrued significant environmental burdens as the result of historic land development practices, natural resource extraction and consumption, industrial operations, transportation projects, energy production and other impacts of urbanization.

A series of indicators were analyzed to identify the Areas of Highest Environmental Burden within the County. These indicators include groundwater threats, hazardous waste, drinking water contamination, PM2.5, and pollution burden.

In locations where environmental burdens are concentrated and impactful land uses are defunct, multiple public benefits can be derived from restoration projects, such as the creation of new parks, that address residual pollution and unhealthy conditions, restore natural systems and provide enhanced recreational opportunities for residents.

As summarized in a September 2021 Board of Supervisor’s Motion entitled *Protecting Communities Near Oil and Gas Drilling Operations in Los Angeles County*, oil and gas development dominated the Los Angeles County landscape at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, tens of thousands of County residents, the majority of whom are lower income people of color, live in close proximity to oil wells. There are approximately 1,600 active and idle oil wells located in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Figure 3-11: Opportunity Areas for Environmental Restoration



Map source: CDFW ACE, 2021; USGS, 2021; COEHHA, 2021; CalFire FRAP 2015

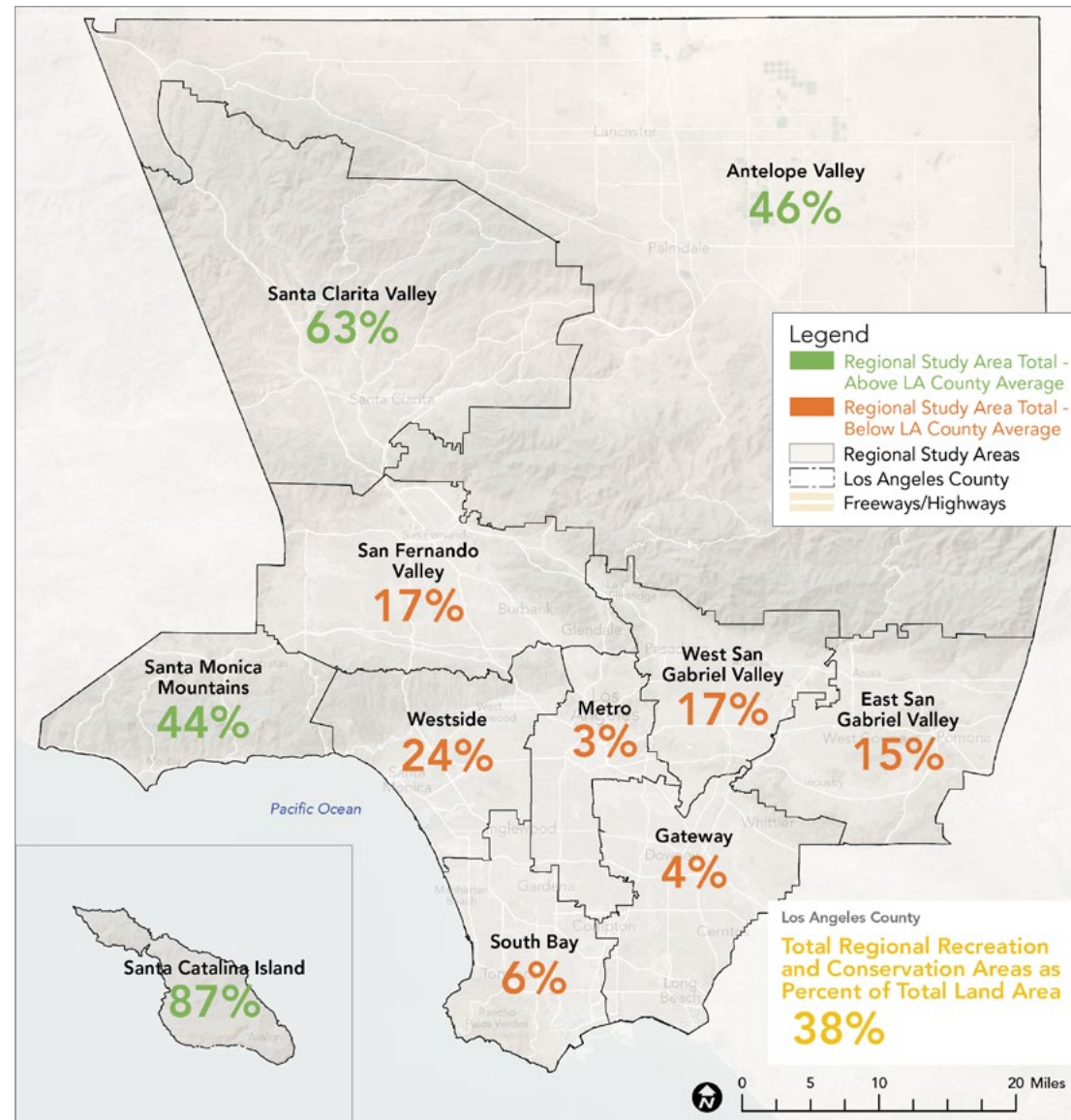
In response to the negative health impacts that have been demonstrated to be associated with living in close proximity to these sites, in 2022 the Board of Supervisors moved to prohibit all new oil and gas extraction wells and to phase out existing oil and gas operations throughout unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Figure 3-11: Opportunity Areas for Environmental Restoration identifies the location of Vacant Land and Oil Fields that fall within the Areas of Highest Environmental Burden identified in Chapter 3: Regional Recreation and Conservation. These sites may provide opportunities for environmental restoration and enhancement projects that could both help to alleviate negative health impacts and provide new recreational opportunities for communities that have historically been disproportionately affected.

ENSURE AN EQUITABLE APPROACH TO 30X30

While regional parks and open spaces comprise over 30 percent of the land in Los Angeles County as a whole, the distribution of these lands (see Figure 3-12) does not provide equitable access or benefits to all communities. DPR maintains that an equitable 30x30 strategy for L.A. County must address the needs of climate vulnerable populations by prioritizing environmental conservation and restoration efforts in park-poor communities. In many urban areas, opportunities exist for degraded lands to be transformed from longstanding environmental liabilities into multi-benefit assets that can provide a range of ecosystem services including recreation and climate mitigation, in the communities where they are most needed.

Figure 3-12: Regional Parks and Open Space as Percentage of Total Land Area



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory





4.0
REGIONAL
RECREATION

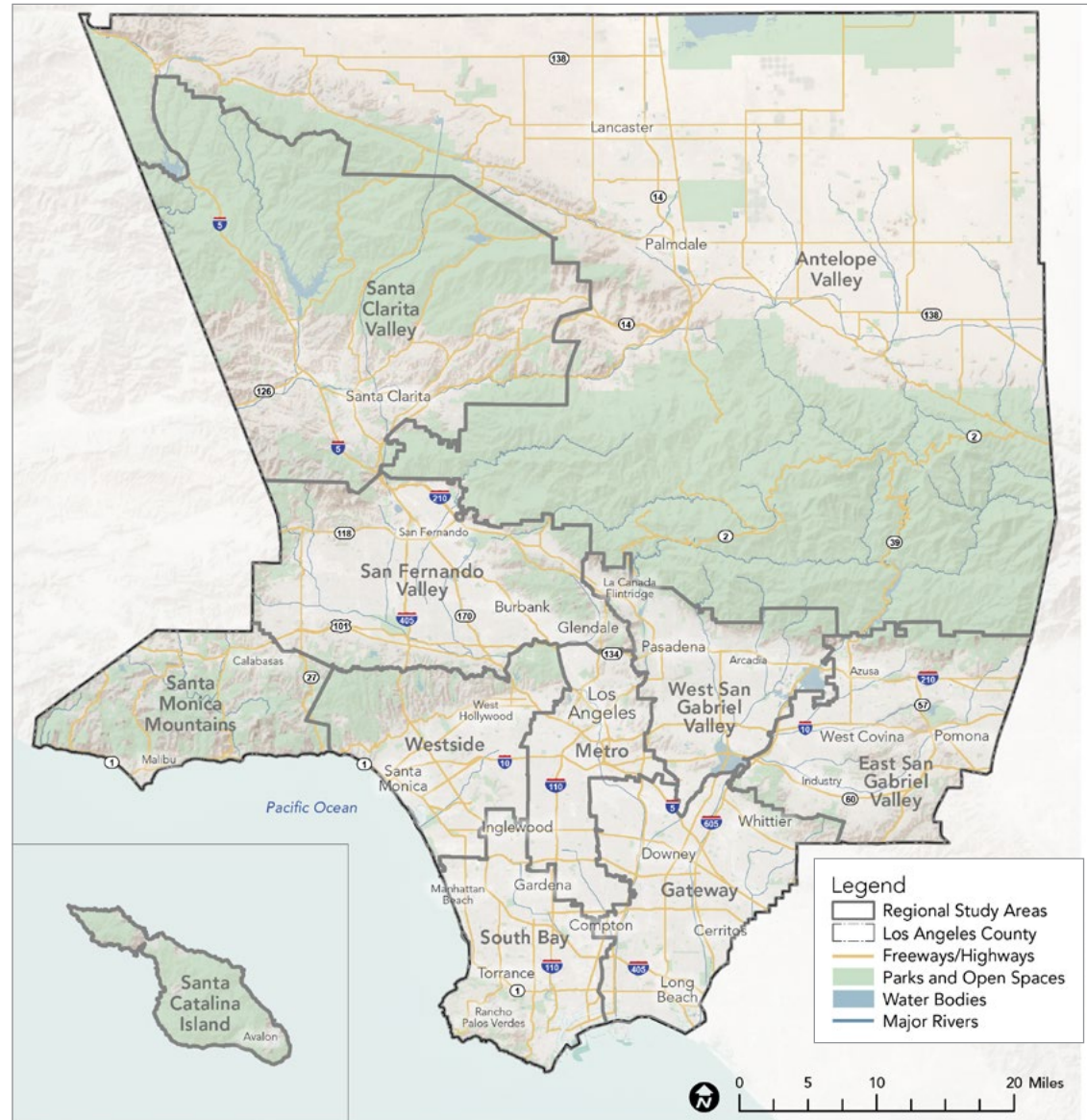
4.0 Regional Recreation

4.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Encompassing approximately 4,083 square miles, Los Angeles County is geographically one of the largest counties in the US. The County stretches along 75 miles of Southern California’s Pacific Coast and is bordered to the east by Orange County and San Bernardino County, to the north by Kern County, and to the west by Ventura County. The County also includes two offshore islands, Santa Catalina Island and San Clemente Island. Los Angeles County includes 88 individual cities, most of which have 60,000 or fewer residents, and account for one-third (or 35 percent) of the County’s total land area. Over one million Los Angeles County residents live within unincorporated areas. These unincorporated communities account for two-thirds (or 65 percent) of the County’s total land area. With over 10 million people living in urban, suburban, and rural settings, Los Angeles County is the most populous and among the most diverse counties in the nation.

Given its breadth and diversity, the County has been divided into eleven Regional Study Areas for the purposes of this analysis. To allow for alignment with current and future planning efforts, the Regional Study Areas are consistent with the Planning Areas identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan (see Figure 4-1: Regional Study Areas).

Figure 4-1: Regional Study Areas



Map source: US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021
Note: All Los Angeles County maps in this chapter include and refer to the sources listed here as basemap layers.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

With a population of over 10 million, the County is also rich with social and cultural diversity. It is estimated that there are more than 140 different cultural groups represented in the County and residents speak over 220 different languages⁸.

While people of color comprise the majority of residents, as acknowledged in the OurCounty Sustainability Plan⁹, Los Angeles County has a long history of discriminatory public policy that has led to housing and land use patterns in which low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately burdened by pollution exposure, affordability challenges, and diminished access to economic opportunity, parks, and open space. It is, however, essential for individuals and communities to have clean air, water, and soil, as well as to feel safe and secure in their daily lives.

In 2017, 17% of the County population earned below the federal poverty level, though African Americans, Native Americans and Alaskan, and Hispanics of any race experienced poverty levels greater than the County average. Poverty rates were greatest in the South Central and Northwest areas of the County¹⁰.

In light of these disparities and the diverse social and environmental contexts that exist across the County, residents experience a wide range of different challenges and conditions associated with access to parks and open space. In order to acknowledge and address the ways in which social, economic and environmental disparities interact to shape the ways in which residents are able to access and benefit from parks and open spaces, we have identified areas of the County where common barriers to access are most prevalent and where health and environmental impacts are most severe.

Figure 4-2: Los Angeles County Demographics

► Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino	Non-Hispanic or Latino						
Any Race	White	Asian	Black	Two or More Races	Other	American Indian and Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander
48.0%	25.6%	14.7%	7.6%	3.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census redistricting data

► Age

Under 15	15 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 - 79	80 +
18.2%	6.4%	15.5%	14.7%	13.5%	12.9%	10.0%	5.4%	3.5%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Gender Identity

Male	Female
49.3%	50.7%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Income

Less than \$24,999	\$25,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000 +
19.5%	33.7%	18.8%	10.8%	17.3%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Education

Less than high school graduate	High school graduate or equivalent	Some college no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or professional degree
20.9%	20.6%	19.0%	7.0%	21.2%	11.3%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

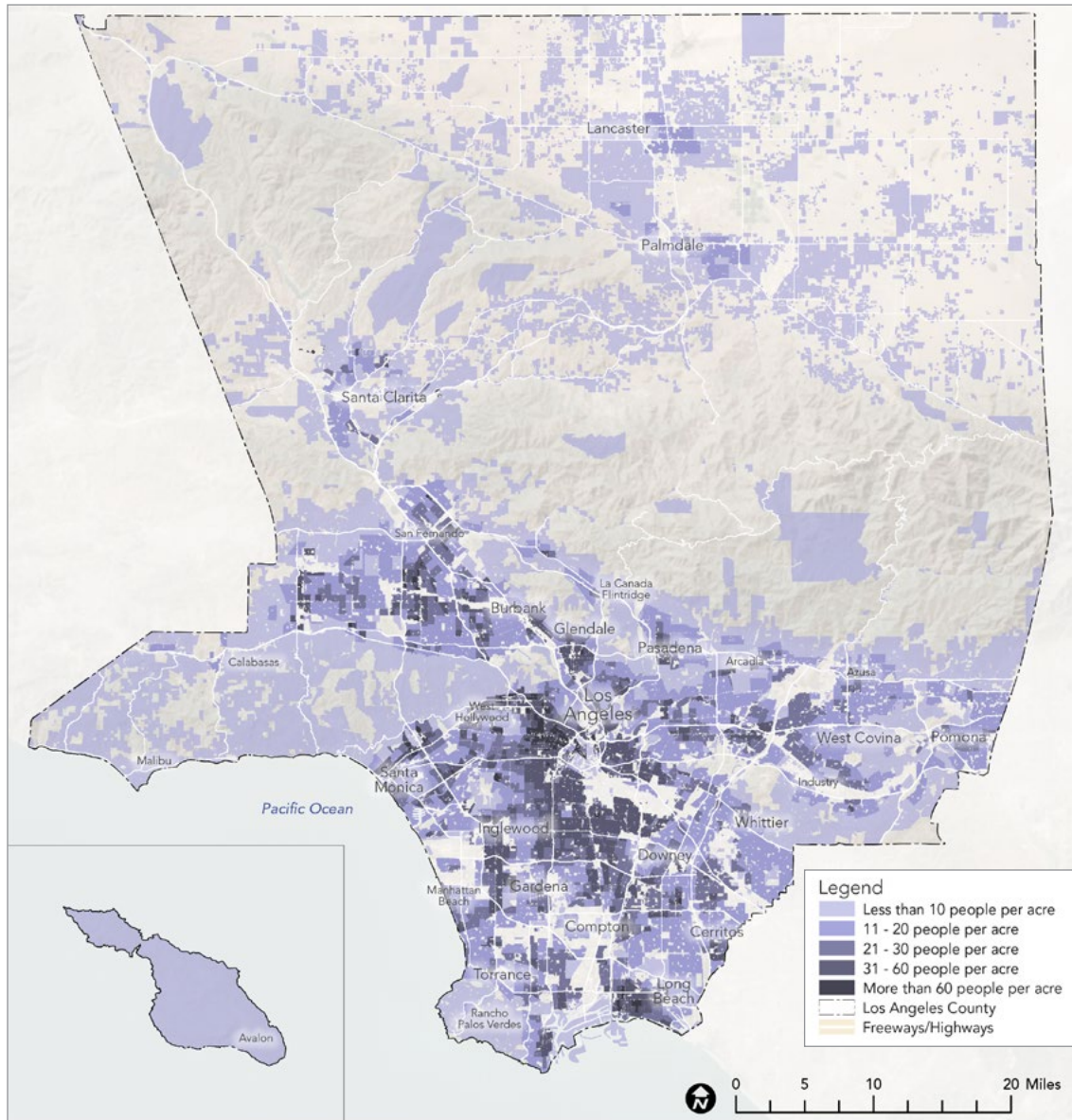
⁸ County of Los Angeles. "Residents." Accessed November 8, 2021, <https://lacounty.gov/residents>.

⁹ Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office. "OurCounty." August 6, 2019. <https://ourcounty.lacounty.gov>

¹⁰ OurCounty Equity Dashboard. "Income, Poverty and Living Wage." Accessed November 8, 2021, <https://data.lacounty.gov/stories/s/OurCounty-Equity-Dashboard/pv5u-rgrh/>

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-3: Los Angeles County Population Density



Map source: US Census ACS, 2014

POPULATION VULNERABILITY

The population density of Los Angeles County varies significantly from fewer than 10 people per acre in rural areas to more than 60 people per acre in the urban core. While it is important to evaluate the number of individuals that parks and open spaces are designed to serve, it is also critical to understand the factors that may influence the ability of residents to equitably access and derive benefits from parks and open spaces. Public health is shaped dramatically by community characteristics and social determinants—good jobs and economic opportunity, quality education, healthy and affordable housing and transportation, clean environments, social supports, health care, and safe neighborhoods that offer spaces for social and physical activity and support healthy choices.

The California Healthy Places Index (HPI) is a web-based tool, developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California in partnership with the Virginia Commonwealth University's Center on Society and Health, to examine community conditions that affect life expectancy at birth. It is intended to help guide and prioritize public and private investments, resources, and programs¹¹.

Population data from the HPI was analyzed to identify areas of the County that experience high levels of Health and Environmental Vulnerability as well as Social and Transportation Barriers to accessing regional recreational opportunities. By mapping areas of the County according to these dimensions, strategies can be better tailored to address the specific conditions that commonly prevent residents from accessing parks and open spaces in Los Angeles County and enjoying the full range of benefits they offer.

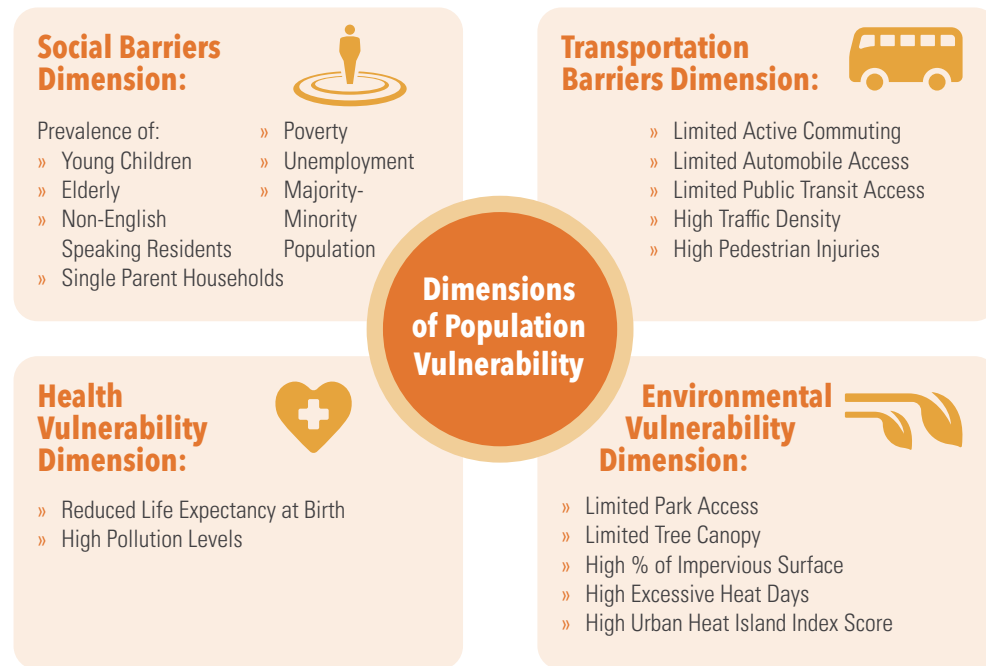
¹¹ Public Health Alliance of California. The California Healthy Places Index (HPI). <https://healthyplacesindex.org/>

Areas of the County are included in the analysis if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for a given indicator. The following maps indicate the number of indicators for which a census tract meets these criteria for each of the Population Vulnerability Dimensions outlined.

Areas of the County are identified as experiencing a “moderate” level of vulnerability if the census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for more than one of the indicators that comprise a Population Vulnerability Dimension and a “high” level of vulnerability if the census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for the majority of indicators that comprise a Population Vulnerability Dimension.

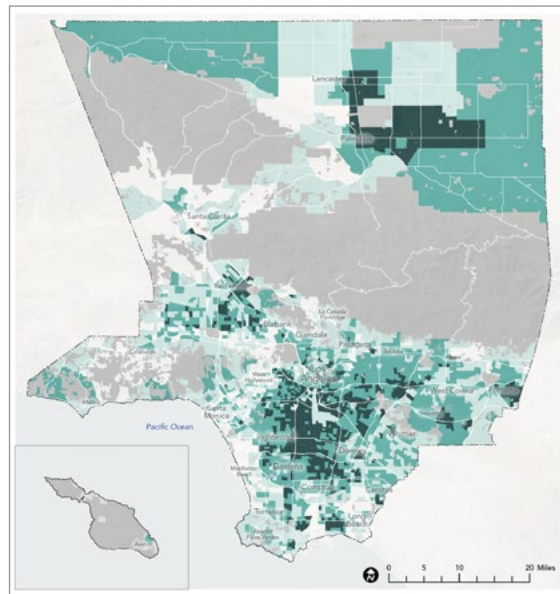
Figure 4-4: Number and Percentage of People in Los Angeles County who Reside in Census Tracts with Moderate and High Levels of Population Vulnerability by Dimension

Population Vulnerability Dimension	Moderate Level <i>(High Vulnerability for more than one Indicator)</i>	High Level <i>(High Vulnerability for the Majority of Indicators)</i>
Social Barriers	3.7 million (37%)	2.8 million (28%)
Transportation Barriers	3.7 million (37%)	1.4 million (14%)
Environmental Vulnerability	3 million (30%)	1.3 million (13%)
Health Vulnerability	4.5 million (45%)	0.5 million (5%)



4.0 Regional Recreation

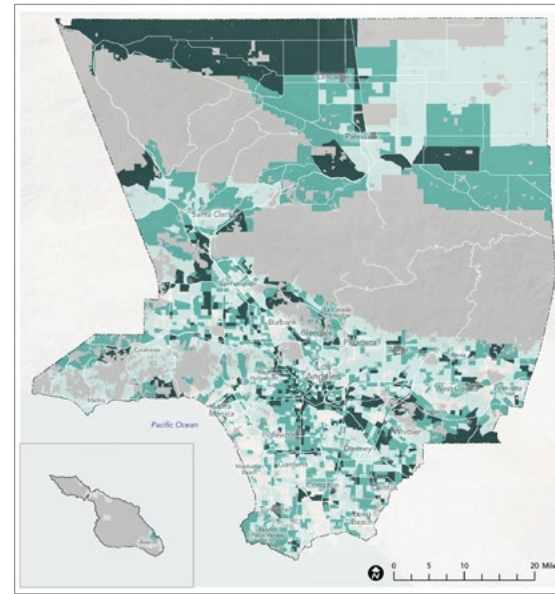
Figure 4-5: Social Barriers Dimension



Indicators:

- » High Poverty Rate
- » High Unemployment Rate
- » Majority-Minority Population
- » High % of Young Children
- » High % of Elderly Residents
- » High % of Non-English-Speaking Residents
- » High % of Single-Parent Households

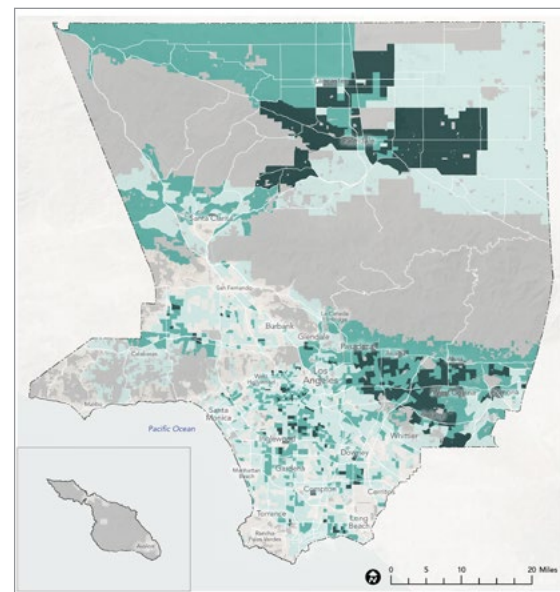
Figure 4-6: Transportation Barriers Dimension



Indicators:

- » Low Automobile Access
- » Low Public Transit Access
- » Low Active Commuting Rate
- » High Traffic Density
- » High Pedestrian Injuries

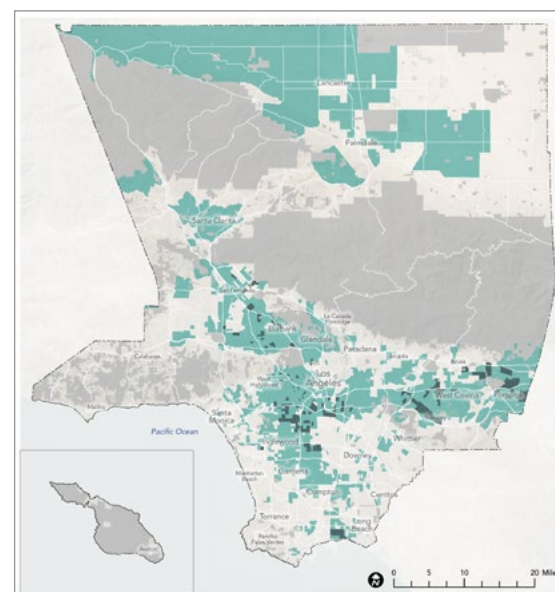
Figure 4-7: Environmental Vulnerability Dimension



Indicators:

- » Low Park Access
- » Low Tree Canopy
- » High % Impervious Surface
- » High Number of Excessive Heat Days
- » High Urban Heat Island Index Score

Figure 4-8: Health Vulnerability Dimension



Indicators:

- » Reduced Life Expectancy at Birth
- » High Pollution Levels



Maps source: HPI, 2021;
2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix
for methodology, individual
indicators, and additional sources.

COMPOSITE POPULATION VULNERABILITY

While some areas of the County experience a single dimension of Population Vulnerability, in census tracts where multiple dimensions overlap, residents face compounding challenges. In these areas, multi-faceted approaches to reducing the barriers and increasing the benefits of access to parks and open space are critical to positively influencing the health and well-being of residents. In Los Angeles County, nearly 1.2 million people reside in areas that are experiencing a moderate or high level of vulnerability for all four of the dimensions identified in this analysis.

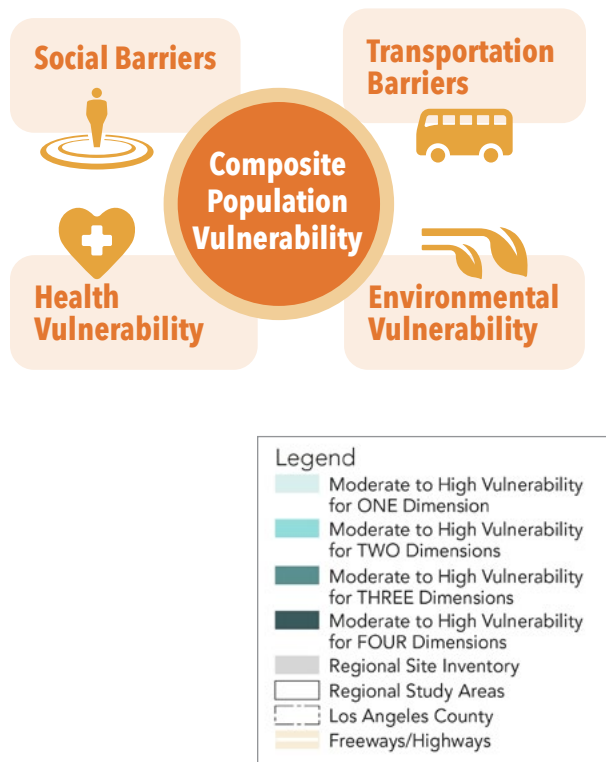
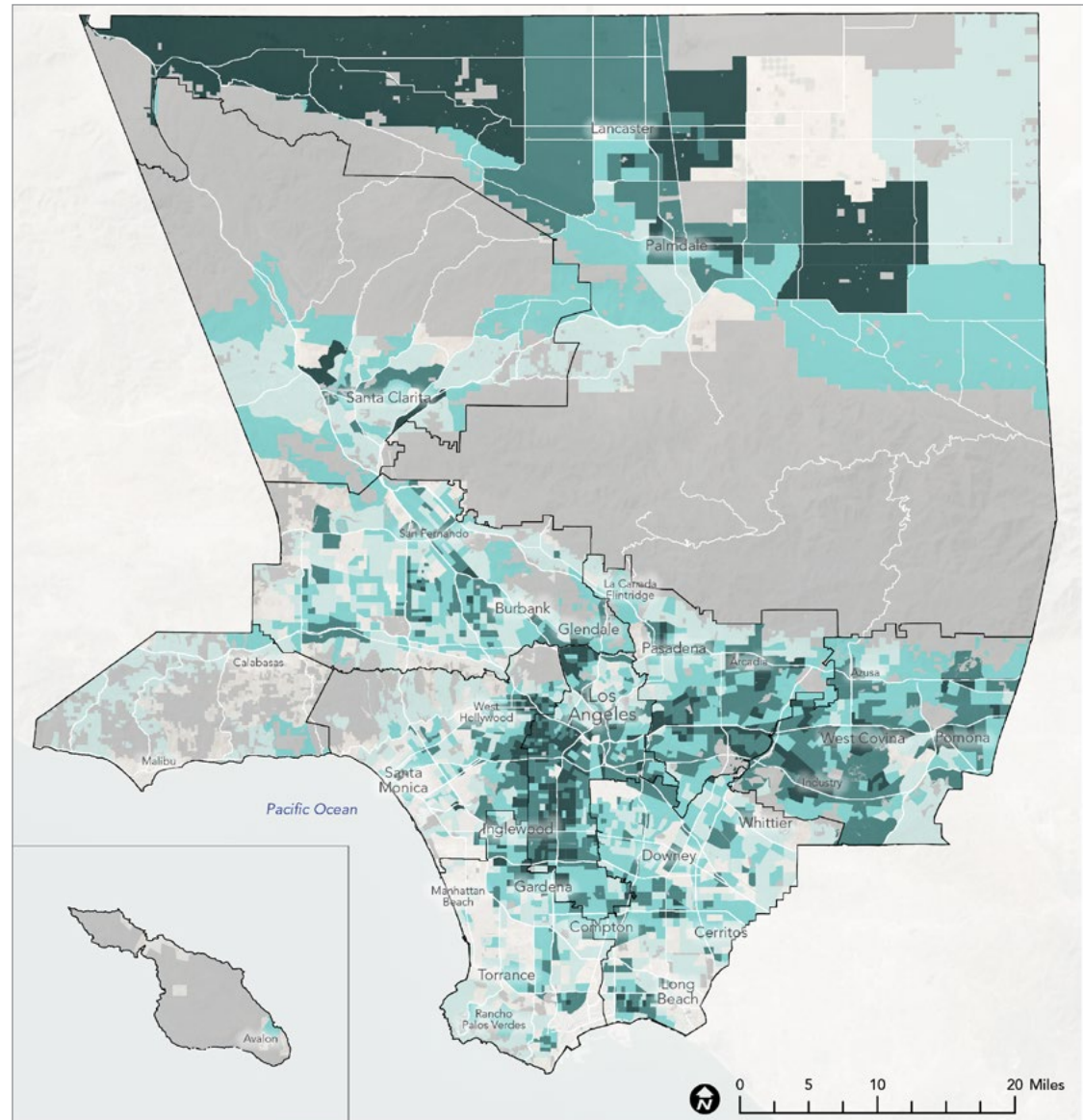


Figure 4-9: Areas of Los Angeles County with the Most Vulnerable Populations



Map source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory
Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology, individual indicators, and additional sources.

4.0 Regional Recreation

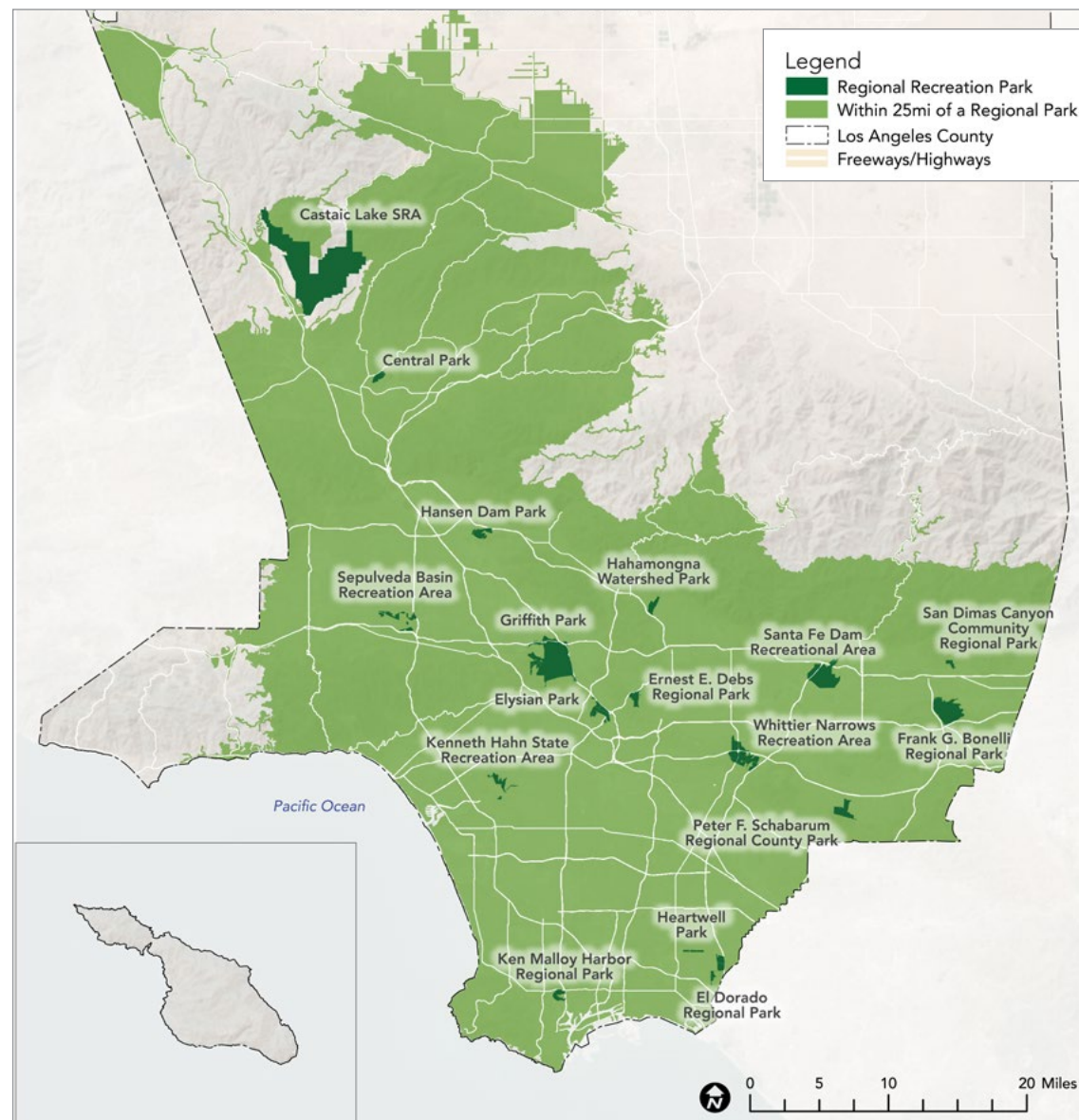
4.2 REGIONAL SITE AND TRAIL INVENTORY

Regional parks, open spaces and trails are critical infrastructure that support the health and well-being of the County’s natural systems and residents alike. Collectively, they encompass over 98% of the protected lands in Los Angeles County. These important assets differ from local parks in several notable ways:

1. **Role:** While some regional parks and open spaces have been developed to provide recreational opportunities, many of these lands are protected for conservation purposes and therefore, recreational access is limited. The ecosystem services provided by regional parks and open spaces are critical to the health and well-being of the natural systems of Los Angeles County as well as the people and wildlife who rely on them to regulate the climate and to provide clean air and water
2. **Geography Served:** While local parks are designed to primarily serve residents of the immediate neighborhoods in which they are located (often measured as the area within a half-mile walk), regional parks are intended to provide recreational opportunities to the residents of broad geographical areas, drawing visitors who reside throughout the diverse communities that comprise Los Angeles County and beyond.

The Los Angeles County General Plan establishes a 25 mile service area radius for Regional Parks managed by DPR. Figure 4-10 illustrates the extent of these service areas.

Figure 4-10: Regional Park Service Area



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

1. **Size:** Regional parks and open spaces are typically larger than local parks. Regional Recreation Parks are defined as parks that encompass at least 100 acres. The average area of the parks and open spaces included in the Regional Site Inventory is over 600 acres.
2. **Features and Amenities:** Regional Recreation Parks often include developed recreational amenities that are larger in scale or more specialized than the amenities typically found at local parks. For instance, a Regional Recreation Park may include a baseball complex that is suitable for tournaments, whereas a local park may simply include a single field for local team practices.

Similarly, Nature-Based Recreation Areas often encompass natural features that draw visitors due to their unique qualities, like the geological formations at Devil’s Punchbowl Natural Area, the seasonal floral display at Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, and the black sand beaches at the Abalone Cove Ecological Reserve. These spaces are often developed with limited amenities like restrooms, trails, picnic areas and information signage that allow visitors to experience nature while managing their impacts on the environment.

REGIONAL SITE DEFINITIONS

In the 2016 Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA), over 3,000 parks and open spaces were inventoried and categorized as:

- » Local Parks
- » Regional Recreation Parks
- » Regional Open Space
- » Natural Areas

Because the PNA focused on the ability of residents to access the parks located closest to their homes, the study placed special emphasis on Local Parks and Regional Recreation Parks. The Regional Open Space and Natural Areas categories were intentionally broadly defined and included a wide variety of public lands (see Figure 4.11: 2016 PNA Categories).

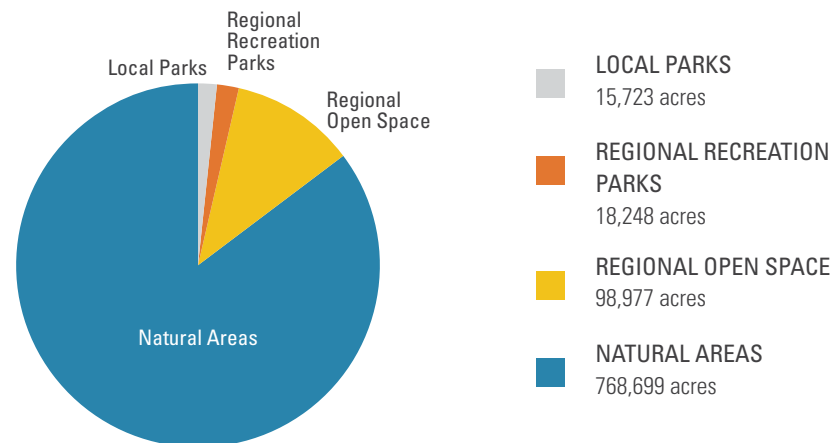
Together, the over 1,400 properties that were identified in the PNA as Regional Open Space and Natural Area comprise 96% of the lands inventoried as part of the PNA.

The PNA+ refines the PNA definitions and classification system for regional facilities to allow for further evaluation of the ecological and recreational benefits that these vast lands provide to the greater population of Los Angeles County.

While the Regional Recreation Park category remains unchanged from the PNA, sites identified as Regional Open Space and Natural Areas were re-categorized into the following four types:

- » Conservation Areas
- » Nature-Based Recreation Areas
- » Regional Specialized Recreation Areas
- » Other Public and Semi-Public Open Space

See Figure 4-15: Revised Regional Site Definitions for more detail about each category.



4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-11:

2016 REGIONAL SITE DEFINITIONS



REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS

are over 100 acres and contain active amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools. Regional Recreation Parks were included in the analysis of all park metrics, and were subject to a separate facility review process due to their large size and regional importance.

(17 SITES/18,248 ACRES)



REGIONAL OPEN SPACE

includes facilities that are more than 5 acres and generally contain only passive amenities such as visitor centers, trails, picnic shelters, or restrooms. These facilities were not included in the analysis of any individual park metric, but are included in the analysis of park need.

(329 SITES/98,977 ACRES)



NATURAL AREAS

are generally larger than 100 acres and contain no reported amenities. These facilities were not included in any of the needs analyses of the Parks Needs Assessment.

(1,075 SITES/768,699 ACRES)

REVISED REGIONAL SITE DEFINITIONS

In order to provide greater clarity about the characteristics of Regional Sites, four new categories (Conservation Areas, Nature-Based Recreation Areas, Regional Specialized Recreation Areas and Other Public and Semi-Public Open Spaces) were developed to replace the more general categories identified in the 2016 PNA (Regional Open Space and Natural Areas).

REGIONAL RECREATION PARK (17 SITES/26,000 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Formal Outdoor Recreation: Multi-Use

Parks that are over 100 acres and contain at least three recreation amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

CONSERVATION AREA (869 SITES/163,000 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Habitat, Wildlife and Resource Conservation

Lands that are protected from development for the purpose of conserving sensitive habitat, wildlife and/or natural/cultural resources. Recreational access to these natural areas is limited or prohibited.

NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREA (477 SITES/713,000 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Nature-Based Recreation and Education

Formal and informal parks and open spaces of any size that primarily provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education. Amenities may include visitor centers, beaches, trails, picnic areas, campsites, access to natural water bodies, wildlife viewing areas, interpretive elements and others.

REGIONAL SPECIALIZED RECREATION AREA (198 SITES/26,000 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Formal Outdoor Recreation: Single-Use

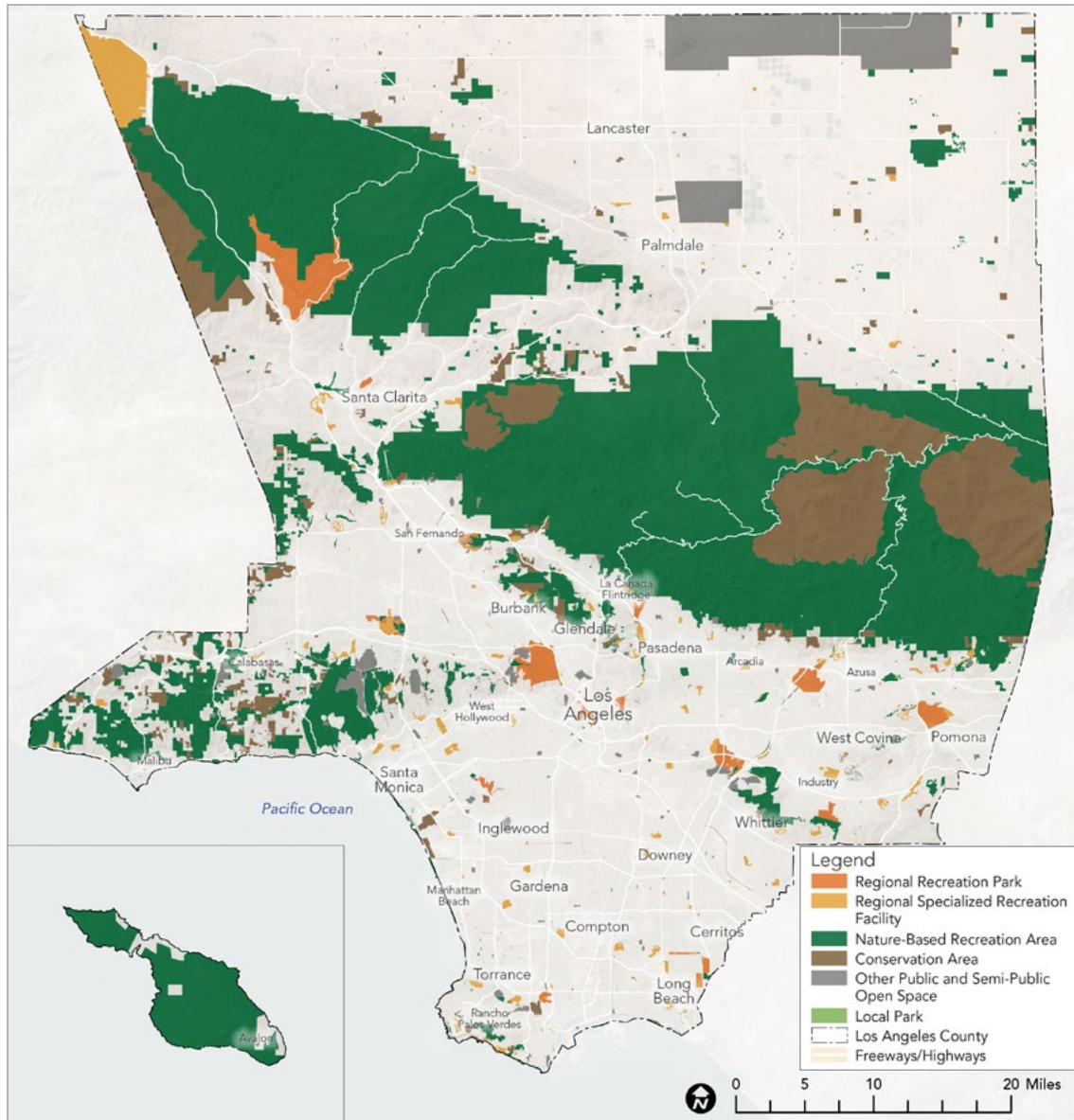
Parks that contain a specialized recreation or cultural facility as the primary use. Examples include golf courses, historic sites, equestrian centers, and amphitheaters that are stand-alone (not contained within a larger park).

OTHER PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (355 SITES/70,000 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Institutional or Infrastructural Use

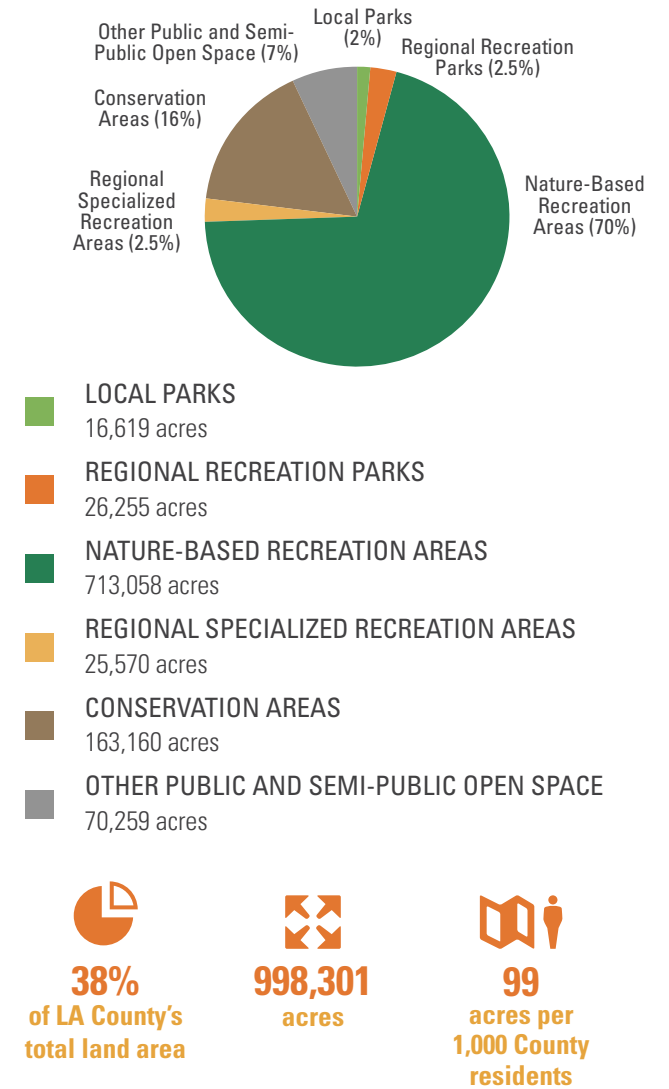
Lands that are held in public or institutional ownership and are typically used for infrastructure or institutional purposes. This includes undeveloped park land, utility corridors, cemeteries and other open spaces that are not designated for recreation or conservation.

Figure 4-12: Regional Site Inventory



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

Figure 4-13: Acres by Site Type, Los Angeles County



4.0 Regional Recreation

4.3 REGIONAL RECREATION METRICS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The nearly one million acres of land included in the Regional Site Inventory perform a wide spectrum of invaluable ecosystem services that benefit the residents of Los Angeles County and beyond. While some of these lands are protected for conservation purposes and therefore allow limited access for visitors, others have been developed to provide opportunities for recreational and cultural activities. Ensuring that there is a system-wide approach to balancing the range of demands that people place on public lands is essential to sustaining both ecosystem health and the well-being of the County's 10 million residents.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Of the five Regional Site Categories identified in the inventory, Regional Recreation Parks and Nature-Based Recreation Areas are the two types of lands that have been developed to provide general recreational opportunities for County residents. It is therefore important to analyze how sites that have been classified into these two categories are distributed throughout the County and to understand the extent to which they are accessible to residents by means of different modes of transportation.

Though Regional Specialized Recreation Sites also serve an important role in meeting the recreational needs of County residents, due to the single-use nature of the facilities in this category (including golf courses, equestrian staging areas, sports complexes and historical sites) they are excluded from the analysis that follows.



REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS

Regional Recreation Parks are multi-use parks that provide formal recreational opportunities. These large parks encompass an area of over 100 acres and contain at least three formal recreation amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

In total, there were 17 Regional Recreation Parks identified as part of the PNA in 2016. The number of Regional Recreation Parks remains consistent in this analysis, however, the boundaries of several of the parks were adjusted to reflect more accurate information, thus the total acreage of parkland identified in this category has increased. Regional Recreation Parks comprise 1% of the total land area of the County.

Regional Recreation Parks are located in each of the Regional Study Areas (RSA) with the exception of the Antelope Valley RSA, Santa Monica Mountains RSA and Santa Catalina Island RSA.

- » On average, there are over 2.6 acres of Regional Recreation Parkland per 1,000 residents of Los Angeles County.

Regional Recreation Park Metrics



26,255

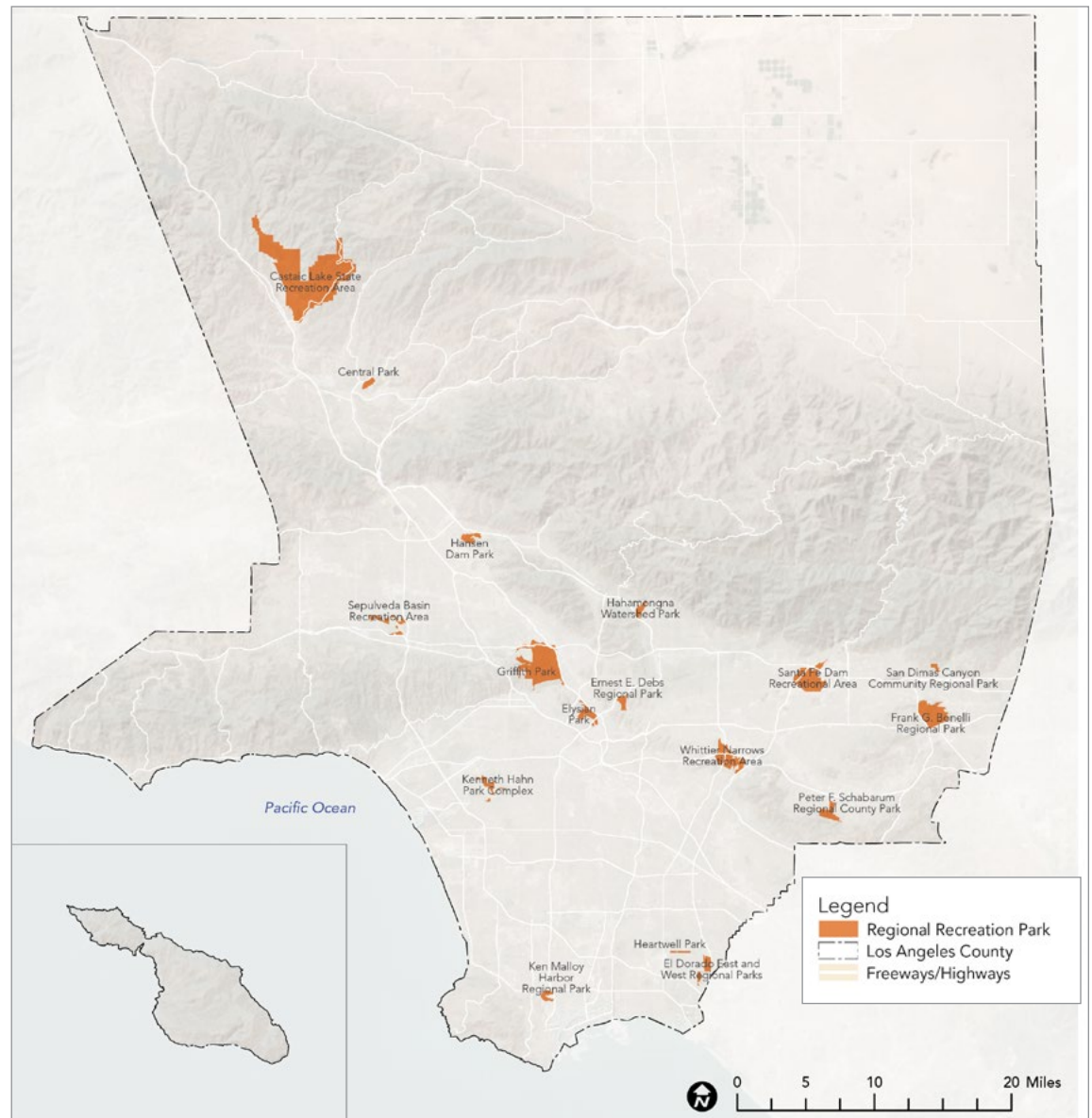
ACRES OF REGIONAL RECREATION PARKLAND



2.6

ACRES OF REGIONAL RECREATION PARKLAND PER 1000 COUNTY RESIDENTS

Figure 4-14: Regional Recreation Parks



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-15: Proximity to Regional Recreation Parks: Walking Distance

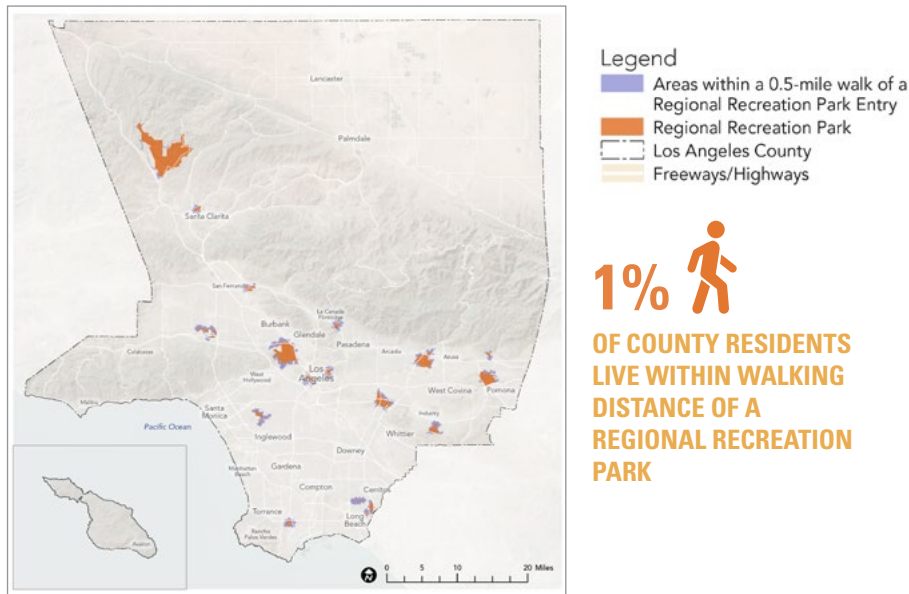


Figure 4-16: Proximity to Regional Recreation Parks: Cycling Distance

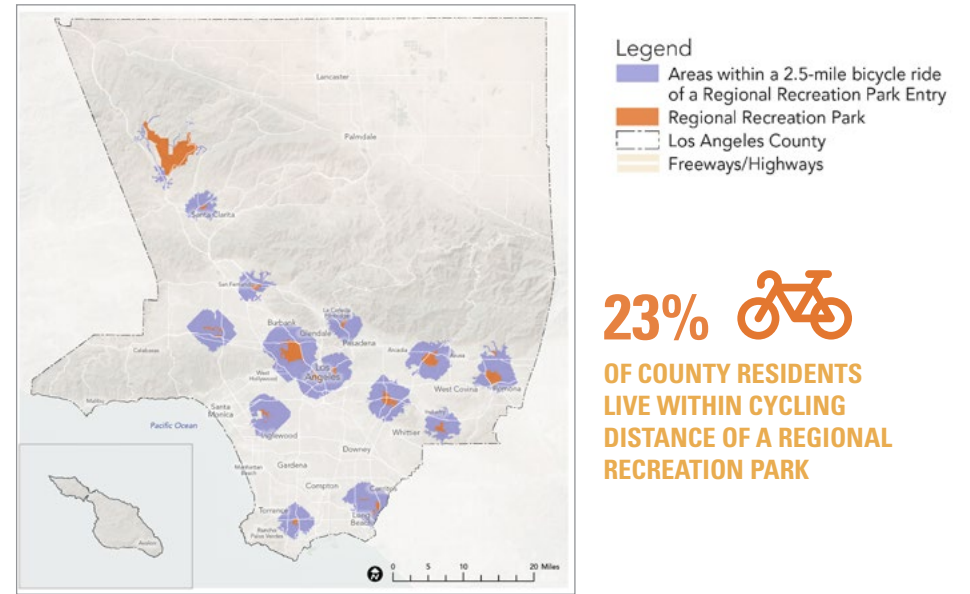


Figure 4-17: Proximity to Regional Recreation Parks: Driving Distance

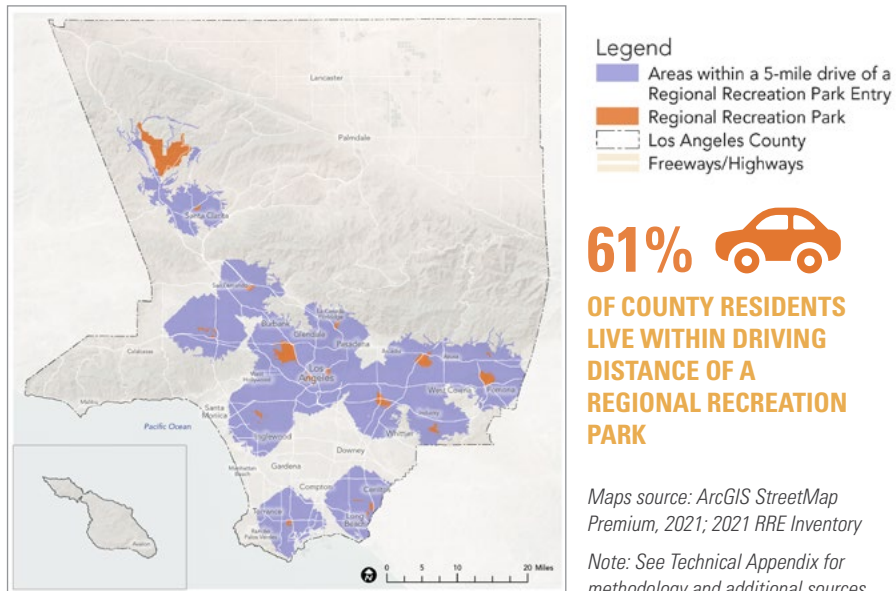


Figure 4-18: Transit Service to Regional Recreation Parks

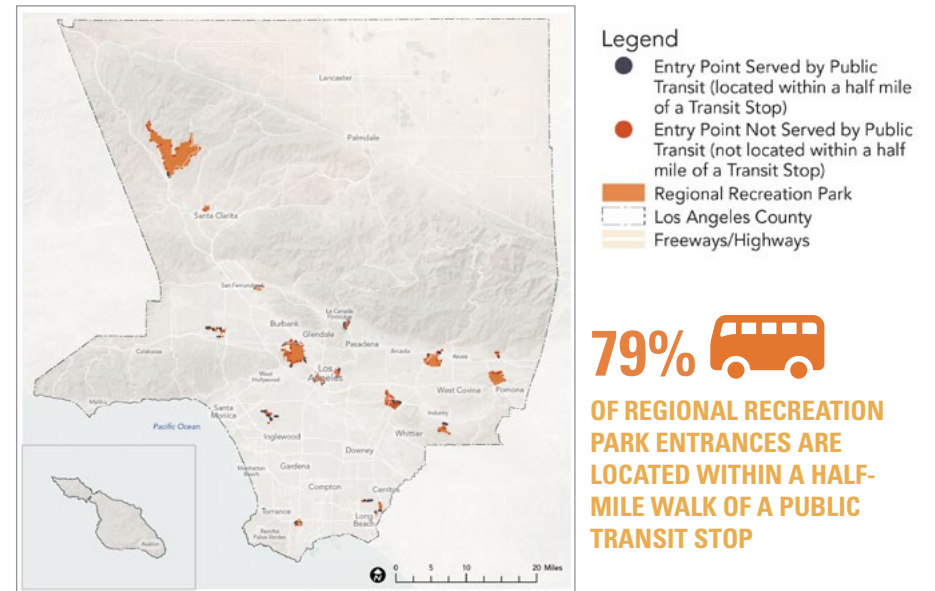
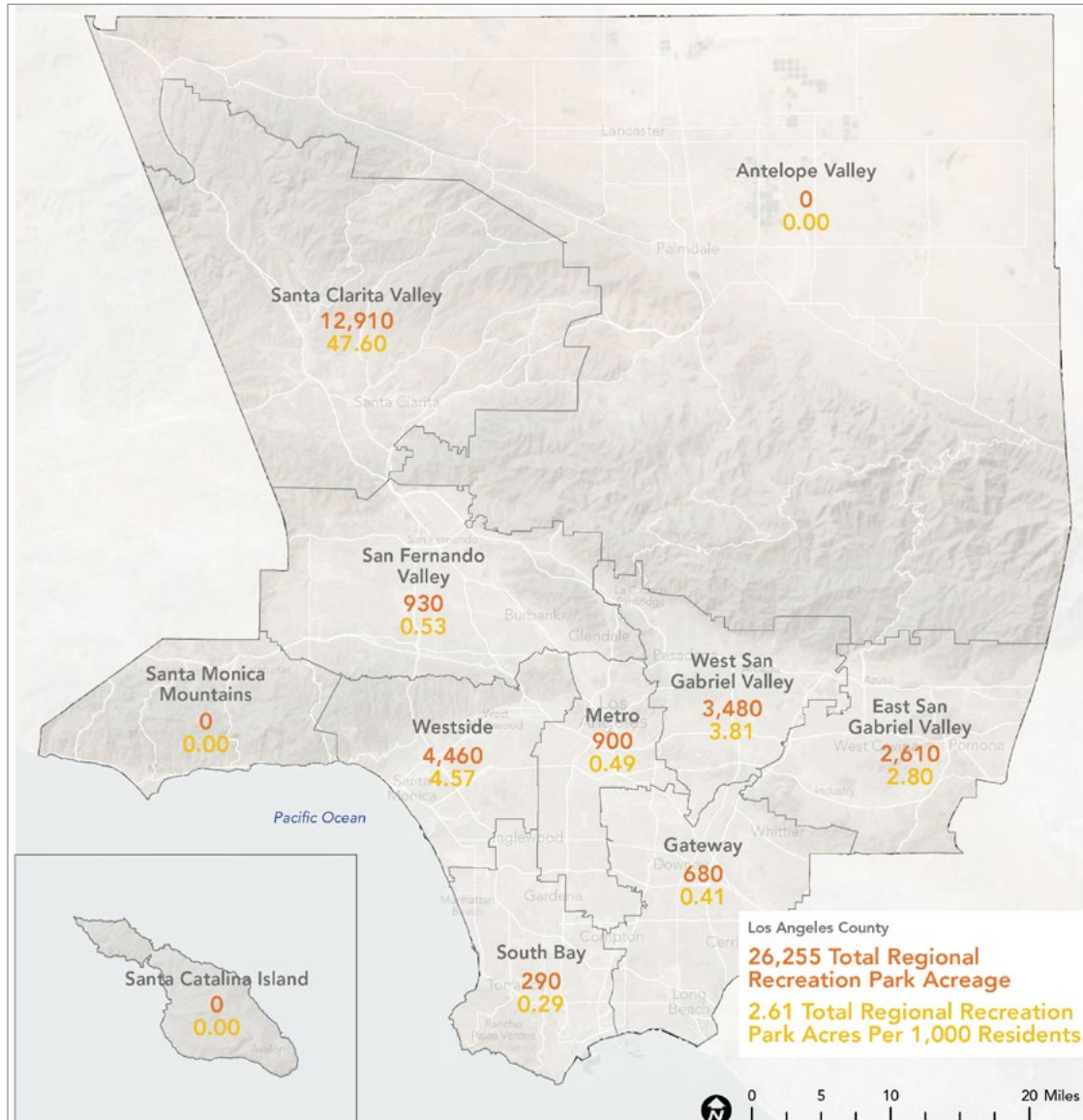


Figure 4-19: Regional Recreation Park Metrics by Regional Study Area



Map source: PNA, 2016; LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

- » Of the eight Regional Study Areas in which there is a Regional Recreation Park located, the number of acres per 1,000 residents is lower than the County average in San Fernando Valley RSA, Metro RSA, South Bay RSA and Gateway RSA.

On average, nearly a quarter (23%) of County residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride and over half (61%) live within a 5-mile drive of a Regional Recreation Park entry point.

- » Of the eight Regional Study Areas in which there is a Regional Recreation Park located, the percentage of residents who live within all three distances (walking, cycling and driving) of these high amenity facilities is lower than the County average in Gateway RSA and South Bay RSA.

Countywide, over 79% of Regional Recreation Park entry points are served by public transit (defined as located within a 0.5-mile walk of a public transit stop).

- » Of the eight Regional Study Areas in which there is a Regional Recreation Park located, the percentage of entry points served by public transit is lower than average in Santa Clarita Valley RSA, Westside RSA, Metro RSA and West San Gabriel Valley RSA.





4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-20: Regional Recreation Park Metrics by Regional Study Area

This table presents a comparison of Regional Recreation Park metrics for Los Angeles County and each of the eleven Regional Study Areas. These metrics include: 1) the number of acres of Regional Recreation Park land, 2) the number of acres Regional Recreation Park land per 1,000 Regional Study Area residents, 3) the percentage of residents that

live within walking distance (0.5 miles), cycling distance (2.5 miles) and driving distance (5 miles) of a Regional Recreation Park entry point, and 4) the percentage of Regional Recreation Park entry points that are located within walking distance (0.5 miles) of a public transit stop.

► Regional Recreation Park Land and Access

Study Area	Total Acres	Acres Per 1,000 Residents	% of Residents that Live Within:			% of Park Entry Points:
			 0.5 mile Walking Distance	 2.5 mile Cycling Distance	 5 mile Driving Distance	 Within 0.5 mile Walking Distance of a Transit Stop
Los Angeles County	26,255	2.61	1%	23%	61%	79%
1 Antelope Valley	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 Santa Clarita Valley	12,910	47.6	1%	22%	64%	67%
3 San Fernando Valley	930	0.53	2%	26%	72%	100%
4 Santa Monica Mountains	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
5 Westside	4,460	4.57	2%	31%	69%	75%
6 Metro	900	0.49	2%	29%	65%	67%
7 West San Gabriel Valley	3,480	3.81	2%	29%	87%	75%
8 East San Gabriel Valley	2,610	2.8	1%	27%	86%	80%
9 South Bay	290	0.29	1%	18%	48%	100%
10 Gateway	680	0.41	1%	11%	37%	83%
11 Santa Catalina Island	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREAS

Nature-Based Recreation Areas are both formal and informal parks and open spaces of any size that primarily provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education. Amenities may include visitor centers, trails, picnic areas, campsites, access to natural water bodies, wildlife viewing areas, interpretive elements and others.

In total, there are 477 Nature-Based Recreation Areas identified in the Regional Site Inventory comprising 27% of the total land area of the County. This category was defined as part of the RRE, therefore many of these sites were previously identified as “Regional Open Space” or “Natural Areas” in the 2016 PNA report.

There are Nature-Based Recreation Areas located in each of the eleven Regional Study Areas.

- » On average, there are 70 acres of Nature-Based Recreation Areas per 1,000 County residents, though this ratio ranges dramatically by Regional Study Area from over 10,000 acres per 1,000 residents in Santa Catalina Island RSA to less than 1 acre per 1,000 residents in Metro RSA.

► Nature-Based Recreation Area Metrics



713,058

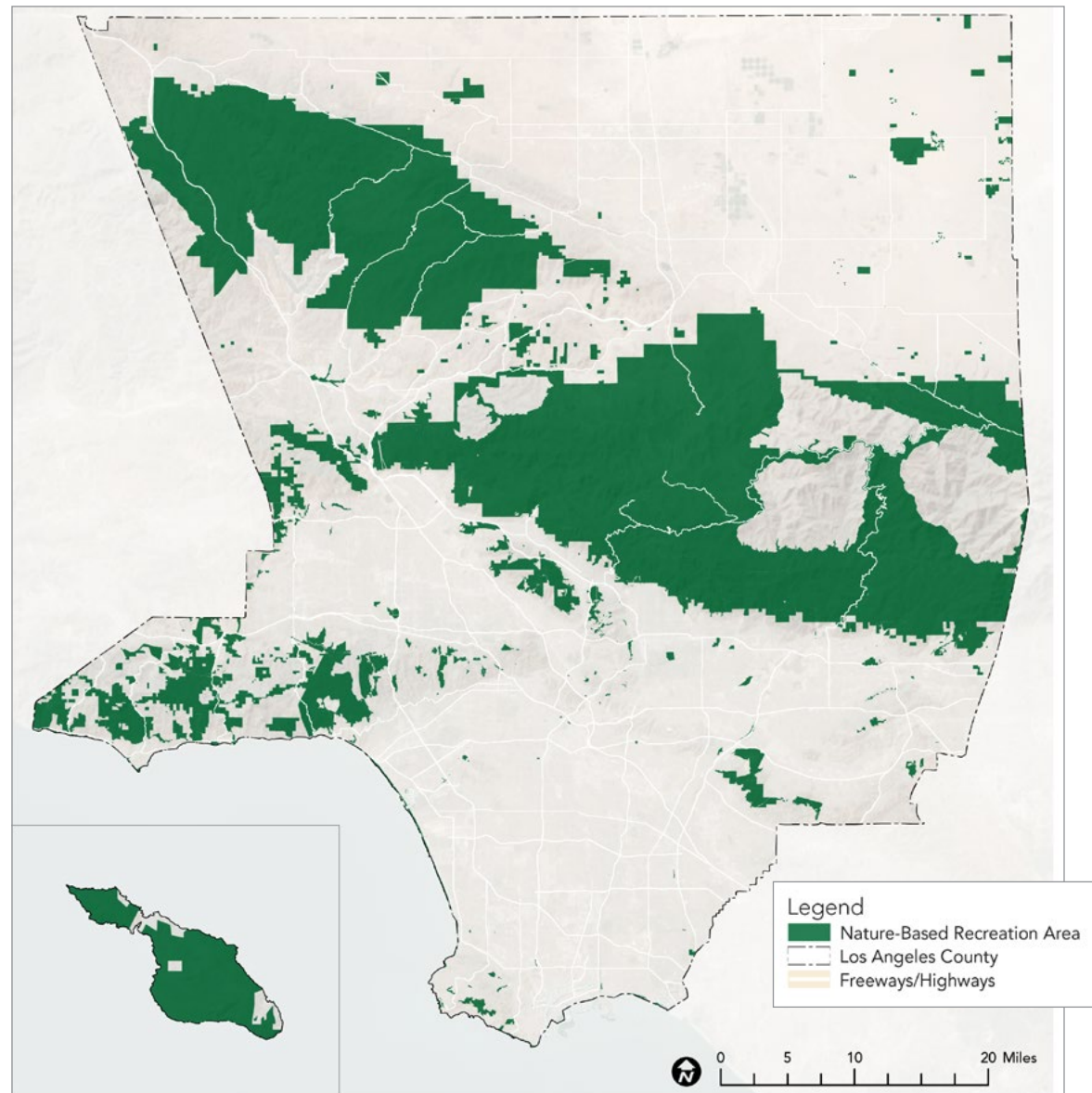
ACRES OF NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREA LAND



71

ACRES OF NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREA LAND PER 1,000 COUNTY RESIDENTS

Figure 4-21: Nature-Based Recreation Areas



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-22: Proximity to Nature-Based Recreation Areas: Walking Distance

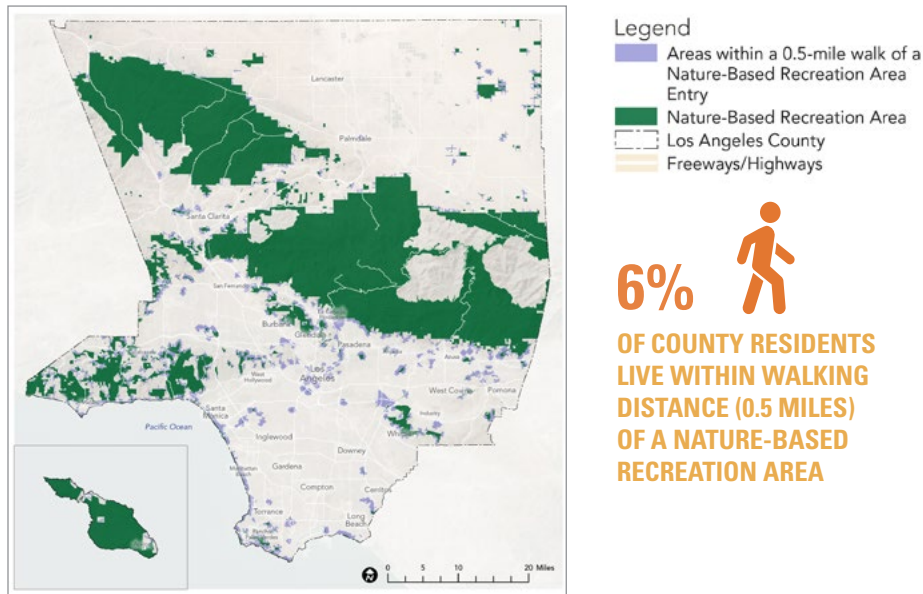


Figure 4-23: Proximity to Nature-Based Recreation Areas: Cycling Distance

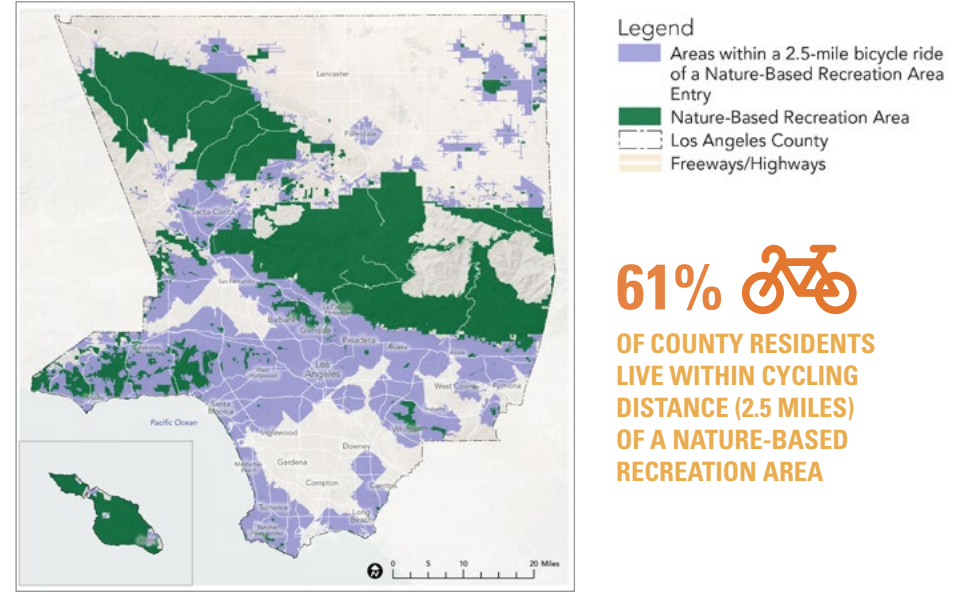


Figure 4-24: Proximity to Nature-Based Recreation Areas: Driving Distance

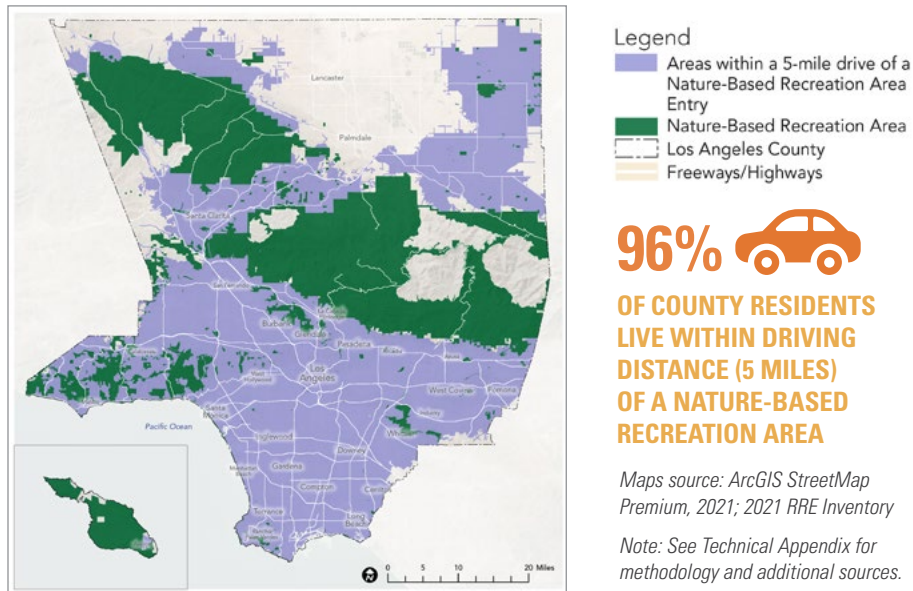


Figure 4-25: Transit Service to Nature-Based Recreation Areas

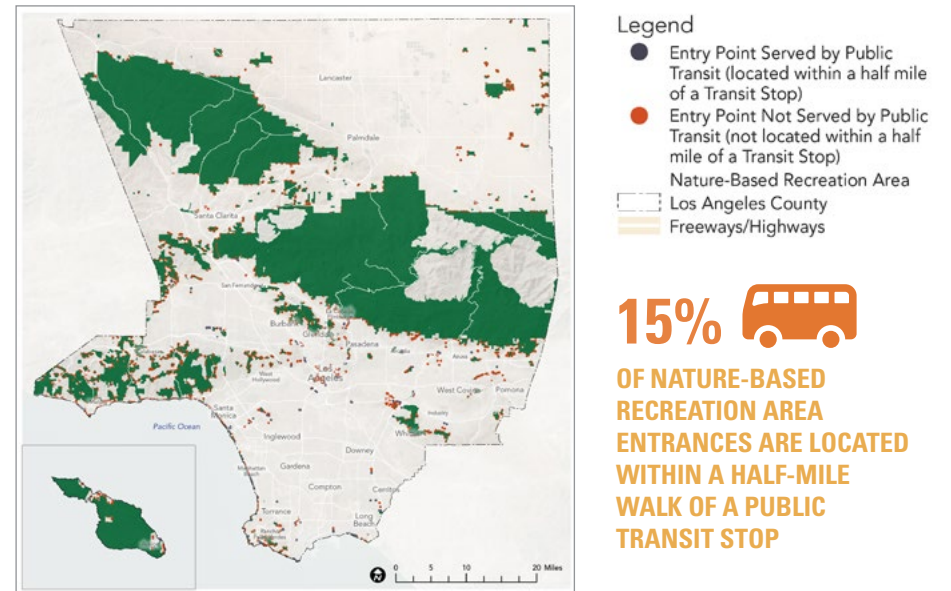
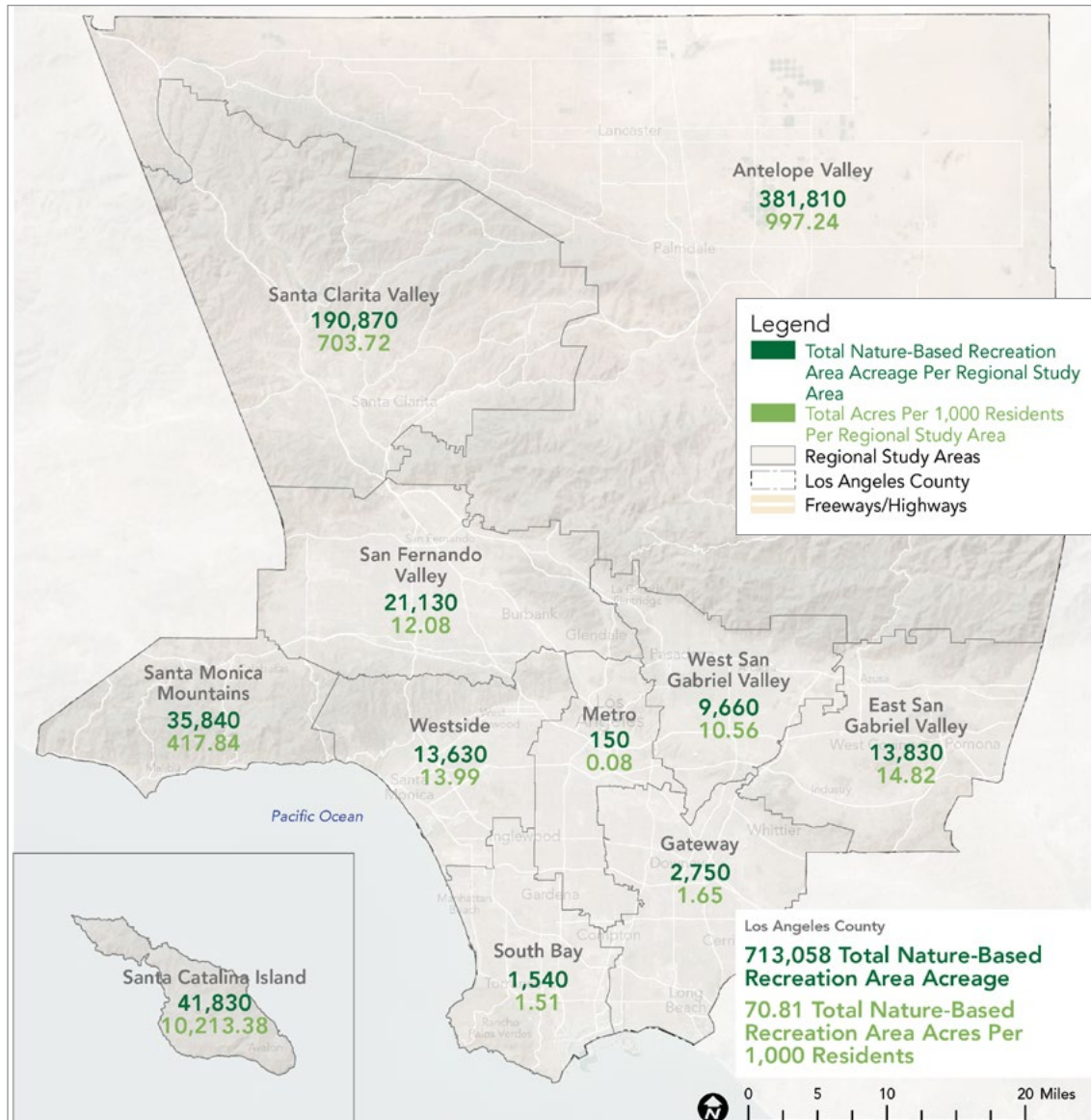


Figure 4-26: Nature-Based Recreation Area Metrics by Regional Study



Map source: PNA, 2016; LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

» The number of acres of Nature-Based Recreation Area per 1,000 residents is well below the County average in South Bay RSA (1.5) and Gateway RSA (1.65) while the Antelope Valley RSA (997), Santa Clarita RSA (704) and Santa Monica Mountains RSA (418) are particularly rich in Nature-Based Recreation Area lands in relation to their populations.

On average, over half (61%) of County residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride and nearly all County residents (96%) live within a 5-mile drive of a Nature-Based Recreation Area entry point.

- » Notable exceptions include the Antelope Valley RSA where just 14% of residents live within a 5-mile drive of a Nature-Based Recreation Area entry point despite the large number of acres that are encompassed within this Study Area.
- » In addition, a lower-than-average percentage (40%) of residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride of a Nature-Based Recreation Area in Gateway RSA.

Countywide, only 15% of Nature-Based Recreation Area entry points are served by public transit (defined as located within a 0.5-mile walk of a public transit stop).

- » The percentage of entry points served by public transit is lower than the County average in Antelope Valley RSA (11%), Santa Clarita Valley RSA (6%), San Fernando Valley RSA (9%), Santa Monica Mountains RSA (7%) and East San Gabriel Valley RSA (9%).





4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-27: Nature-Based Recreation Area Access Metrics by Regional Study Area

This table presents a comparison of Nature-Based Recreation Area metrics for Los Angeles County and each of the eleven Regional Study Areas. These metrics include: 1) the number of acres of Nature-Based Recreation Area land, 2) the number of acres of Nature-Based Recreation Area land per 1,000 Regional Study Area residents, 3) the

percentage of residents that live within walking distance (0.5 miles), cycling distance (2.5 miles) and driving distance (5 miles) of a Nature-Based Recreation Area entry point, and 4) the percentage of Nature-Based Recreation Area entry points that are located within walking distance (0.5 miles) of a public transit stop.

► *Nature-Based Recreation Area Land and Access*

Study Area	Total Acres	Acres Per 1,000 Residents	% of Residents that Live Within:			% of Park Entry Points:
			 0.5 mile Walking Distance	 2.5 mile Cycling Distance	 5 mile Driving Distance	 Within 0.5 mile Walking Distance of a Transit Stop
Los Angeles County	713,058	70.81	6%	61%	96%	15%
1 Antelope Valley	381,810	997.24	1%	14%	14%	11%
2 Santa Clarita Valley	190,870	703.72	8%	85%	98%	6%
3 San Fernando Valley	21,130	12.08	5%	59%	98%	9%
4 Santa Monica Mountains	35,840	417.84	24%	86%	98%	7%
5 Westside	13,630	13.99	10%	100%	100%	18%
6 Metro	150	0.08	5%	54%	99%	47%
7 West San Gabriel Valley	9,660	10.56	7%	79%	100%	27%
8 East San Gabriel Valley	13,830	14.82	6%	59%	100%	9%
9 South Bay	1,540	1.51	8%	56%	100%	46%
10 Gateway	2,750	1.65	3%	40%	100%	35%
11 Santa Catalina Island	41,830	10,213.38	0%	73%	73%	23%

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BEACHES

Ocean Beaches

Categorized as Nature-Based Recreation Areas for the purposes of the PNA+, the 30 public beaches that stretch along the 75-mile mainland coast of Los Angeles County are some of the most recognizable and popular destinations in the world. While these beaches provide unique recreational opportunities and serve a critical ecological role, they also face threats related to climate change and development.

The Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) operates and maintains 19 public beaches stretching along 25 miles of coastline from Malibu to San Pedro. Collectively, they attract upwards of 70 million visitors annually. Healthy beaches help drive economic activity important to nearby communities, and provide protection by acting as buffers against powerful storms.

Los Angeles County beaches share the following common threats:

Sand Erosion: LA County's beaches feature cliffs, tidepools, marine life, and hold many recreational opportunities for the millions of people who visits the vast coastline each year. These beaches share a common ecological challenge of sand erosion. Due to waves, currents and man-made structures, such as storm drains, the natural process of sand replenishment is hindered.

One phenomenon that causes sand erosion is energetic waves that cause turbulence to move the sand below the wave base. In effect, this movement of sand narrows beach width. Another factor affecting the deterioration of sand is "submarine canyons" which are deep, sharp

Figure 4-28: Los Angeles County Ocean Beaches



4.0 Regional Recreation

walled features disrupt waves and sucks sand down to the ocean floor, losing it deep within the ocean floor. A third cause of sand erosion is man-made constructions. Of these structures, storm drains, which were built to control large amounts of water during rainstorms and collect debris, block natural sediments and small rocks from naturally rebuilding the sand.¹²

Sea Level Rise: The vulnerability of the County’s beach facilities will depend upon the magnitude of future sea level rise. As greenhouse gas emissions continue to impact the global climate, the warming of the atmosphere and oceans is projected to accelerate melting of glaciers and polar ice sheets, release more water into the oceans, and cause sea water to expand. The cumulative effect of these physical processes will result in ocean levels higher than today. Predictions of the magnitude and rate of rise are continually evolving as the science and understanding of the phenomenon becomes better understood and the ability to more accurately simulate the process with numerical models improves.

While the pace and extent at which sea-levels will rise in the coming decades is difficult to predict, it is estimated that by the end of this century, global sea-level rise will range from 1 foot to over 6 feet. With the County’s population expected to double by 2100, demand for beach recreation is also anticipated to increase. Therefore, the challenge for the future is to continue to maintain and provide adequate public beach facilities even as they become increasingly more vulnerable to shoreline recession, erosion and flood hazards.¹³

Degraded Water Quality: All regions of California are experiencing extreme or exceptional drought conditions in 2021. Although decreases in rainfall have generally improved water quality, beaches and ocean ecosystems are still threatened by ocean acidification and other pollution sources.

Heal the Bay, an environmental advocacy group, publishes an annual Beach Report Card, which includes an “Honor Roll.” To earn a spot on this list, a beach must be monitored weekly all year and must receive an A+ for all seasons and weather conditions (Summer Dry, Winter Dry, Wet Weather). Most Los Angeles County beaches are Honor Roll Beaches. Unfortunately, some beaches, such as Mother’s Beach in Marina Del Rey, have been occasionally identified as a “Beach Bummer” and included on the list of most polluted beaches in California. The Mother’s beach is enclosed and experiences little wave action and circulation so bacteria pollution does not get flushed away from the shore as it does at open ocean beaches.¹⁴

In light of these challenges, Los Angeles County and other agencies are taking actions to protect beaches from further degradation so that they can continue to support marine life as essential habitat and to provide recreational opportunities for the millions of people who visit the vast coastline each year. One of these actions that will be led by DBH includes a future coastal resiliency study that will identify vulnerable areas along the coastline, and short-term and long-term shoreline protection measures. The study will be used to prioritize beach facilities that have the greatest need for funding and implementation of projects.

Beach Access: Approximately 100,000 Los Angeles County residents (1% of the population) live within walking distance of an ocean beach access point. The majority of ocean beach access points (71%) are not served by public transit. See Figures 4-29 through 4-32.

Beach Facilities: Many publicly accessible beaches do not have critical infrastructure—permanent restrooms, showers, parking, public information/signage, lifeguards, etc.—which assist all visitors, but especially those vulnerable populations who are traveling from distant and environmentally burdened areas.



¹² Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors. “Protecting and Restoring our Beaches.” Accessed on December 13, 2021. <https://beaches.lacounty.gov/beach-erosion-restoration/>

¹³ Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors. “Los Angeles County Public Beach Facilities Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment.” April 19, 2016. Accessed http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dbh/docs/247261_LACO_SLR_Vulnerabilty_FinalReport_19Apr2016.pdf

¹⁴ Heal the Bay. “2020-2021 Beach Report Card.” Accessed: <https://healthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Beach-Report-Card-2020-2021.pdf>

Figure 4-29: Proximity to Beaches: Walking Distance



1% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS
LIVE WITHIN WALKING
DISTANCE (0.5 MILES)
OF A BEACH ACCESS
POINT

Legend






-  Areas within 0.5-mile walking distance from a beach access point
-  Beach
-  Los Angeles County
-  Major Roads

Figure 4-30: Proximity to Beaches: Cycling Distance



7% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS
LIVE WITHIN CYCLING
DISTANCE (2.5 MILES)
OF A BEACH ACCESS
POINT

Legend






-  Areas within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride of a beach access point
-  Beach
-  Los Angeles County
-  Major Roads

Figure 4-31: Proximity to Beaches: Driving Distance



13% 
OF COUNTY RESIDENTS
LIVE WITHIN DRIVING
DISTANCE (5 MILES)
OF A BEACH ACCESS
POINT

Legend










-  Areas within 5 miles driving distance of a beach access point
-  Beach
-  Los Angeles County
-  Major Roads

Figure 4-32: Transit Service to Beaches



29% 
OF BEACH ACCESS
POINTS ARE LOCATED
WITHIN A HALF-MILE
WALK OF A PUBLIC
TRANSIT STOP

Legend

-  Entry Point Served by Public Transit (located within a half mile of a Transit Stop)
-  Entry Point Not Served by Public Transit (not located within a half mile of a Transit Stop)
-  Beaches
-  Los Angeles County
-  Freeways/Highways

Maps source: ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

4.0 Regional Recreation

Lake Beaches

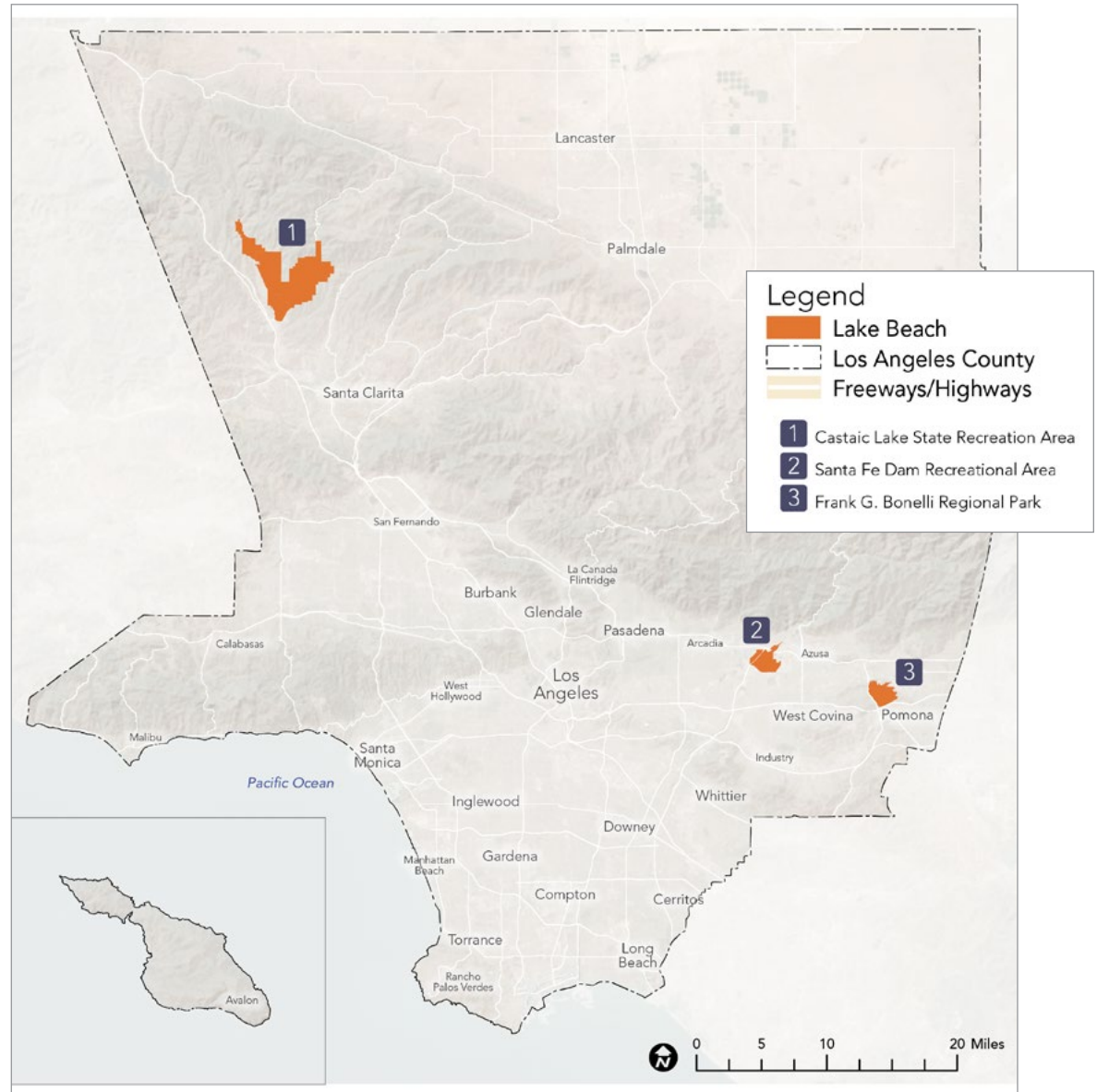
Lake swim beaches provide opportunities for water-based recreation for many residents living inland. DPR operates designated recreational swim beaches on lakes located within three Regional Recreation Parks: Castaic Lake State Recreation Area, Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, and Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area. In the 1970s, due to the public’s increasing demand for water-oriented recreation, swim beaches were developed at these parks. These facilities were designed to provide water-based recreational opportunities, including boating, fishing, and swimming to the growing population of the greater Los Angeles County, not just to the communities immediately adjacent to the parks. To maintain public health and safety, all three beaches are equipped with restroom facilities and chlorinators to reduce the risk of elevated bacteria counts and harmful algae blooms. Trained lifeguards are on site when swim beaches are open.

Swim beaches are open on designated days throughout the warm summer months. Support amenities include accessible picnic areas and barbecue pits for visitors to enjoy.

Castaic Lake State Recreation Area

Castaic Lake State Recreation Area is one of the largest state water reservoirs in California, featuring 29 miles of shoreline. It not only provides fresh water to local communities, but this 12,655-acre facility is also a recreational resource for visitors of all ages. This northern oasis features two lakes: the Upper Lake which offers two launch ramps for boating with various waterways and coves for exploring and the Lower Lake that includes picnic areas, launch areas for kayaks, float tubes and other non-gasoline boating, and a swim beach. The park is also known for hiking, horseback riding, wake boarding, jet skiing, and camping.

Figure 4-33: Lake Beaches



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park is an 1,800-acre facility featuring a 250-acre lake with 14 miles of multi-use trails. Bonelli Park offers a wide variety of recreational activities, including boating, jet skiing, fishing, swimming, family and group picnicking, nature walks, hiking, jogging, and biking. There are also concessionaires offering RV camping, hot tubs, wedding facilities, and horseback riding. Throughout the year, annual special events are conducted including fishing tournaments, concerts, triathlons, water sports and cultural events.

Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area

Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area is nestled at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains and is considered one of the many hidden jewels of Southern California. Owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and jointly-managed by DPR, this 1,900-acre facility boasts a serene 70-acre lake with year-round fishing and non-motorized watercraft usage. During the summer months, the recreational area highlights a five-acre chlorinated swim beach and a unique water play area. The facility is home to many protected native plants and animals. The Nature Center is operated and staffed by volunteers of the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy offering educational, interpretive and walking tours throughout the year.

Junior Lake Lifeguards Program

DPR's Junior Lake Lifeguard Program provides a challenging and exciting open water environment which promotes an active and responsible lifestyle for participants ages 9-17. Lifeguard staff serve as mentors and impart their experience by leading hands-on activities. Youth are introduced to water safety, athleticism, teamwork and

potential careers in aquatics. Participants learn from a variety of activities that range from first aid, CPR and water related rescue skills. This 3-week summer program takes place at each of the lake beaches operated by DPR.

Hazards at Lakes, Rivers, Swimming Holes, and Other Bodies of Water

There are many areas throughout Los Angeles County used for water contact that are not designated swim areas, such as lakes, rivers, swimming holes, creeks, ponds, storm water collection and flood control areas. These areas usually do not have associated restrooms, nor are they staffed with lifeguards. Additionally, the water in these areas is affected by runoff that is often contaminated.

These waters are regularly tested by LA County and other agencies/organizations, and often found to have high bacteria counts. The bacteria can come from both animal and human sources. The high counts indicate that there may be bacteria in the water that can cause illness such as gastrointestinal illness, skin rash, respiratory illness, and infections. Risk of becoming ill is increased for young children and the elderly as well as for those with compromised immune systems. Rain events increase runoff and bacteria levels and increase the risk of becoming ill from water contact. Also, some areas may become flooded and create a safety and drowning hazard during and after rain events. In addition, other unknown harmful organisms or toxins may occur in these open waters at any time.





REGIONAL RECREATION AMENITIES

Regional Recreation Amenities are developed features that are intended to provide settings for social gathering and organized activities as well as to enhance visitors' access to and experience of natural elements including waterbodies, open spaces, geological formations, plant-communities and wildlife habitat.

In order to evaluate the range of recreational opportunities that exist throughout the County, these amenities have been grouped with related features into the following Recreation Opportunity Types:

1. Gathering Spaces
2. Experiential Learning Opportunities
3. Water-Based Recreation
4. Trails and Pathways
5. Sports Facilities
6. Overnight Accommodations
7. Support Facilities

Sites that offer any of the amenities associated with each Regional Recreation Opportunity Type have been mapped to show how they are distributed throughout the County.

Note: Mapping regarding proximity to the various recreation opportunity types is based primarily on data collected from park-managing agencies. As such, the accuracy of the analyses is dependent upon the availability and quality of data provided. For example, while we were informed that certain amenities existed in a park or recreation area, the available data did not show where the amenities were specifically located. Thus, there are some limitations to our analysis which may have overstated or understated the availability of certain recreation opportunity types in some places, especially in areas within or in proximity to large recreation and conservation areas such as the Angeles National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains.



► *Regional Recreation Amenities*



GATHERING SPACES



36
Group Picnic Areas



363
Individual Picnic Areas



74
Indoor Event Spaces



108
Outdoor Event Spaces



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



104
Visitor Centers



54
Environmental Learning Facilities



30
Gardens



WATER-BASED RECREATION



80
Boating Areas



79
Swimming Areas



50
Watersport Facilities



118
Waterfront Access Areas



114
Fishing Areas



TRAILS AND PATHWAYS



5
Rock Climbing Areas



2,774
Trailheads



SPORTS FACILITIES



21
Shooting Ranges



40
Archery Ranges



2
Snowsport Facilities



OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS



883
Tent Campsites



1,009
RV Campsites



SUPPORT FACILITIES



79
Concessions



122,000
Parking Spaces



893
Restrooms

Figure 4-34: Regional Sites with Gathering Spaces

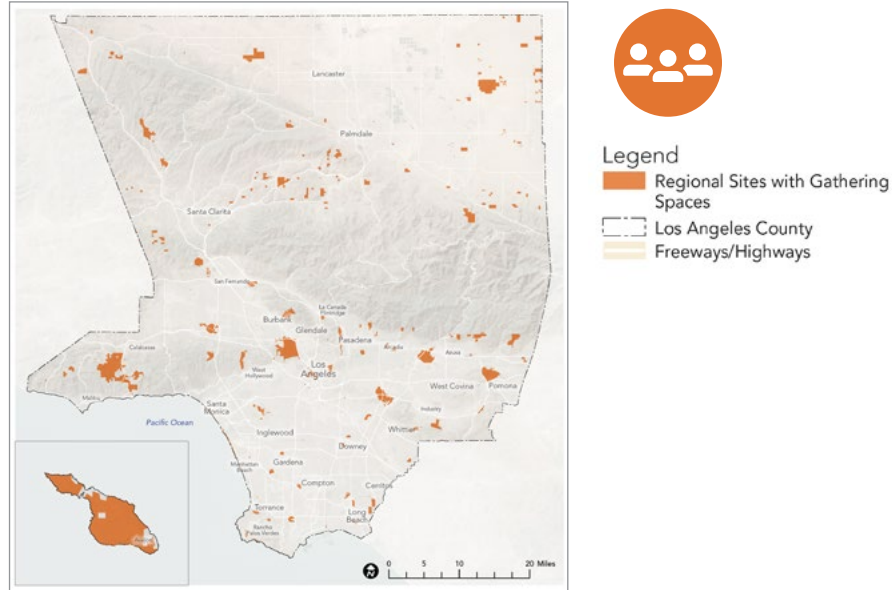


Figure 4-35: Regional Sites with Experiential Learning Opportunities

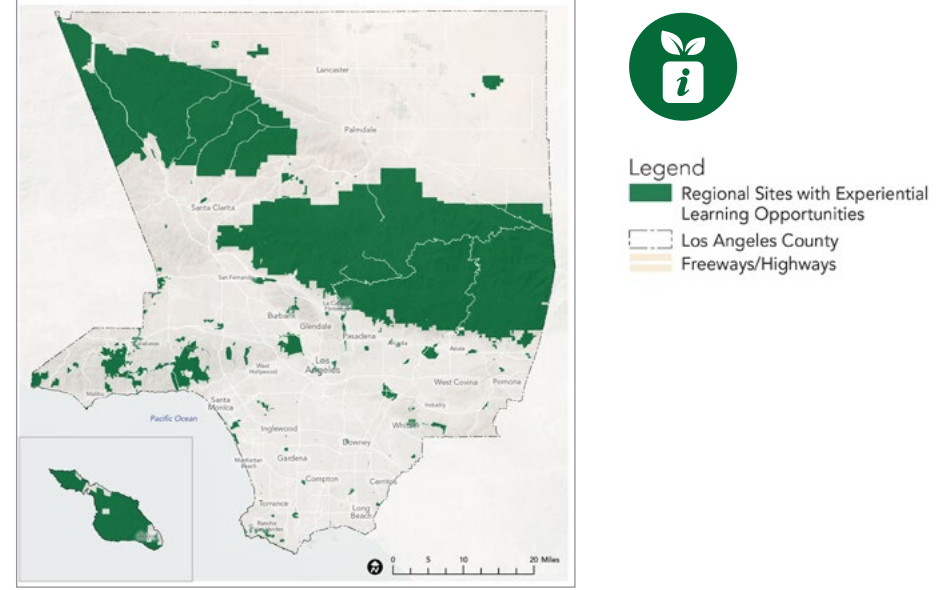


Figure 4-36: Regional Sites with Water-Based Recreation

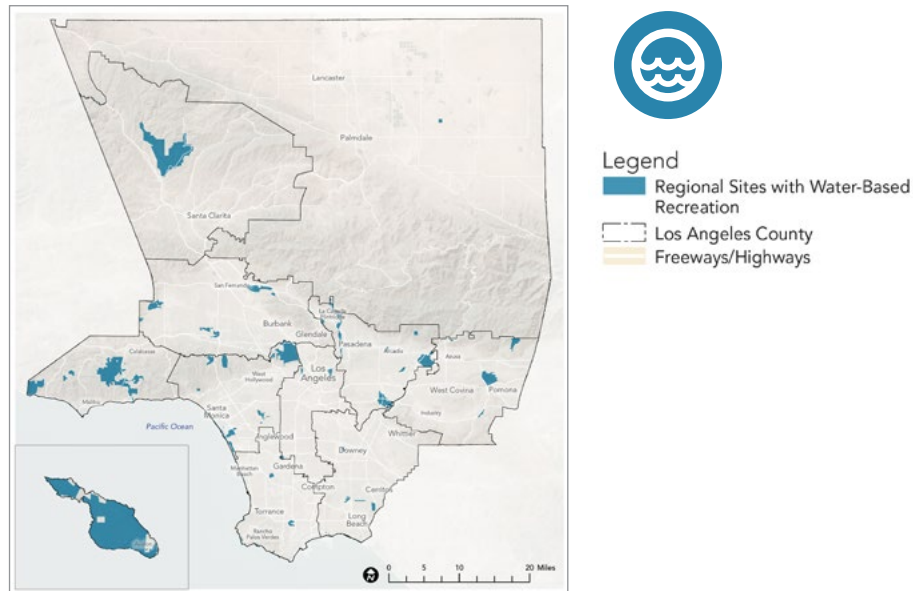
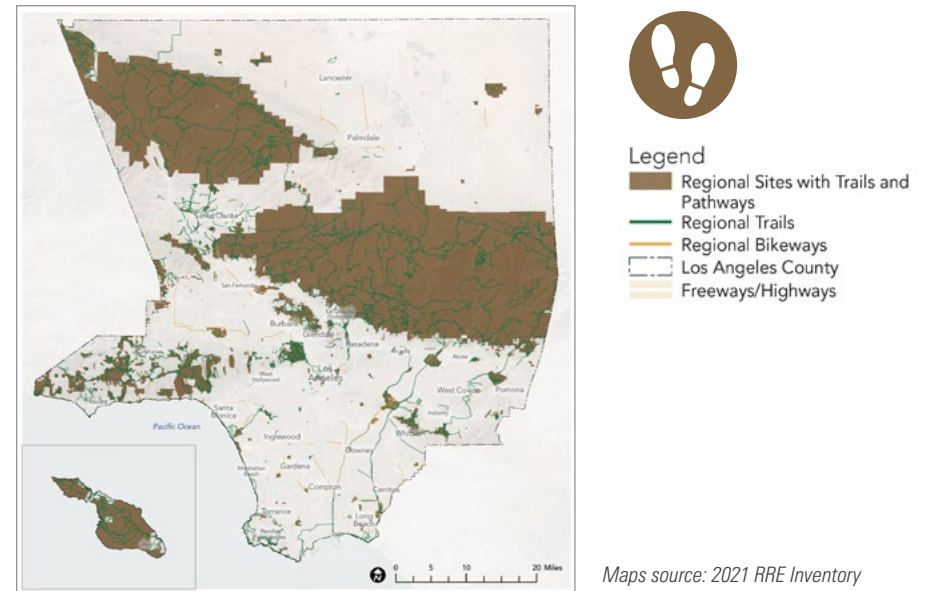


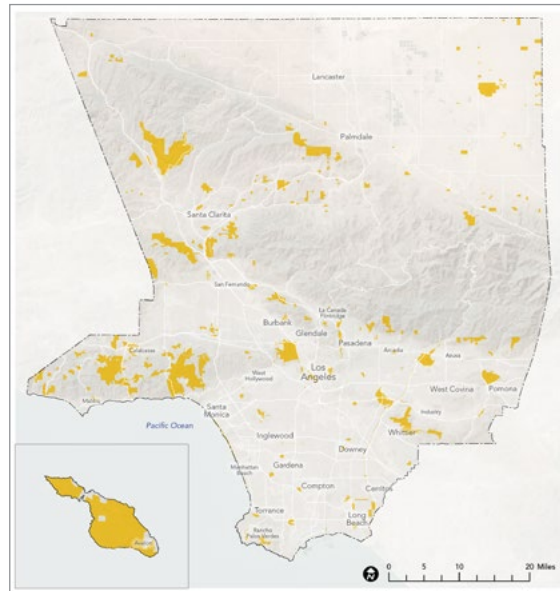
Figure 4-37: Regional Sites with Trails and Pathways



Maps source: 2021 RRE Inventory

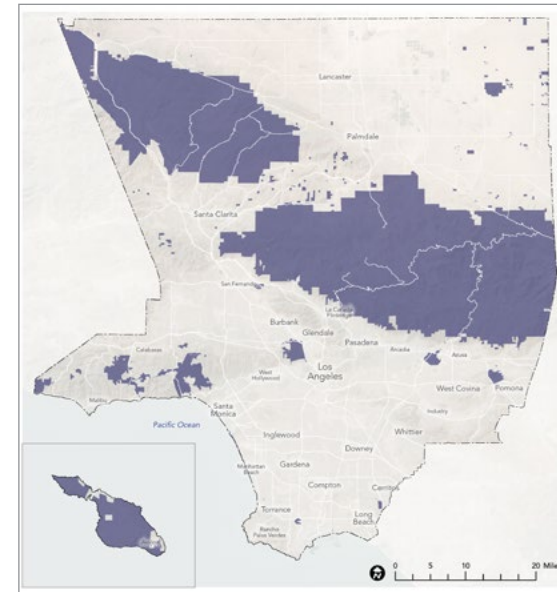
4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-38: Regional Sites with Sports Facilities



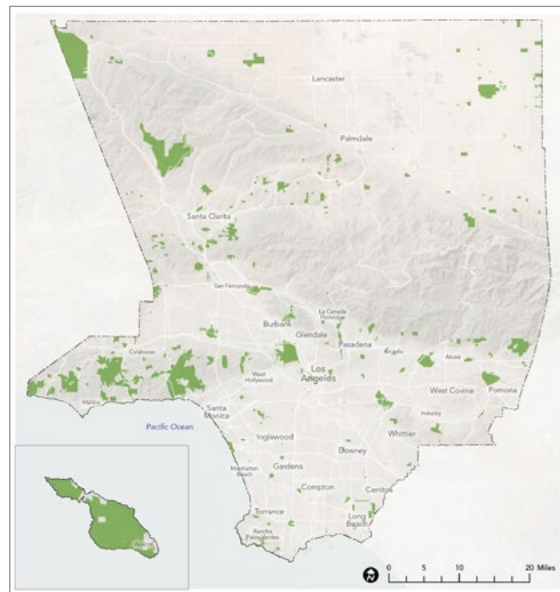
- Legend**
- Regional Sites with Sports Facilities
 - Los Angeles County
 - Freeways/Highways

Figure 4-39: Regional Sites with Overnight Accommodations



- Legend**
- Regional Sites with Overnight Accommodations
 - Los Angeles County
 - Freeways/Highways

Figure 4-40: Regional Sites with Support Facilities



- Legend**
- Regional Sites with Support Facilities
 - Los Angeles County
 - Freeways/Highways

Maps source: 2021 RRE Inventory

REGIONAL TRAILS

Trail networks can provide people of every age, ability, and socioeconomic background safe and inexpensive settings for outdoor physical activity, commuting, and recreation. DPR manages approximately 240 miles of regional and multi-use trails. Prior to undertaking the data collection process for the PNA+, DPR estimated that there were over 2,000 miles of publicly accessible trails located in the County. These trails are managed by many different agencies and as a result, countywide trail reporting has historically not been comprehensive. DPR has developed a trails database (Trails LA County) that begins to bridge this data gap by partnering with federal, state, and municipal land management agencies to collect and report trail data in one place as a reference for local jurisdictions and community members.

During the 2016 PNA, limited information about trails was collected using the same methods that were applied to other Local and Regional Recreation Park amenities. For the purposes of the PNA+, a comprehensive Regional Trail Inventory has been developed in parallel with the Regional Site Inventory using the same data collection and verification methods as described earlier in this chapter.

The Regional Trail Inventory includes 3,306 miles of publicly accessible trails managed by 60 different managing agencies. The inventory incorporates regional trails, recreational pathways/urban pedestrian paths, trailheads and access points allowing for robust analysis of trail infrastructure and access.

This total trail mileage is more than previously estimated and reveals how significant trails are as a recreational resource. This also means that there are many miles of



trails that need to be maintained and that more resources, including funding, staffing, and volunteers, are needed to upkeep these trails.

According to the 2021 NRPA Park Metrics Report, the typical park and recreation agency in the US manages or maintains 12 miles of trails and county-level agencies manage an average of 33 miles of trails.

By comparison, one third of the 62 trail managing agencies in Los Angeles County manage over 12 miles of trails. Seven of those agencies, including DPR, manage or maintain between 100 and 300 miles of trails while the United States Forest Service is responsible for maintaining over 1,400 miles.

As part of the data collection effort, trail managing agencies were asked to provide condition assessments of the trails within their systems. Unfortunately, only 18 of the 62 trail managing agencies were able to provide this level of information for all or part of the trails within their systems. There are Regional Trails located in each of the eleven Regional Study Areas. On average, there is 0.33 of a mile of Regional Trail per 1,000 residents of Los Angeles County. Trails are distributed unevenly across the County and trail mileage varies widely by Regional Study Areas, ranging from just 0.03 per 1,000 residents in the Metro

Study Area to 39.83 per 1,000 residents in Santa Catalina Island. There are opportunities to create new trails and fill gaps in trails in both “trail-rich” and “trail-poor” areas.

On average, over 96% of County residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride and nearly all County residents live within a 5-mile drive of a trailhead or access point.

- » A significantly lower than average percentage of residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride of a trailhead or access point in the Antelope Valley RSA (57%), Santa Catalina Island RSA (73%) and Santa Clarita Valley RSA (86%).
- » In addition, in Antelope Valley RSA (89%) a significantly lower than average percentage of residents live within a 5-mile drive of a trailhead or access point.

Countywide, 30% of trailheads and access points are served by public transit (defined as located within a 0.5-mile walk of a public transit stop).

- » This percentage is lower than the County average in the Antelope Valley RSA (1%), Santa Clarita Valley RSA (11%), Santa Monica Mountains RSA (7%) and East San Gabriel Valley RSA (18%).

The PNA+ examines regional trails as key amenities for outdoor recreation. However, DPR recognizes that trails also serve as critical active transportation infrastructure in some areas of Los Angeles County, and specifically in parts of the Antelope Valley. As such, trails serve to connect residents with important community destinations such as parks, libraries, and shopping areas.



REGIONAL TRAIL DEFINITIONS

REGIONAL TRAIL

Primary Purpose: Physical Activity, Commuting and Recreation Typically, a natural surface trail (2-8 feet wide) that extends over large expanses of land, providing a continuous route through diverse communities, landscapes and natural features. Regional trails often cross jurisdictional boundaries. Refer to Natural Trail 2 and/or Natural Trail 3 guidelines per the County of Los Angeles Trails Manual for additional detail.

RECREATIONAL PATHWAY/URBAN PEDESTRIAN PATH

Primary Purpose: Physical Activity, Commuting and Recreation

Typically, either a natural surface (8-10 feet wide) or paved (10-11 feet wide) trail located in highly populated areas within local/urban parks or adjacent to a visitor center. Designed for higher frequency of use and accessibility, intended to provide the public with access to nature and exercise. Refer to Recreational Pathway and Urban Pedestrian Path guidelines per the County of Los Angeles Trails Manual for additional detail.

MULTI-USE TRAIL

Primary Purpose: Physical Activity, Commuting and Recreation

Typically, a natural surface trail that accommodates equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers. Motor vehicles are not allowed. Refer to Natural Trail 2 and/or Natural Trail 3 guidelines per the County of Los Angeles Trails Manual for additional detail.

TRAILHEAD OR ACCESS POINT

Primary Purpose: Physical Activity, Commuting and Recreation

Designated access or entry point to a trail. May include amenities such as parking facilities, restrooms, picnic areas, etc.

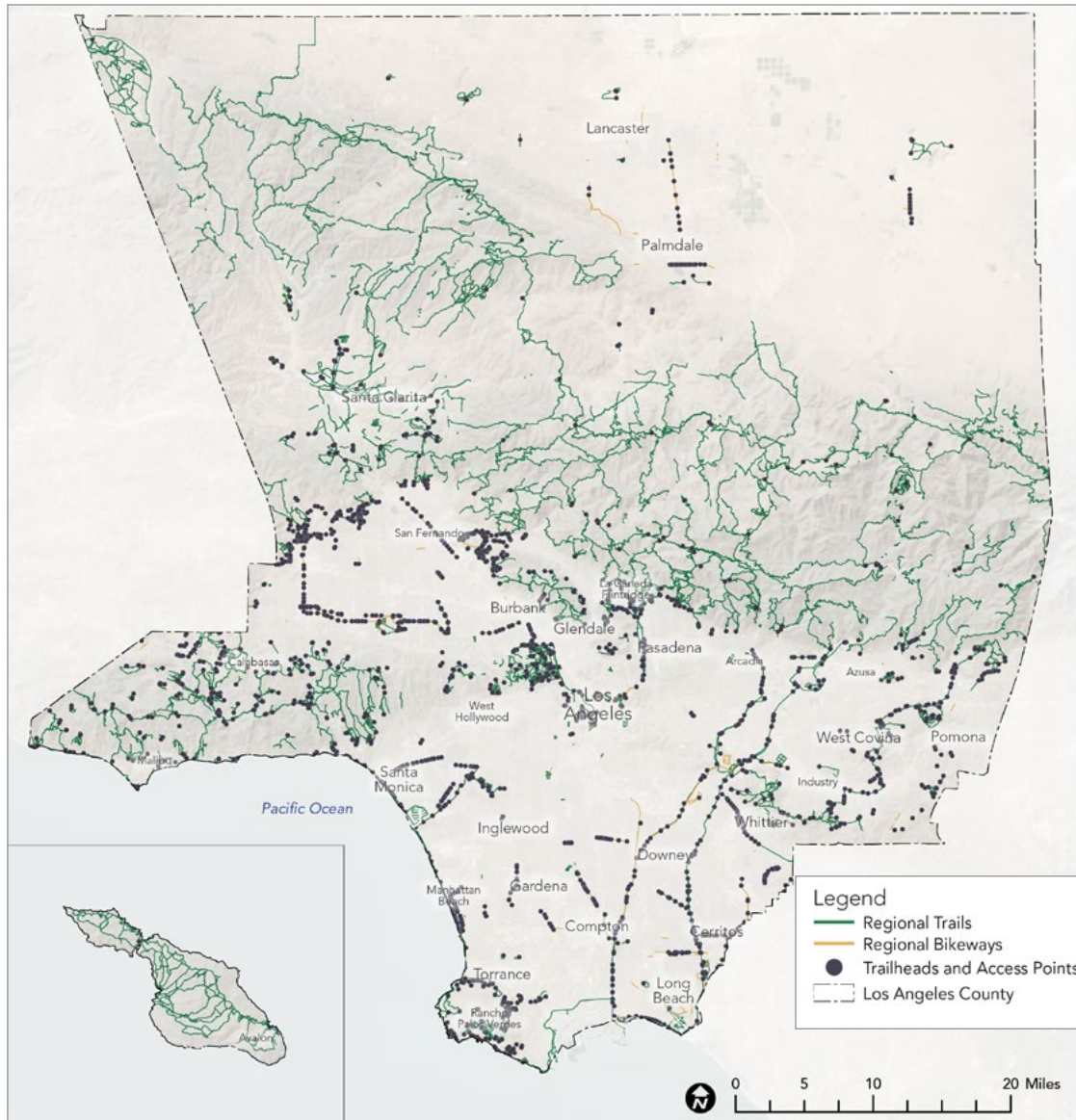
► Los Angeles County Trails Policies

Goal P/R 4: Improved accessibility and connectivity to a comprehensive trail system including rivers, greenways, and community linkages.

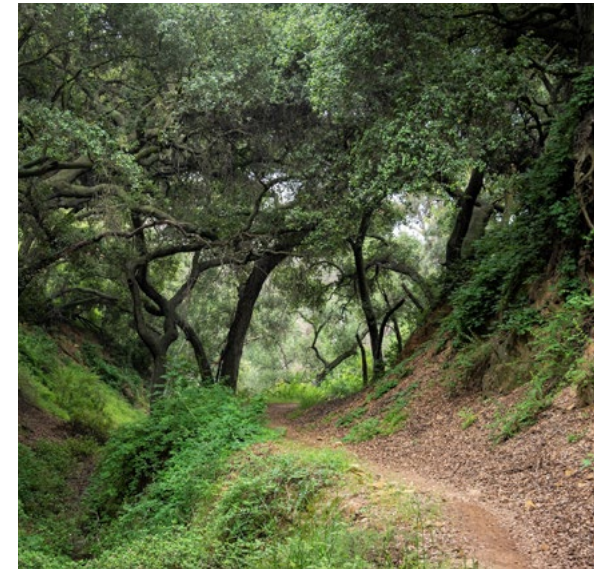
- » Policy P/R 4.1: Create multi-use trails to accommodate all users.
- » Policy P/R 4.2: Develop staging areas and trail heads at strategic locations to accommodate multi-use trail users.
- » Policy P/R 4.3: Develop a network of feeder trails into regional trails.
- » Policy P/R 4.4: Maintain and design multi-purpose trails in ways that minimize circulation conflicts among trail users.
- » Policy P/R 4.5: Collaborate with other public, non-profit, and private organizations in the development of a comprehensive trail system.
- » Policy P/R 4.6: Create new multi-use trails that link community destinations including parks, schools and libraries.

(Source: Parks and Recreation Element of the Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan)

Figure 4-41: Regional Trail Network



Map source: LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory
Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.



► Regional Trail Metrics



3,306

MILES OF REGIONAL TRAILS



0.33

MILE OF REGIONAL TRAIL PER 1,000 COUNTY RESIDENTS

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-42: Proximity to Regional Trail Access Points : Walking Distance

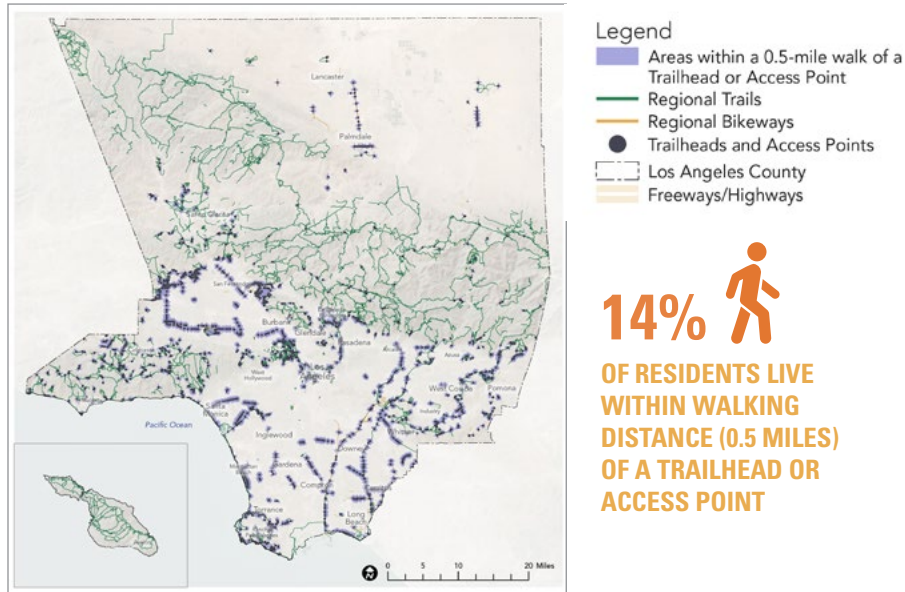


Figure 4-43: Proximity to Regional Trail Access Points: Cycling Distance

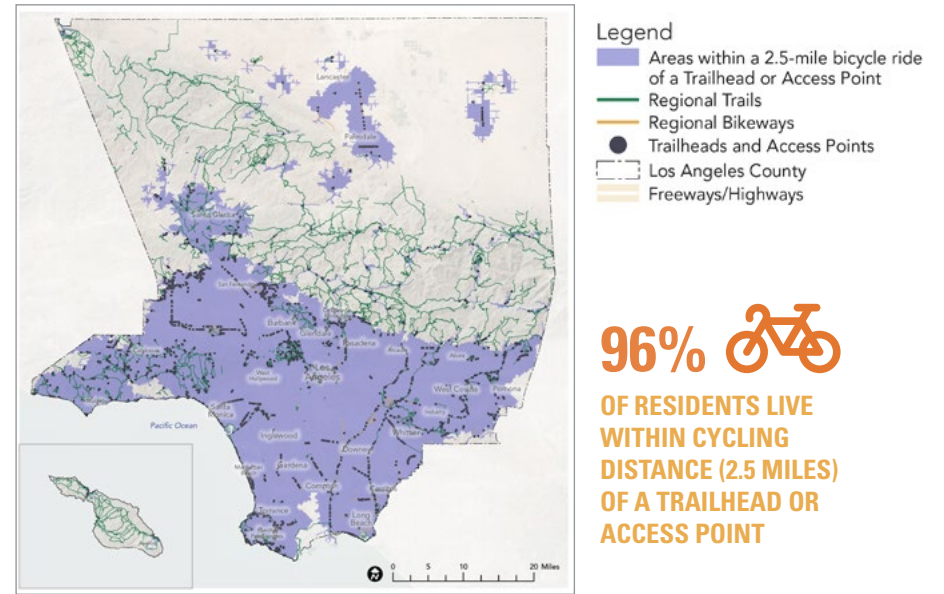


Figure 4-44: Proximity to Regional Trail Access Points: Driving Distance

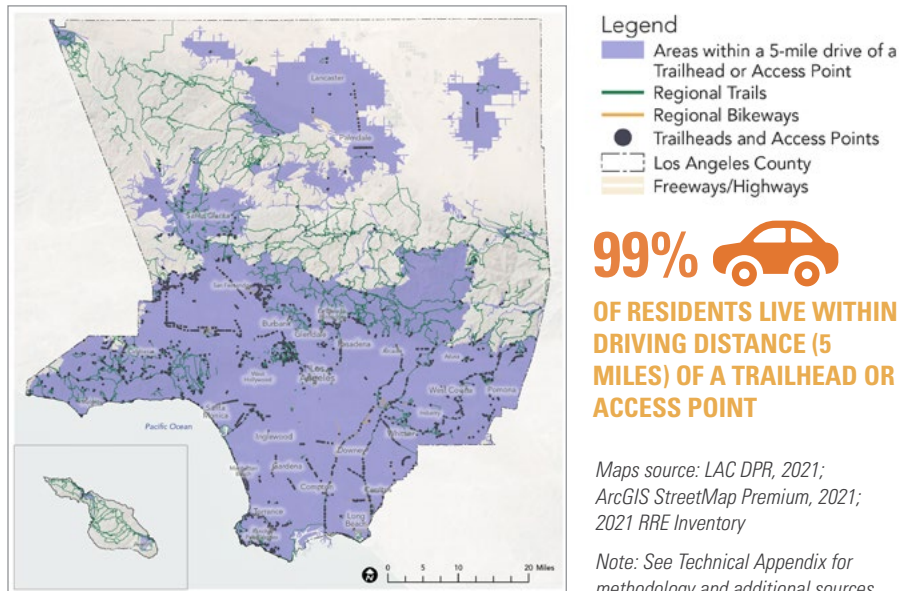


Figure 4-45: Transit Service to Regional Trail Access Points

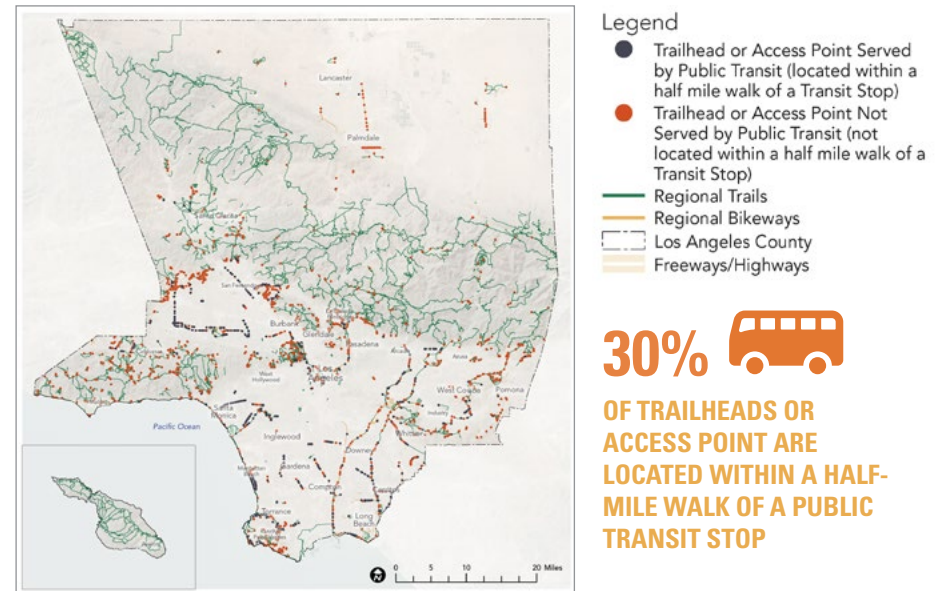
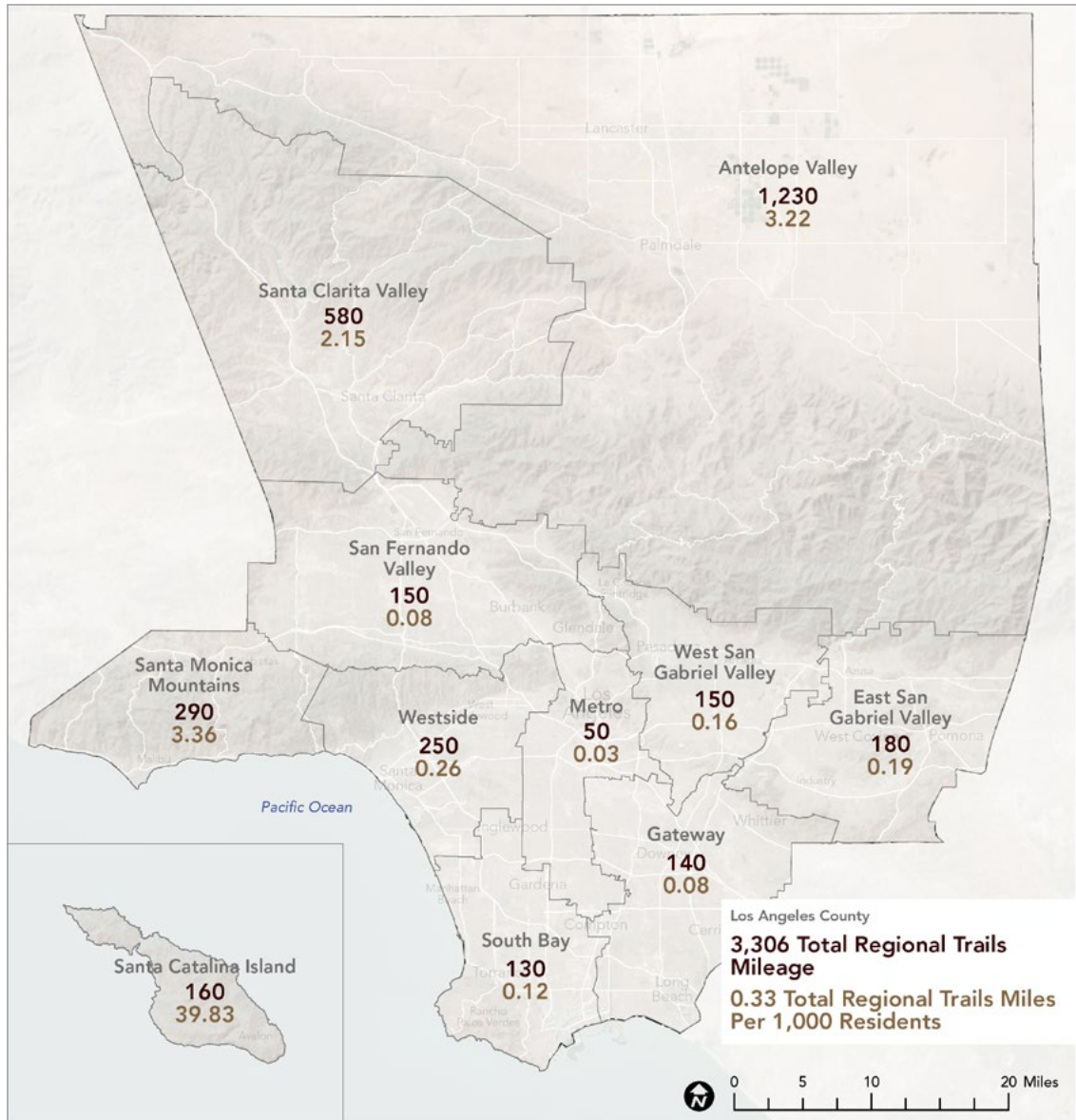


Figure 4-46: Regional Trail Metrics by Regional Study Area



Legend

- Total Regional Trails Mileage Per Regional Study Area
- Total Miles Per 1,000 Residents Per Regional Study Area
- Regional Study Areas
- Los Angeles County
- Freeways/Highways

Map source: PNA, 2016; LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory





4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-47: Regional Trail Access Metrics by Regional Study Area

This table presents a comparison of Regional Trail metrics for Los Angeles County and each of the eleven Regional Study Areas. These metrics include: 1) the number of miles of Regional Trails, 2) the number of miles of Regional Trails per 1,000 Regional Study Area residents, 3) the percentage of residents that live within walking distance (0.5 miles),

cycling distance (2.5 miles) and driving distance (5 miles) of a Regional Trail entry point or trailhead, and 4) the percentage of Regional Trail entry points or trailheads that are located within walking distance (0.5 miles) of a public transit stop.

► Regional Trail Miles and Access

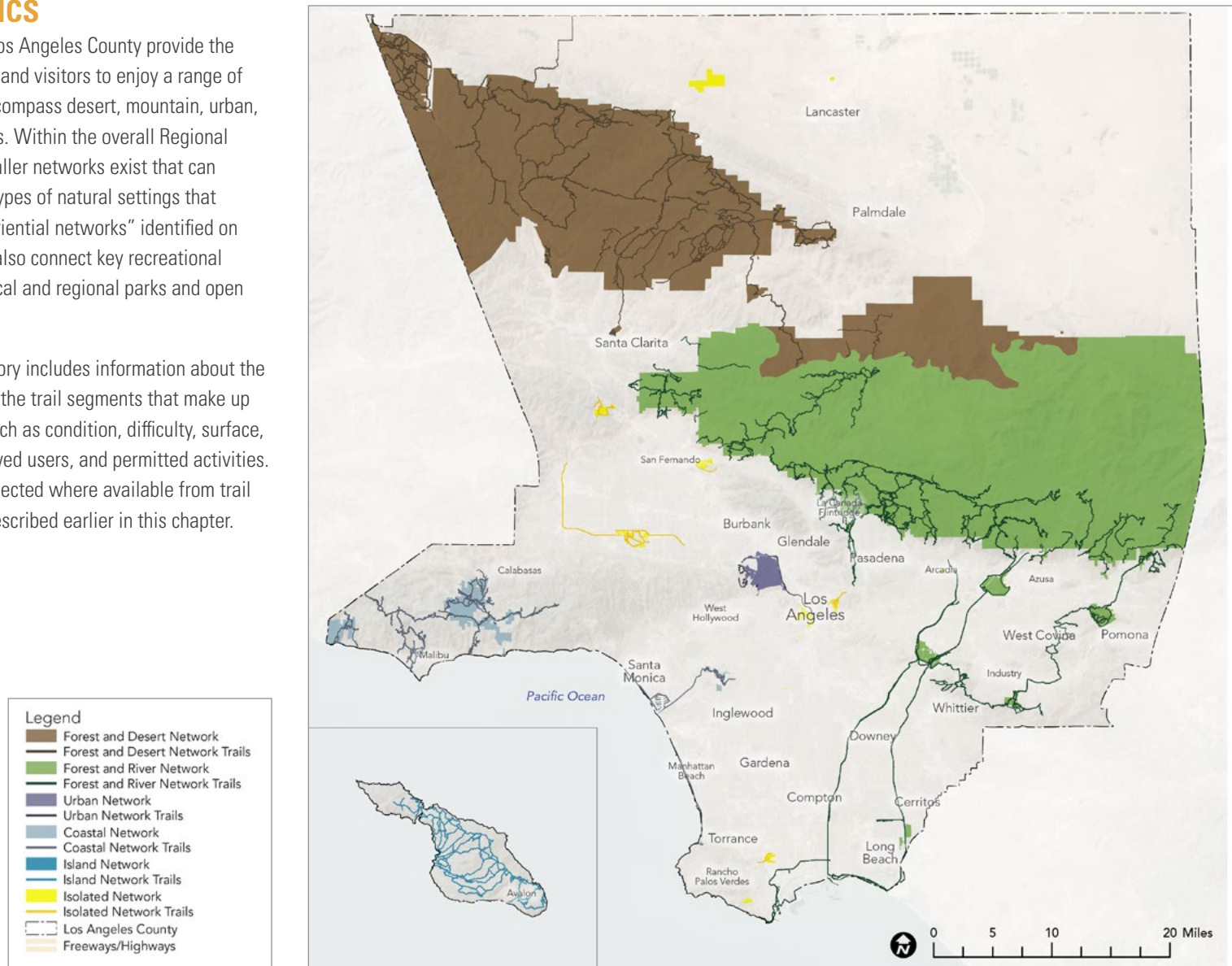
Study Area	Total Miles	Miles Per 1,000 Residents	% of Residents that Live Within:			% of Trailheads:
			 0.5 mile Walking Distance of a Trailhead	 2.5 mile Cycling Distance of a Trailhead	 5 mile Driving Distance of a Trailhead	 Within 0.5 mile Walking Distance of a Transit Stop
Los Angeles County	3,306	0.33	14%	96%	99%	30%
1 Antelope Valley	1,230	3.22	5%	57%	89%	1%
2 Santa Clarita Valley	580	2.15	8%	86%	97%	11%
3 San Fernando Valley	150	0.08	21%	97%	98%	35%
4 Santa Monica Mountains	290	3.36	20%	90%	98%	35%
5 Westside	250	0.26	17%	100%	100%	38%
6 Metro	50	0.03	6%	99%	99%	35%
7 West San Gabriel Valley	150	0.16	13%	100%	100%	30%
8 East San Gabriel Valley	180	0.19	12%	92%	100%	18%
9 South Bay	130	0.12	14%	97%	100%	51%
10 Gateway	140	0.08	22%	100%	100%	46%
11 Santa Catalina Island	160	39.83	0%	73%	73%	33%

REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

The vast landscapes of Los Angeles County provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy a range of trail experiences that encompass desert, mountain, urban, and coastal environments. Within the overall Regional Trail System, several smaller networks exist that can be characterized by the types of natural settings that they traverse. The “experiential networks” identified on the accompanying map, also connect key recreational destinations including local and regional parks and open spaces.

The Regional Trail Inventory includes information about the unique characteristics of the trail segments that make up the overall the system such as condition, difficulty, surface, parking availability, allowed users, and permitted activities. This information was collected where available from trail managing agencies as described earlier in this chapter.

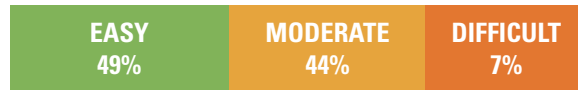
Figure 4-48: Regional Trail System: Experiential Networks



Map source: LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

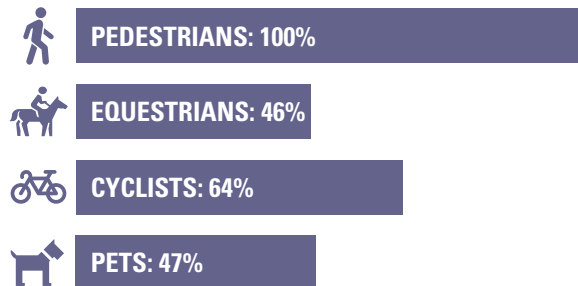
TRAIL DIFFICULTY (3,444 MILES)



TRAIL SURFACE (2,989 SEGMENTS/72% OF TOTAL)



ALLOWED USERS (3,244 SEGMENTS/79% OF TOTAL)



DEDICATED MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING AVAILABLE (2,059 SEGMENTS/50% OF TOTAL)



IDENTIFIED AS ADA ACCESSIBLE (4,129 SEGMENTS/100% OF TOTAL)



MOST COMMON TYPES OF SCENERY:



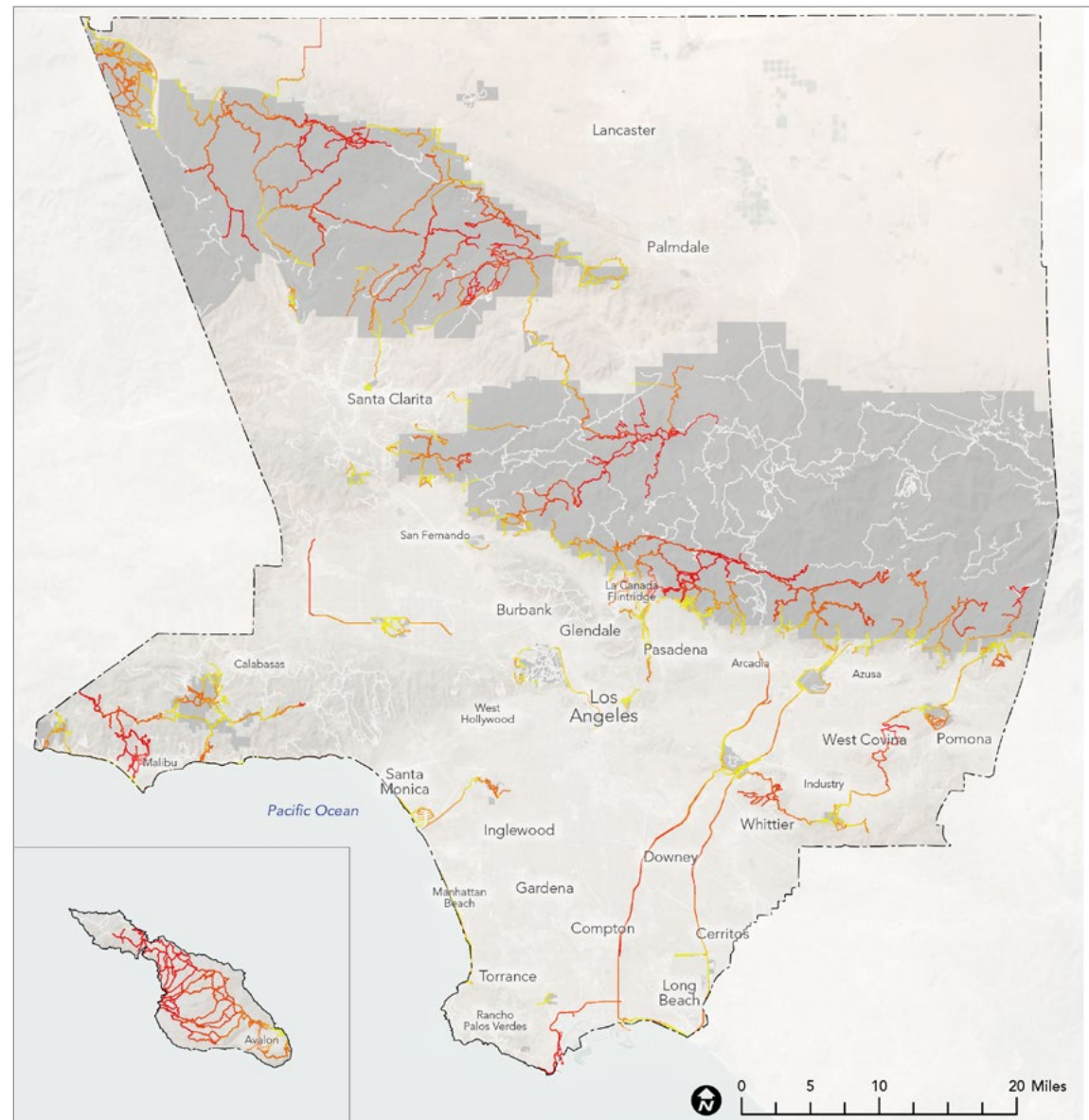
TRAIL CONNECTIVITY

Trail connectivity between sites is vital to a cohesive and functioning regional trail network. Some of the largest and most popular recreational destinations, or “regional anchors”, in the county are currently connected by trails. For example, river corridors provide significant trail connectivity between the Angeles National Forest and coastal destinations in Long Beach and San Pedro. There is also a well-connected network within the Santa Monica Mountains. The Pacific Crest Trail connects the Angeles National Forest through Agua Dulce and continues to the northwestern Antelope Valley.

However, some regional anchors are more isolated. The Los Angeles River corridor, for example, has the potential to provide significant north-south trail connectivity through the most densely populated areas of the County, but currently has gaps south of Downtown and north above Griffith Park. These gaps cut off connectivity between regional anchors such as Lake Balboa Park in the San Fernando Valley and coastal destinations in Long Beach and San Pedro. Connectivity is also lacking in the Antelope Valley RSA where there is ample open space, but few developed trails. By contrast, in the Metro RSA, the density of development and lack of remaining open space present challenges for new trail development.



Figure 4-49: Regional Trail Connectivity



Map source: LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

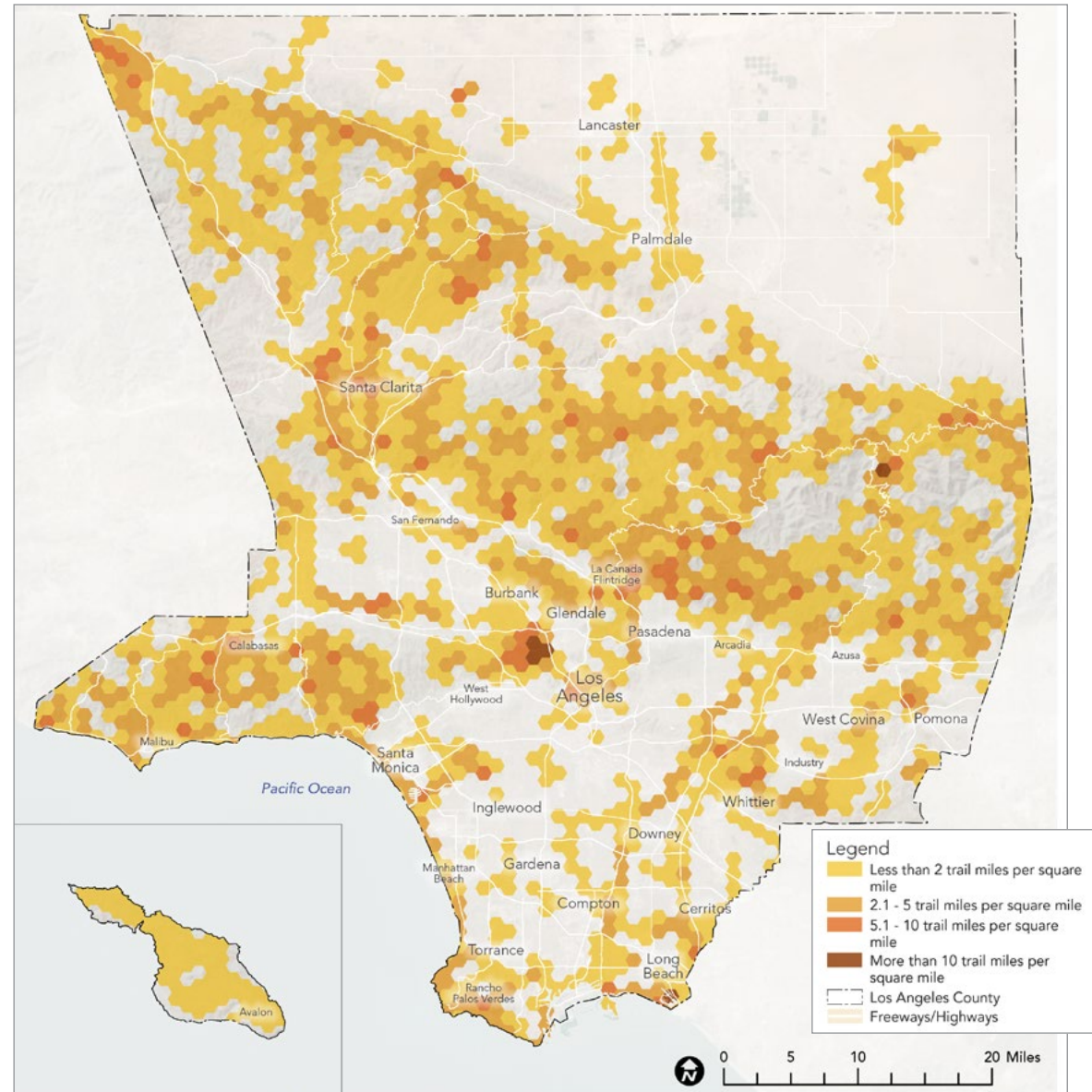
TRAIL DENSITY

Trail density is a measure of the number of developed miles of trail that exist within each square mile area of Los Angeles County. By mapping Trail Density, it is possible to identify at a fine-grained scale, areas where trail infrastructure is particularly concentrated as well as areas that do not include this amenity.

On average, there are 0.81 miles of trail per square mile (mi/sqmi) within the County. The Metro RSA (0.45 mi/sqmi) and the Antelope Valley (0.66 mi/sqmi) represent the areas with the lowest trail density. A number of factors contribute to an area's level of trail development. The Antelope Valley RSA's lack of both varied terrain recreational destinations has historically deterred significant trail development. The Metro RSA is constrained by a dense urban area with little available open space for significant trail development, however, there is a high concentration of developed trails located in nearby Griffith Park.

The Santa Monica Mountains RSA (1.54 mi/sqmi) and the Santa Catalina Island RSA (1.52 mi/sqmi) represent the areas with the highest trail density within Los Angeles County. These areas have a relatively large amount of preserved open space ideal for trail development as well as dedicated public agencies that manage and expand upon these well-known and highly frequented trail networks.

Figure 4-50: Regional Trail Density Analysis



Map source: LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE USE

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure helps to support healthy, active lifestyles as well as reduce vehicular trips and associated air pollution. In order to better understand cycling and pedestrian behavior in Los Angeles County, DPR requested data from Strava Metro. Strava is a fitness tracking social media application with over 90 million members worldwide. Trip data that is provided by members through the application is aggregated and deidentified according to industry standards. This data is then provided at no cost to public agencies through the Strava Metro online dashboard in an effort to increase the amount of data-driven information about local mobility patterns that is available to planners as they make decisions about the development and management of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure⁷.

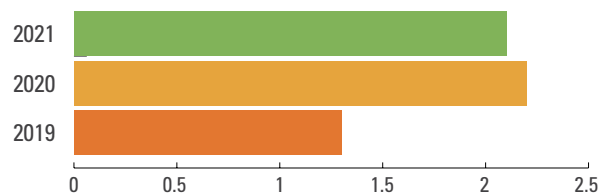
Based on annual summary data of cycling and pedestrian behavior in Los Angeles County provided to DPR through the Strava Metro online dashboard, the following trends are apparent. Because these findings are derived from a sample of cyclists and pedestrians, they are presented here as percentage changes relative to 2019 baseline information rather than numerical counts⁸.

Cycling Behavior

» Trips Increased

The number of total bicycling trips observed in 2020 represents an increase of 69% over 2019 totals. There was a large spike in activity observed between March and May of 2020. For the month of May, 2020, there were nearly twice as many trips reported than in May 2019. This timeframe in the spring of 2020 coincides with the lifting of stay-at-home orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For 2021, the gains in trip numbers have declined by 4.5% from 2020 but have remained above 2019 levels.

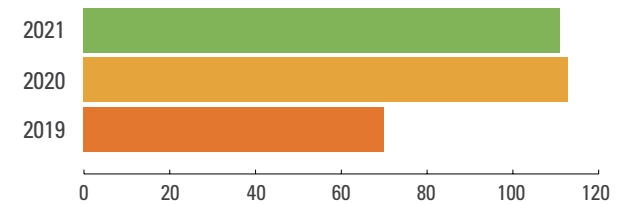
CYCLING TRIPS (IN MILLIONS)



» Number of People Making Trips Increased

The number of people who reported bicycle trips through Strava increased by 61% from 2019 to 2020. The frequency of trips increased slightly from 18 trips per person in 2019 to 19 trips per person in 2020. In 2021, the number of people who reported trips remained elevated from 2019 levels, “decreasing by only 1.8% from 2020 and trip frequency remained constant at 19 trips per person.”, and trip frequency remained constant at 19 trips per person.

NUMBER OF CYCLISTS (IN THOUSANDS)



» The Percentage of Locals Increased

The percentage of locals using bicycle infrastructure in the County increased from 58% in 2019 to 71% in 2020. In 2021, the gains in local use have remained above 2019 levels at 66%.

LOCALS AND VISITORS (PERCENTAGE OF CYCLISTS)

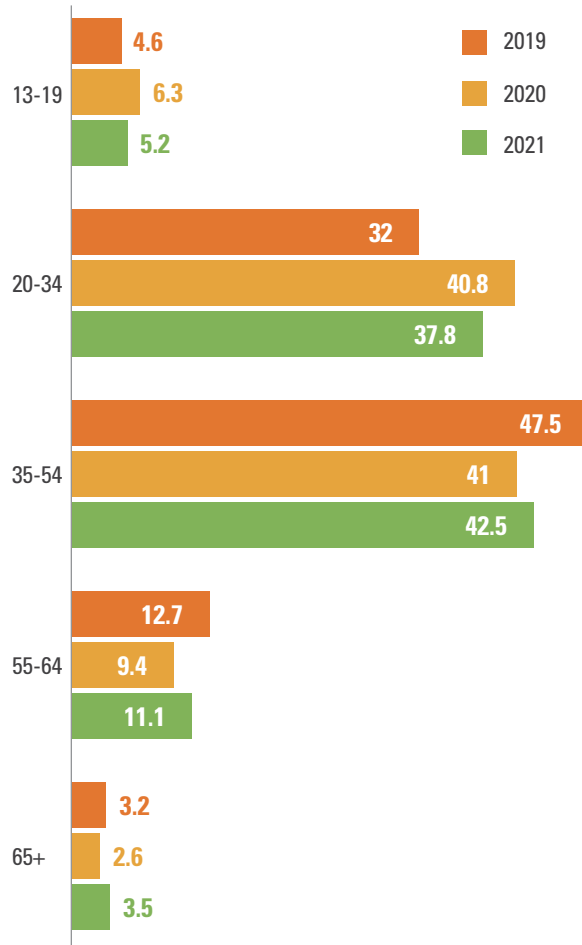


⁷ Strava Metro. “FAQs.” Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://metro.strava.com/>

⁸ This report includes aggregated and de-identified data from Strava Metro.

4.0 Regional Recreation

PERCENTAGE OF CYCLISTS BY AGE (IN YEARS)

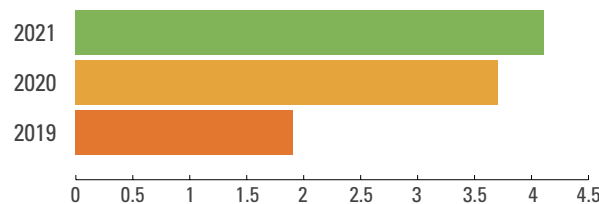


» The Age of Cyclists Decreased
Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of users in the 35-54 year old age range decreased from 48% to 41%, while users in the 20-34 year old age range increased from 32% to 40%. Declines were also recorded in the 55-64 year old and 65+ year old age ranges, while an increase occurred in the 13-19 year old age range. In 2021, the distribution of users by age trended closer to 2019 levels.

Pedestrian Behavior

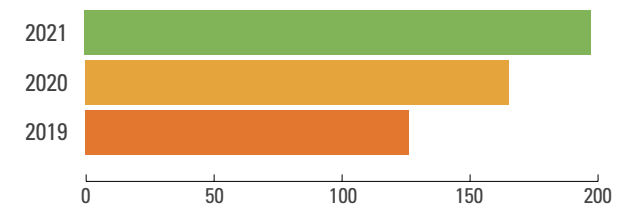
» Trips Increased
The number of total pedestrian trips (walking, running and hiking) increased by 95% in 2020 compared with 2019 totals. There was a large spike of observed activity between March and May of 2020. For the month of May 2020, there were 2.8 times as many trips reported than in May 2019. This timeframe in the spring of 2020 coincides with the lifting of stay-at-home orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the gains in trip numbers continued with an annual increase of 11% over 2020.

PEDESTRIAN TRIPS (IN MILLIONS)

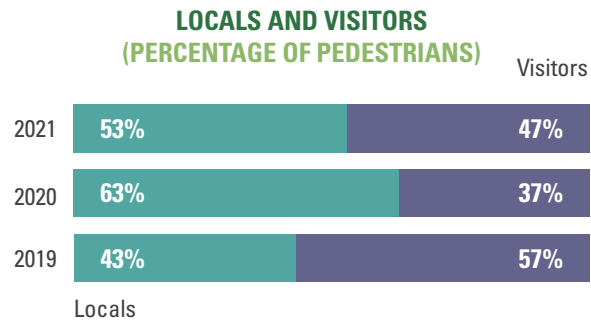


» Number of People Making Trips Increased
The number of people who reported pedestrian trips increased by 31% in 2020 compared with 2019 participant totals. The frequency of trips increased more notably from 15 trips per person in 2019 to 23 trips per person in 2020. In 2021, the total number of people who reported pedestrian trips exceeded both 2019 and 2020 levels, with an annual increase of 19%. Trip frequency declined slightly to 20 trips per person.

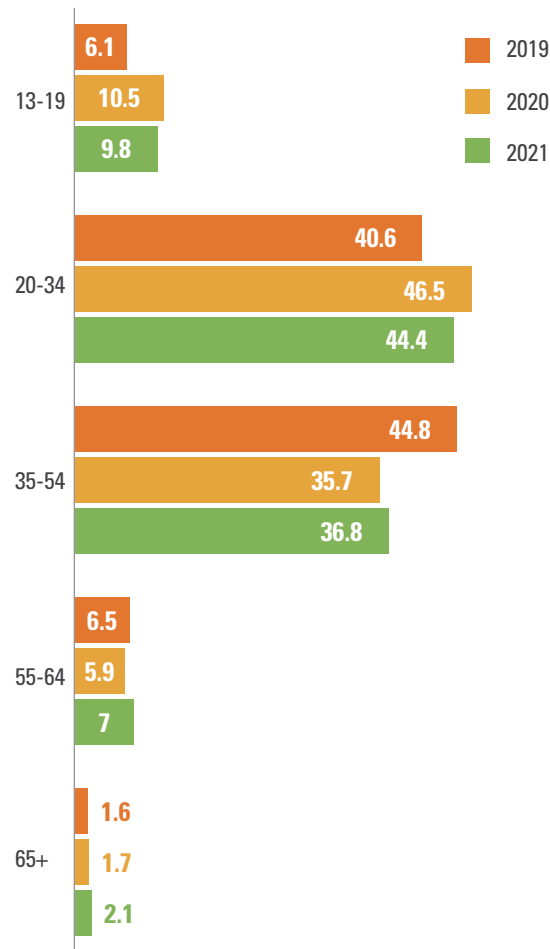
NUMBER OF PEDESTRIANS (IN THOUSANDS)



- » The Percentage of Locals Increased
The percentage of locals reporting walking, running and hiking trips in the County increased from 43% in 2019 to 63% in 2020. In 2021, the gains in local use remained above 2019 levels at 53%.



**PERCENTAGE OF PEDESTRIANS BY AGE
(IN YEARS)**



- » The Age of Walkers, Runners and Hikers Decreased
Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of users in the 35-54 year old age range decreased from 45% to 36%, while users in the 20-34 year old age range increased from 41% to 47%. An increase occurred in the 13-19 year old age range from 6.5% to 10%, while the percentage of users in the 55 year old and older ranges remained consistent. In 2021, the distribution of users by age remained close to 2020 levels, with a larger percentage of younger users than were recorded in 2019.

4.4 COMMUNITY USE AND PERCEPTIONS

Several different methods were used to gain a broad understanding of 1) who visits the Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas and Regional Trails that were identified in the Regional Site and Trail Inventory and, 2) how residents perceive and use these spaces and the amenities that they provide.

These methods included:

- » Analyzing Visitorship Data for a sample of parks and recreation areas
- » Hosting a range of Community Engagement Sessions and summarizing the feedback received from residents of Los Angeles County into key themes as described in Chapter 2
- » Conducting a series of Community Surveys and tabulating all responses to identify use patterns and perceptions as described in Chapter 2



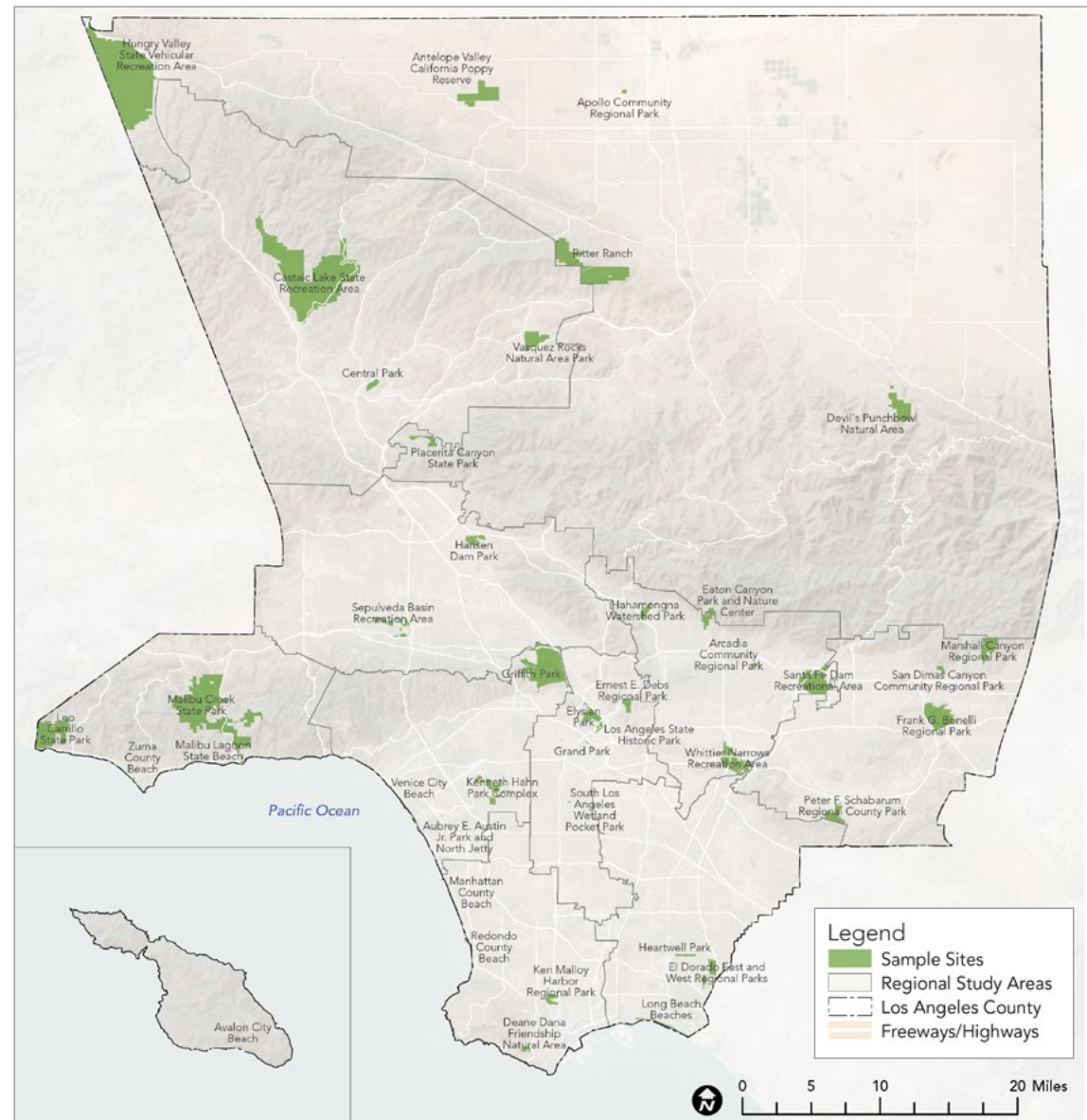
WHO VISITS REGIONAL SITES?

In general, detailed information about who visits public parks and recreation areas is limited because it has traditionally been time-consuming and costly to count and survey individual visitors on-location. While detailed visitorship studies have been undertaken for individual parks located in Los Angeles County in the past, the goal of this report is to gain a broad, systematic understanding of whether regional park and recreation areas are used equitably by all Los Angeles County residents.

In order to advance that understanding, the County procured cellphone generated visitorship data from Unacast, a location data platform, for a sub-sample of approximately 8% of the nearly 500 parks and recreation areas included in the Regional Site Inventory. The sample includes **41** sites that span the eleven Regional Study Areas and include a wide range of natural settings and recreational opportunities. The visitorship data covers the two-year time frame from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2020. Full visitorship reports for each sample site are included in the Regional Study Area Profiles presented in Appendix A.

While cellphone generated human mobility data provides unprecedented insight into broad patterns of park use, allowing park planners to identify and compare systemwide trends, there are some limitations associated with this method of gathering visitorship information. For instance, the data presented in the PNA+ is limited to adults over the age of 18. For sites that attract large numbers of children on field trips where they are not accompanied by their individual guardians, visitorship totals may be understated. Additionally, in areas with poor cellular coverage, some visits may not be reflected in the data.

Figure 4-51: Sample Sites for Visitorship Analysis



Map source: Unacast, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

► *Total Annual Visits for All Sample Sites Combined—2019 and 2020 and Percent from Los Angeles County*

Over 59 Million

visits to the Regional Sites in this sample occurred in 2019 and 2020

61%

of these visits were from residents of LA County

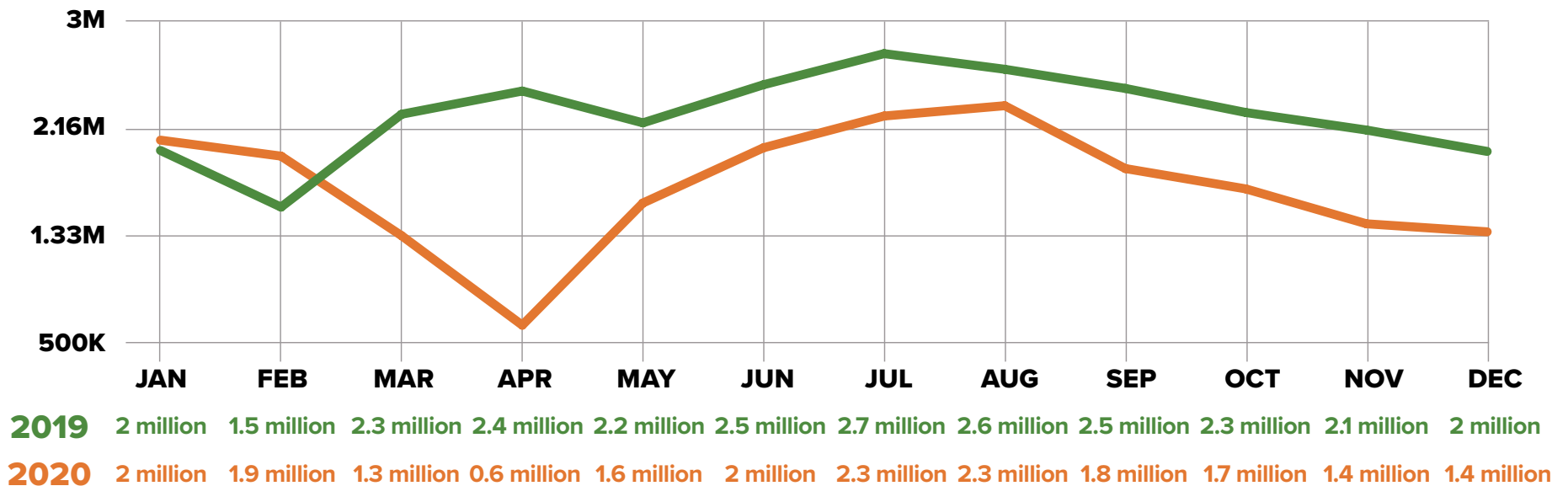
39%

of these visits were from visitors from outside of LA County

Through the analysis of this data, it is possible to summarize and compare the following visitorship information for each site:

- » How many visits are made to each regional park or recreation area monthly and annually?
- » Who visits regional parks and recreation areas (age, race, ethnicity, income level, education level and gender)?
- » When do people visit regional parks and recreation areas?
- » Where do visitors come from and how far do they typically travel to reach regional parks and recreation areas?
- » How frequently do visitors from different parts of the County travel to regional parks and recreation areas?

Figure 4-52: Total Monthly Visits (All Sites)



The dramatic decline in March 2020 was due to stay-at-home orders issued in response to COVID-19.

Figure 4-53: Total Annual Visits per Site—2019 and 2020

	2019	2020
Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve	68,470	9,779
Apollo Community Regional Park	61,714	66,135
Arcadia Community Regional Park	560,177	415,833
Aubrey E. Austin Jr. Park and North Jetty	98,520	145,851
Avalon City Beaches	352,784	364,727
Castaic Lake State Recreation Area	357,473	386,057
Central Park	733,582	530,075
Deane Dana Friendship Natural Area	48,940	54,278
Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area	28,675	12,238*
Eaton Canyon Natural Area and Nature Area	197,329	103,515
El Dorado East Regional Park	897,461	716,177
Elysian Park	1,737,438	1,299,904
Ernest E. Debs Regional Park	196,193	219,138
Frank G Bonelli Regional Park	1,032,134	977,712
Grand Park	764,180	291,193
Griffith Park	6,090,580	2,738,933
Hahamongna Watershed Park	398,435	284,316
Hansen Dam Park	529,316	387,426
Heartwell Park	491,262	380,454
Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area	81,195	62,252
Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park	374,982	249,149

Note: 2020 figures were significantly impacted by COVID-19. Monthly and total fluctuations were caused by issuance of stay-at-home orders, closures of popular destinations such as shopping malls and theme parks, pent-up demand for visits to beaches and other recreational locations after stay-at-home orders were relaxed or lifted, etc.

	2019	2020
Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area	1,097,887	862,674
Lake Balboa Park	1,407,289	859,369
Leo Carrillo State Park	85,272	160,785
Long Beach Beaches	934,681	1,108,675
Los Angeles State Historic Park	187,896	100,479
Malibu Creek State Park	170,835	189,004
Malibu Lagoon State Beach	548,509	431,140
Manhattan County Beach	662,604	882,045
Marshall Canyon Regional Park	101,527	106,387
Peter F Schabarum Regional County Park	374,301	313,850
Placerita Canyon State Park	38,659	23,436
Redondo County Beach	1,423,897	1,467,602
Ritter Ranch	3,136	3,057
San Dimas Canyon Community Regional Park	99,910	89,969
Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area	562,756	323,031
South Los Angeles Wetlands Park	94,981	81,117
Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park	99,452	95,908
Venice City Beach	2,444,322	1,631,834
Whittier Narrows Recreation Area	1,076,519	879,734
Zuma County Beach	665,668	1,150,434

*In September 2020, the Bobcat Fire destroyed over 30,000 acres of land, which included many parts of the Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area, including the Nature Center. As a result, the Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area was closed to the public from September 2020 to March 2022.

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-54: How far do Los Angeles County residents travel to visit Regional Sites?

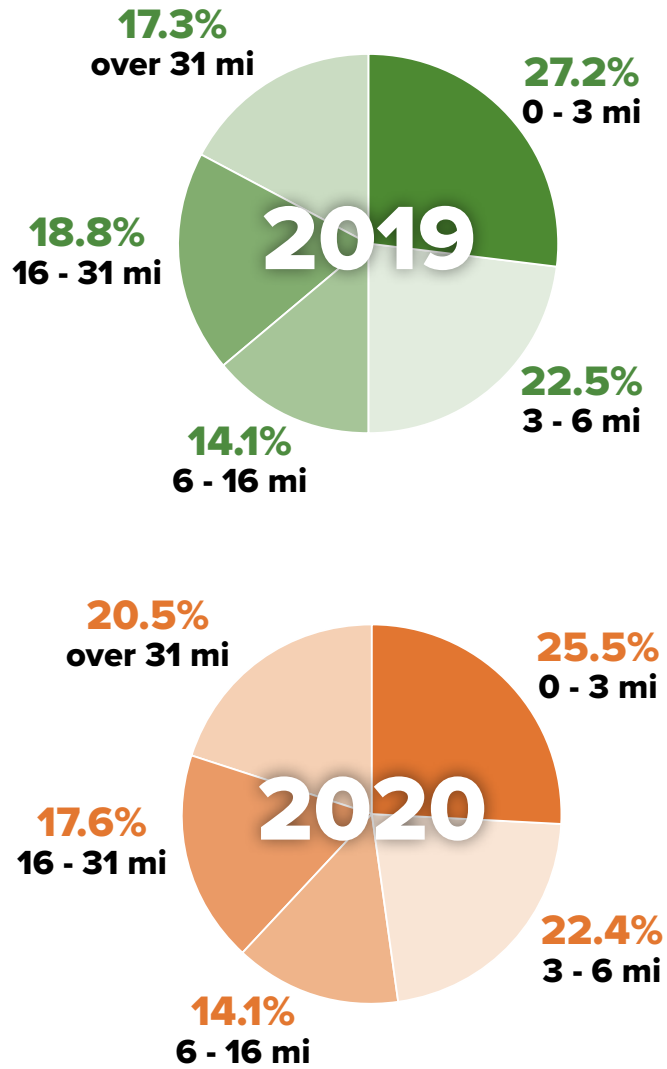


Figure 4-55: Where do Regional Site Visitors Live?

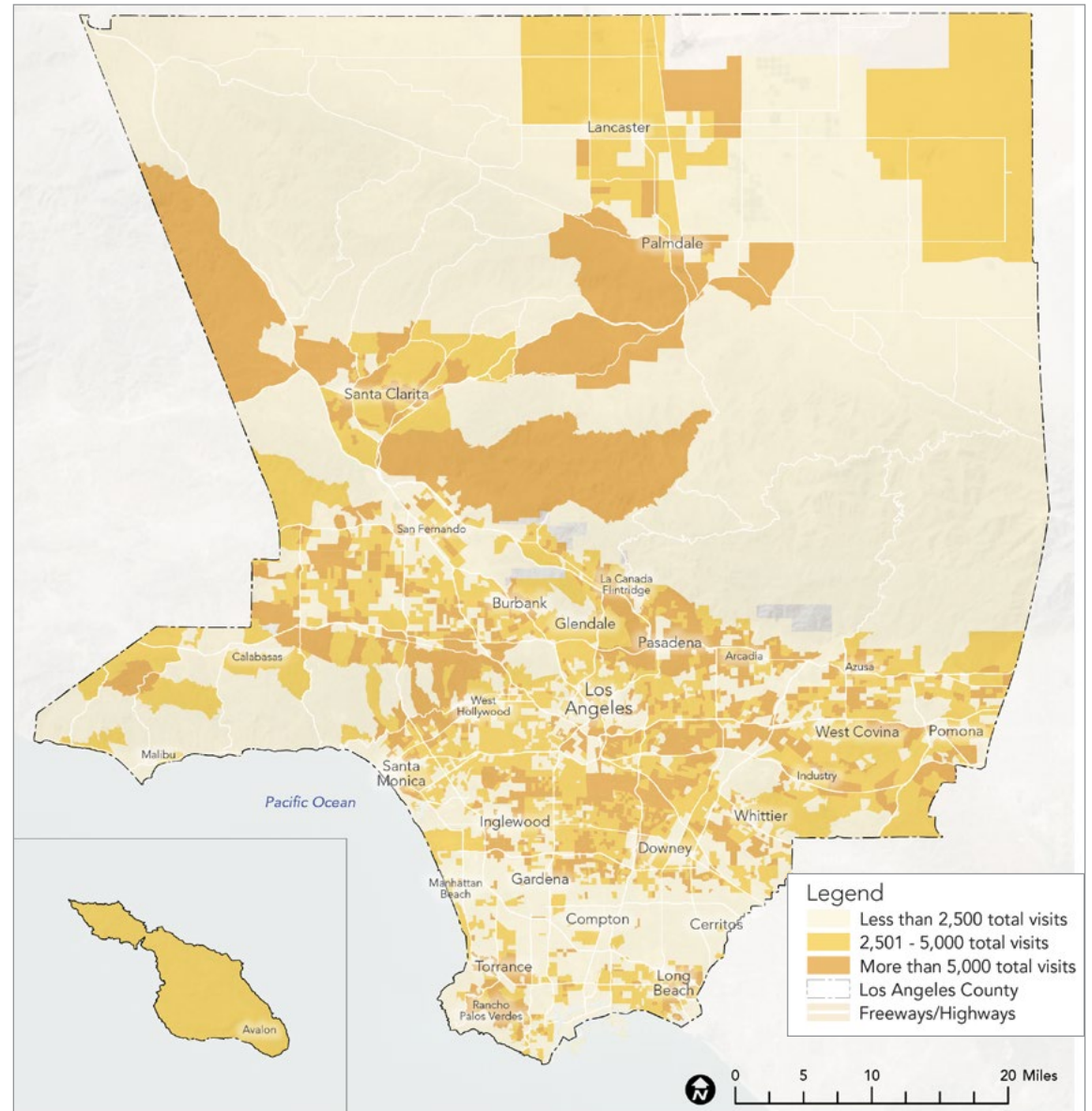
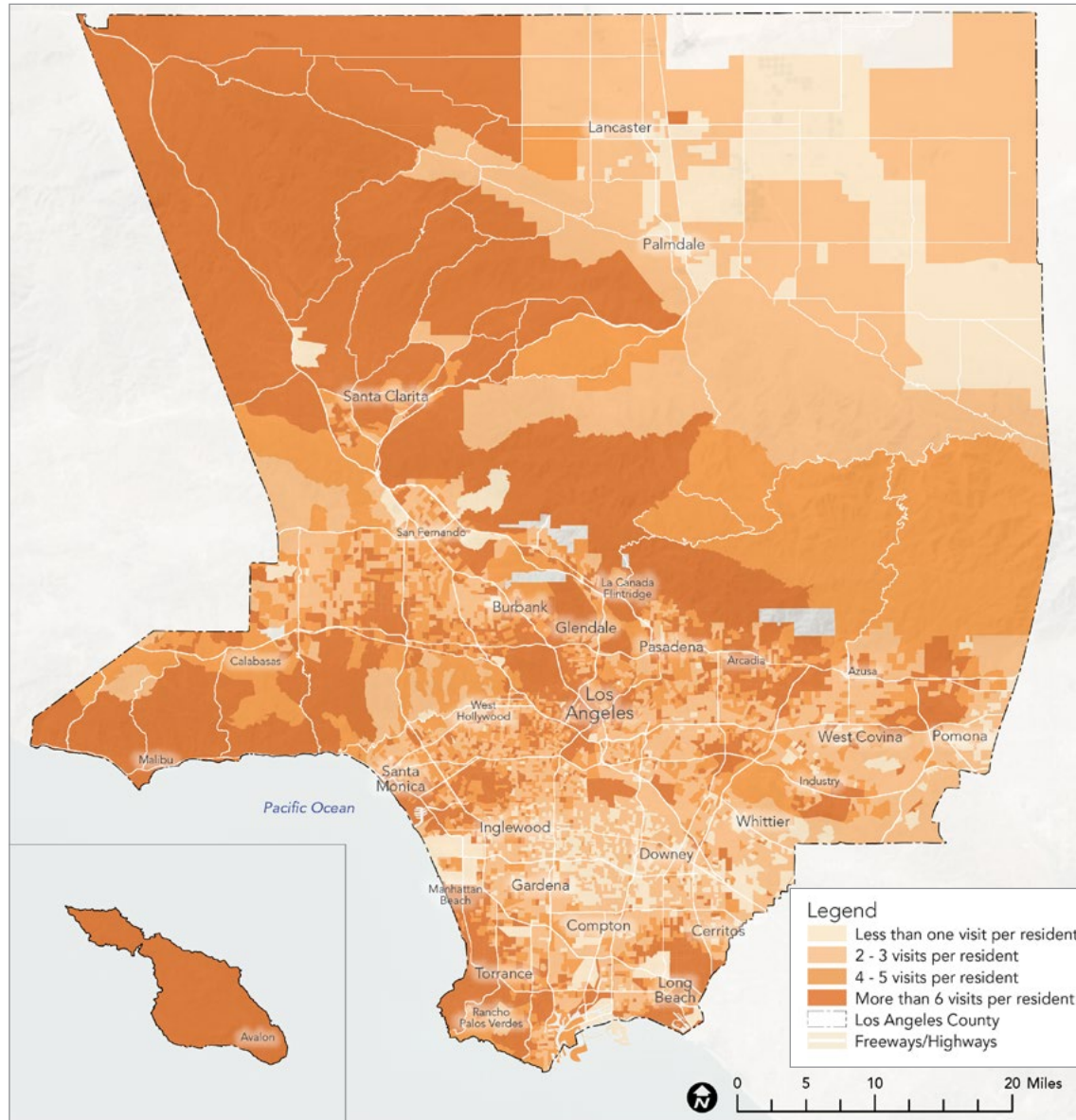


Figure 4-56: How Many Regional Site Visits were Made per Resident between January 2019 and December 2020?



Map source: US Census, 2019; Unacast, 2021

It is also useful to compare this information to the general population of Los Angeles County to identify whether residents who belong to different demographic groups or reside in different areas of the County are equally represented at regional parks and recreation areas.

Compared with the general population of Los Angeles County, the park visitors observed in the sample:

- **Are more likely to earn high incomes**
 - » Over 35% of observed park visitors earn more than \$100,000 per year compared with 17.3% of the general population of the County.
- **Are less likely to earn low incomes**
 - » 33% of observed park visitors earn less than \$50,000 per year compared with 53.2% of the general population of the County.
- **Are less likely to be Black or Hispanic**
 - » Although the percentage of non-White visitors increased between 2019 and 2020, minorities remained underrepresented compared with the general population of Los Angeles County.
 - » 6% of observed park visitors are identified as Black compared with over 7.6% of the general population of the County.
 - » 36% of observed park visitors are identified as Hispanic compared with 48% of the general population of the County.

4.0 Regional Recreation

Figure 4-57: Regional Site Visitor Demographics

Education

	High School Diploma	Some College, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Masters Degree & Above
2019	15.2%	19.9%	7.7%	20.0%	8.3%
2020	16.6%	20.9%	7.2%	17.6%	6.8%

Income

	Less than \$24,999	\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$124,999	More than \$125,000
2019	16.2%	14.4%	19.9%	12.6%	10.2%	26.6%
2020	19.3%	13.9%	21.1%	13.4%	9.2%	22.8%

Gender Identity

	Male	Female
2019	48.3%	51.7%
2020	48.6%	51.4%

Race/Ethnicity

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	2 or More	Other
2019	1.1%	10.8%	6.3%	28.3%	49.9%	3.3%	0.2%
2020	0.2%	11.6%	7.9%	33.9%	43.3%	2.8%	0.2%

Age

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
2019	22.5%	16.4%	17.5%	17.9%	13.9%	7.2%	4.6%
2020	24.8%	17.7%	17.6%	17.7%	12.2%	6.2%	3.8%

- **Are slightly more likely to be female**

- » 51+% of observed park visitors are identified as female compared with 50.7% of the general population of the County.

- **Are less likely to live in the Antelope Valley, Metro, Gateway and East San Gabriel Valley Regional Study Areas**

- » The percentage of total park visits that were observed in the sample as originating from these Regional Study Areas is lower than the percentage of the population of the County that lives in these Regional Study Areas. There are fewer observed visits per person who lives in these Regional Study Areas than the average number of observed visits per person in the County.

- **Are more likely to live in the Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, Westside, West San Gabriel Valley, South Bay and Santa Catalina Regional Study Areas**

- » The percentage of total park visits that were observed in the sample as originating from these Regional Study Areas this area is higher than the percentage of the population of the County that lives in these Regional Study Areas. There are more observed visits per person who lives in these Regional Study Areas than the average number of observed visits per person in the County.

Figure 4-58: Site Visitation Metrics by Regional Study Area

► *Regional Site Visitorship Rates (Combined 2019-2020)*

	Study Area	Percent of Total Population of County	Percent of Total Site Visits by Residents of this Study Area	Number of Site Visits per Resident
	Los Angeles County	100%	100%	3.61
1	Antelope Valley	3.80%	1.42%	1.35
2	Santa Clarita Valley	2.69%	5.05%	6.77
3	San Fernando Valley	17.37%	17.78%	3.7
4	Santa Monica Mountains	0.85%	1.88%	7.95
5	Westside	9.68%	14.19%	5.29
6	Metro	18.07%	15.42%	3.08
7	West San Gabriel Valley	9.09%	10.22%	4.06
8	East San Gabriel Valley	9.27%	8.39%	3.27
9	South Bay	10.10%	13.25%	4.74
10	Gateway	16.55%	12.14%	2.65
11	Santa Catalina Island	0.04%	0.26%	23.49

Visitorship data is limited and provides a snapshot of who is and is not visiting regional sites. In some cases, the data shows that visitorship does not reflect the demographics of the Regional Study Area or the County as a whole. Appendix F provides additional details on visitorship information for each of the sample sites.

Many regional facilities and amenities attract visitors from beyond Los Angeles County. Geographically unique resources are draws and cannot be relocated or duplicated which impacts some review or comparison by Regional Study Area. Some regional sites are more heavily utilized than others, and sites have differing capacities to address the amount of visitorship they current have. High use, which varies by site, brings with it concentrated burdens—high traffic, congestion, degraded conditions, the need for facilities and amenities, increased operations and maintenance needs. Survey respondents have indicated “the area is too crowded” when responding to what limits their use of or visits to regional facilities such as beaches or areas in the Santa Monica Mountains, for instance. Some regional sites may be overused, especially on weekends, requiring additional resources for operations and maintenance, and possible measures to manage public usage to better align with the carrying capacity of a site.

4.0 Regional Recreation

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

As described in Chapter 2, the project team used several methods to learn more about how Los Angeles County residents perceive and use regional parks and recreational spaces and the amenities they provide. To reach residents across the county, the community engagement effort included:

- » Eleven community engagement workshops with participants in each of the eleven regional study areas, and additional focus groups for Santa Catalina Island, and Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles and Willowbrook/Watts communities

- » More than 140 outreach events held by community partners to gather input
- » Two online surveys, publicized across a variety of media platforms and one in-person survey shared by community partners
- » Publicizing activities via social media, email, and the project website and through community partner networks

Altogether, the community engagement efforts reached more than 295,000 people.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

The project team organized online workshops and focus groups and joined community partner meetings to gather input about how and why Los Angeles County residents use regional parks, what barriers they experience that prevent them from using parks and facilities, and what is needed to improve their experiences and access.

Key themes from these sessions, as well as additional insights from community partner outreach, are described below in three sections. The first section displays the reasons why people use regional parks and facilities. A second section of themes focuses on barriers to access. The last section looks at what participants suggest they need to use or improve their experiences at regional parks and facilities.



Reasons People Use Regional Parks



SHADE

Parks provide cool, shaded areas and relief from the sun.



WATER

Parks provide water features like splash pads and pools, safe places to play and learn to swim. Lakes and rivers are natural options for cooling off and provide space for aquatic recreation and hobbies like sailing, kayaking, and fishing.



EXERCISE AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Places to hike, walk, run and bike, use exercise equipment and participate in outdoor fitness classes and activities.



RELAXATION AND REFLECTION

Parks offer respite from city life and provide spaces for meditation and reflection.



WILDLIFE AND NATURE

Parks are full of natural beauty and views and allow users to appreciate or gain an appreciation for wildlife.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Parks provide spaces for community gatherings, events, and for local artists and musicians.



FAMILY FRIENDLY

Parks have spaces to gather with family and friends safely during COVID and include educational activities about nature and environmental stewardship.



STEWARDSHIP

Parks can provide opportunities for community partnerships to promote safety and stewardship. Enjoying parks and natural spaces creates an incentive to protect the environment.



Barriers to Using Regional Parks and Facilities



LACK OF SHADE

Without shade, many parks are unusable during hot months.



COST

Parking and entry fees prevent low-income families from using some regional park facilities.



LACK OF TRANSIT

Public transit wait and travel times to parks can be up to two hours or more and there are few options for carpooling or shuttles. Many parks do not have stops close enough to park entrances to be accessible to those who use transit.



PARKING

There is limited parking and limited time to park at trailheads and parks.



LACK OF INFORMATION

Many residents lack awareness about where regional parks are located, what amenities they provide and how to get there.



LACK OF SIGNAGE

There is not enough wayfinding, multilingual and accessible signage.



LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY

Parks do not provide enough access or amenities for disabled, injured and wheelchair users, and there are not enough places for seniors and others to sit and rest.



LIMITED NATIVE AND TRIBAL ACCESS

Tribal members do not have access and/or do not feel safe gathering for ceremony and other activities, and do not have privacy in park spaces.



NOT FEELING WELCOME

People of color and women do not always feel safe or welcomed in regional parks and spaces, and there is a lack of multilingual and representative staff, programs and activities.



SAFETY CONCERNS

Add emergency call devices along trails, address crime and graffiti at parks, and ensure safe sidewalks walking paths for pedestrians.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES SHORTCOMINGS

Trails, walking path and restrooms are not well-maintained, and playground equipment is often old and unsafe. There are not enough gathering spaces for people to use.

What Community Members Need to Increase Their Use and Improve Their Experiences at Regional Parks and Facilities



MORE SHADE

More shade structures and mature trees.



ACCESS TO WATER

Water fountain for users and animals, more splash pads and water features for cooling off, and improved water conservation.



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Improve public transit to parks, including more frequent service to address access for community members without cars, and create more opportunities for shuttle services that connect communities to parks.



MORE PARKING

More and expanded parking opportunities at trailheads and parks and advertise parks with free parking.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Improve community awareness and expand publicity about regional parks, facilities, and events, and organizations that can connect residents to parks. Provide more frequent public meetings with parks staff.



IMPROVED SIGNAGE

Expand use of interpretive, wayfinding and educational signage in parks and along trails and ensure signage is multilingual and accessible, including audio and braille options.



LIGHTING

Expand lighting at parks and facilities, especially at night.



ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Provide wheelchair and disabled accessible trails and facilities, and plan for places with soft ground for those recovering from injury.



NATIVE AND TRIBAL ACCESS

Provide access and privacy to Native peoples who want to use, enjoy and practice on ancestral lands, and raise awareness and educate the community about tribal stewardship and the indigenous history of the region as part of Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash lands.



TO FEEL WELCOME

People of color need to feel welcome and safe in regional parks and spaces, and multilingual programming and information should be available to all.



TO FEEL SAFER

Add emergency call devices along trails, address crime and graffiti at parks, and ensure safe sidewalks walking paths for pedestrians.



ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Expand services and partnerships to support unhoused people who use parks.



IMPROVED MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide more regular maintenance and cleaning of restrooms, more trail maintenance to mitigate fire danger, improve trash collection, update play equipment and playgrounds and provide Wi-Fi for park users.



ADDITIONAL STAFFING

Additional parks staff and volunteer ambassadors for programming, facilities maintenance and security at parks.

What Community Members Need to Increase Their Use and Improve Their Experiences at Regional Parks and Facilities (continued)



BETTER ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

Improve and standardize the online reservation system, increase the variety of recreation classes, provide classes for all age groups, including seniors, and expand science, nature and stewardship programs and activities.



MORE RECREATION FACILITIES

Extend facilities hours and build more tennis, pickleball, basketball courts, disc golf and other facilities to meet demand.



DEDICATED USE TRAILS

Provide separate trails for hiking, biking, equestrian use to help mitigate conflict and increase safety for all users along trails.



ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY

Work with cities and other public agencies to develop greenways and greenbelts between parks and in the regional watersheds.



CLIMATE ADAPTATION EDUCATION

Educate the public about importance of parks for climate health, plant native species and increase local biodiversity.



PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS, PUBLIC AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Foster environmental stewardship and expand park use and greenspace access through school and community partnerships.



COMMUNITY SURVEYS

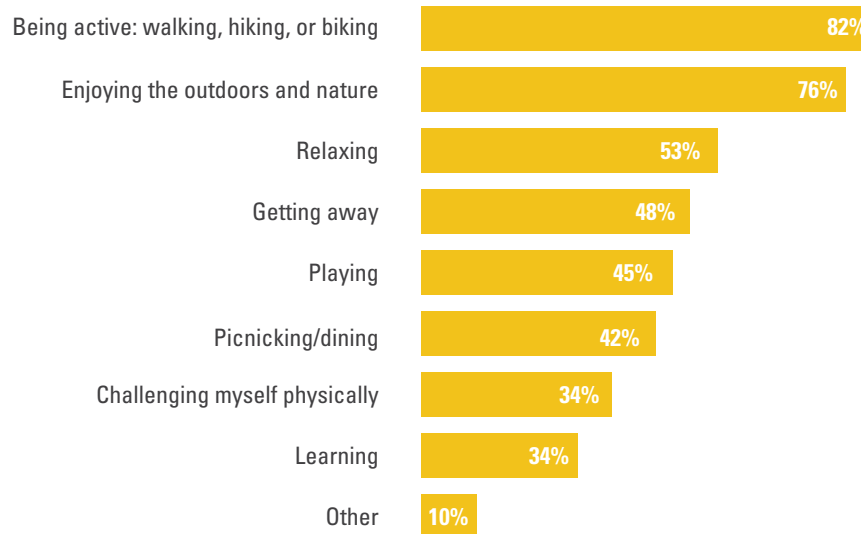
The following pages summarize the results of two online surveys and one in-person survey that focused on regional parks access and use and were completed by more than 3,500 respondents. The surveys were conducted to engage the public and gather their input and were distributed in a variety of formats (online and paper), languages, and locations (parks and non-parks) to encourage participation. While not statistically valid, the results of the surveys were valuable in helping to identify key issues and needs with respect to regional and rural recreation. Survey results were also generally consistent with input received as part of community workshops, stakeholder interviews, and other outreach activities. These surveys included questions which asked County residents and parks users about the types of parks and outdoors spaces they visit and why, how they get to parks and who they go with, what barriers they experience to using parks and facilities, and whether the pandemic has changed how they use parks and open spaces. Many of these questions asked people to choose as many answers as they wanted.

The results are organized below into six themes:

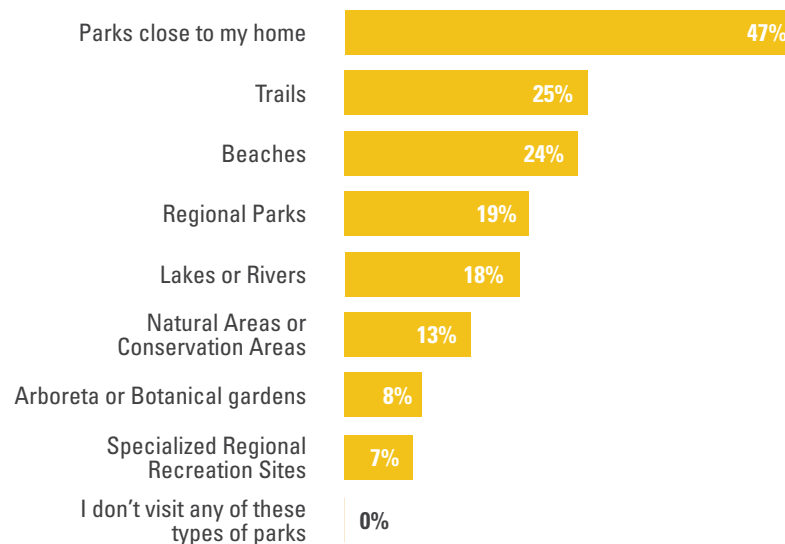
- » Regional Parks Use and Activities
- » Barriers to Use
- » The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Recreation Choices
- » Travel to Parks
- » Regional Parks and Amenities Needs
- » Quality of Parks and Amenities

► Regional Parks Use and Activities

Recreation to me means...

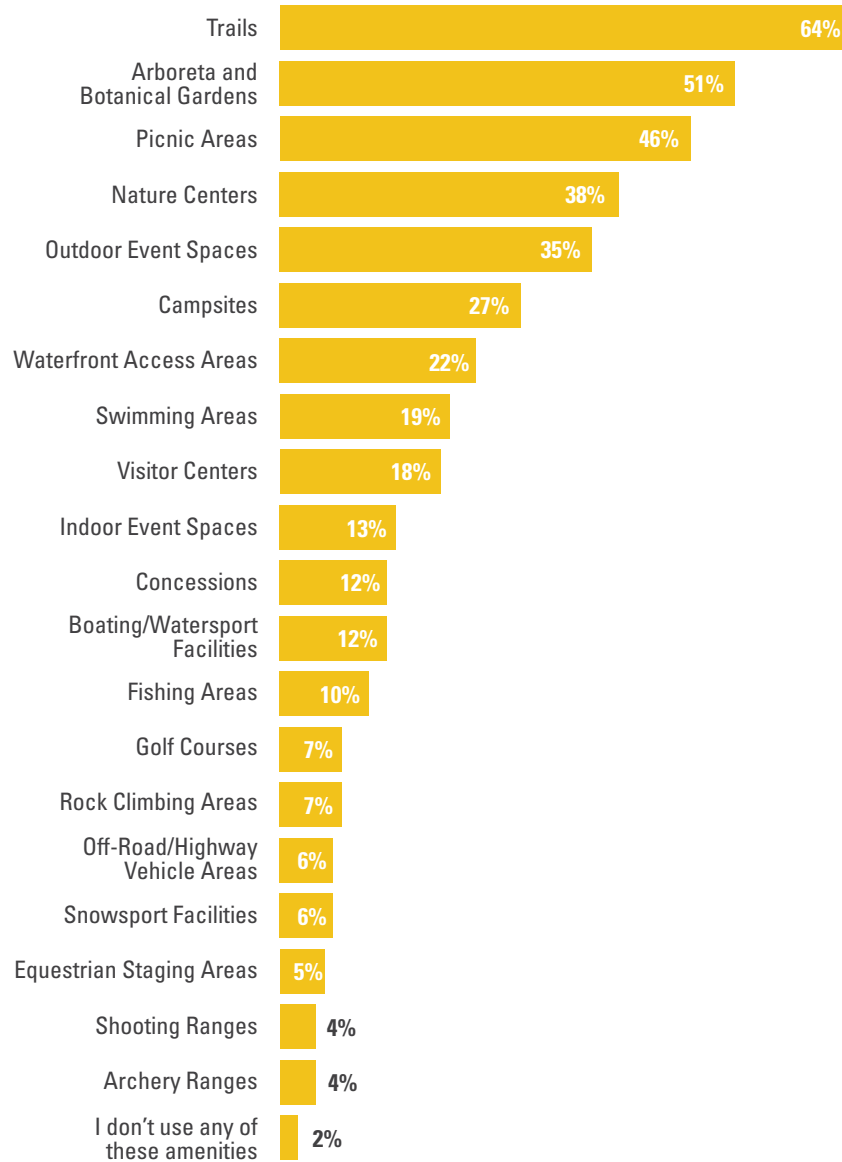


I visit these types of regional parks and facilities the most...

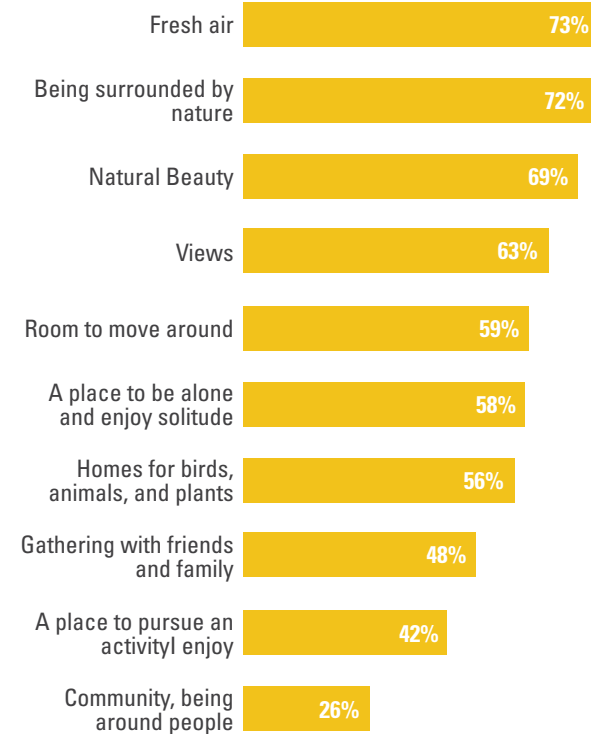


► *Regional Parks Use and Activities (continued)*

I use these park amenities most often:



These places are special to me because they provide...



► *Barriers to Parks Use*

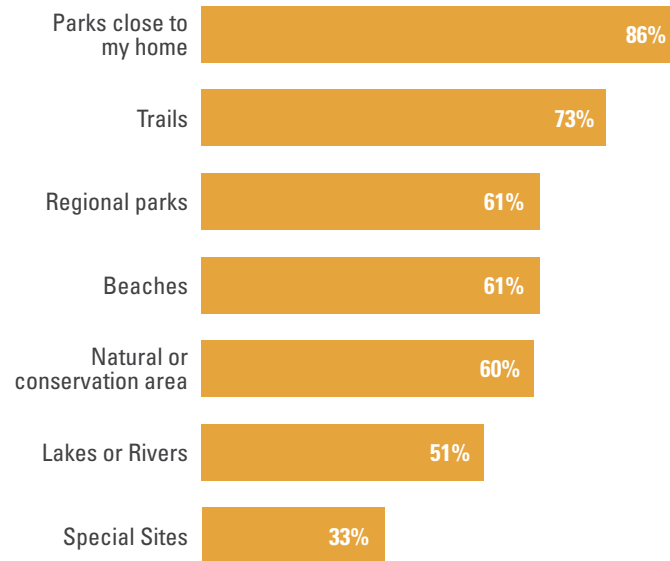
I can't go outside or to parks because...



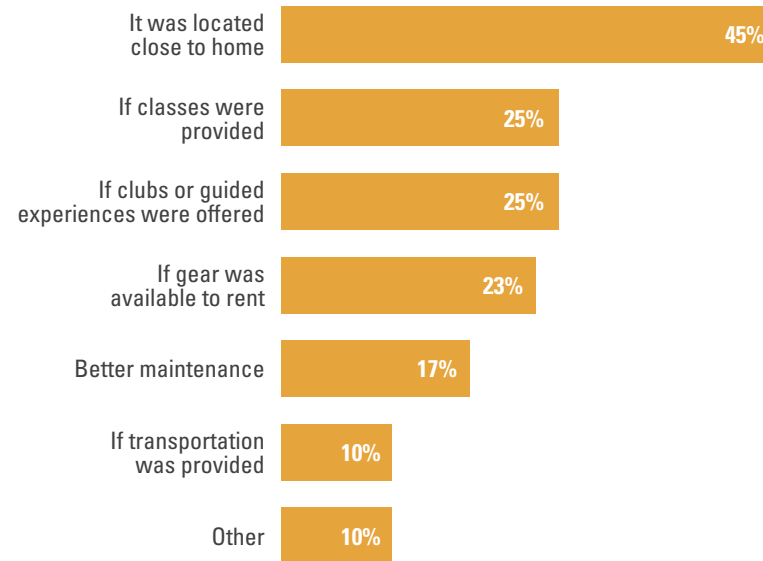
4.0 Regional Recreation

► Barriers to Parks Use (continued)

If cost wasn't an issue, I would regularly visit ...

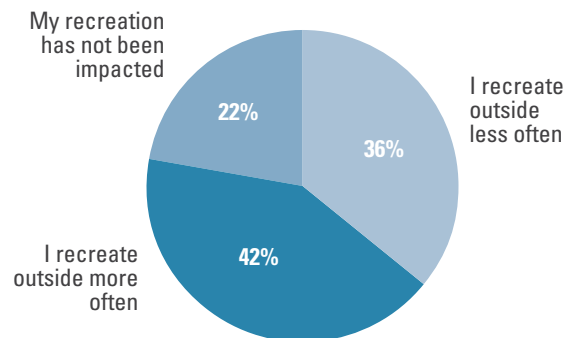


I would use parks and amenities more often if...

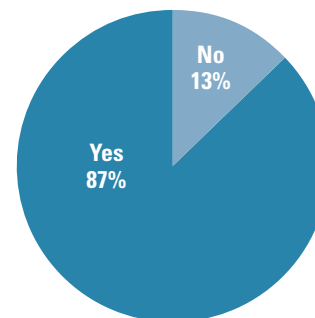


► COVID-19 Impacts on Recreation

COVID has affected how I recreate...



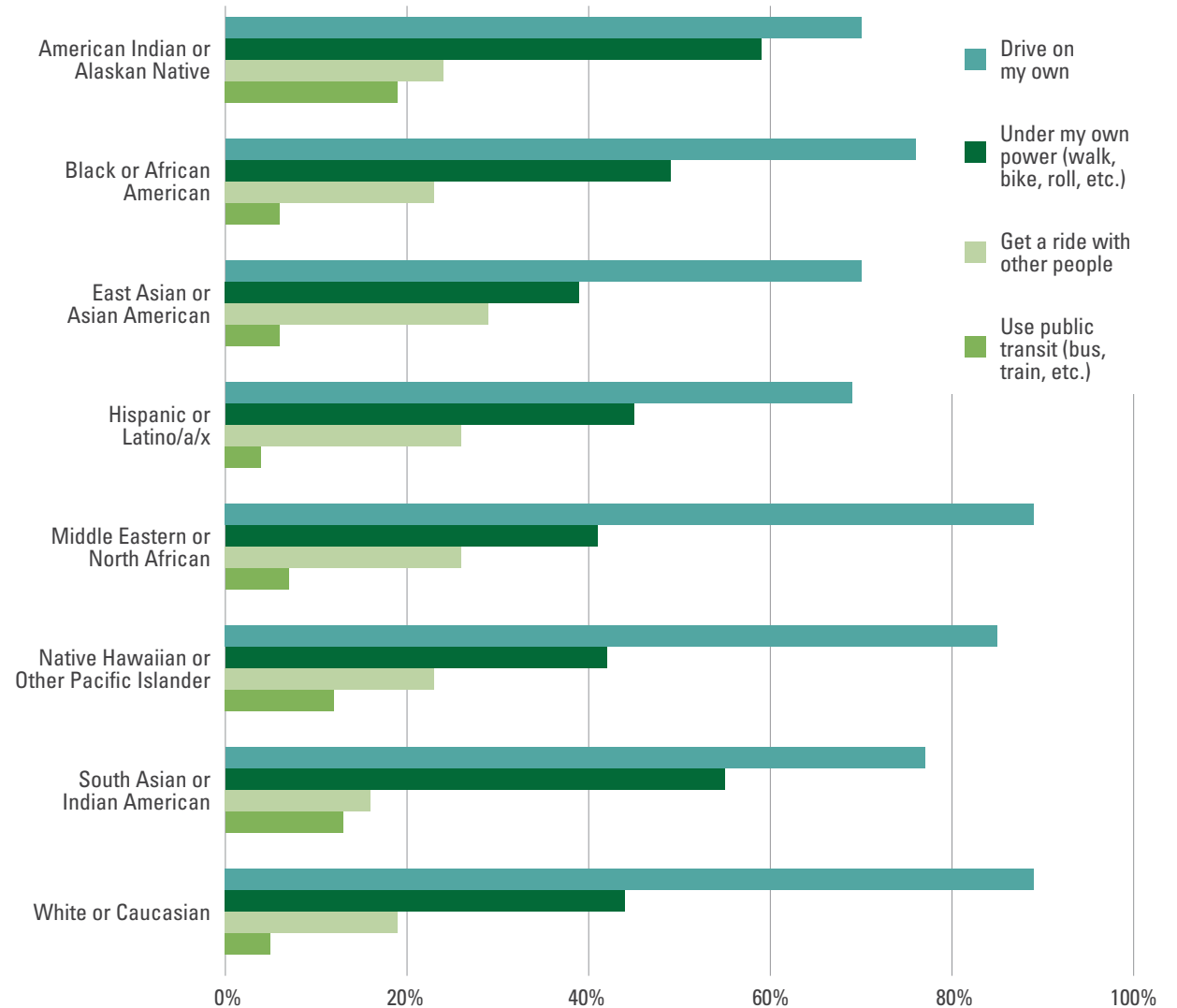
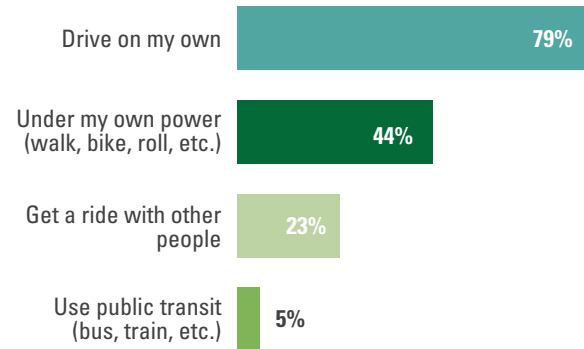
Because of COVID I am looking for recreation opportunities closer to home...



► *Travel to Parks*

When I travel to parks, these are all the ways I get there...

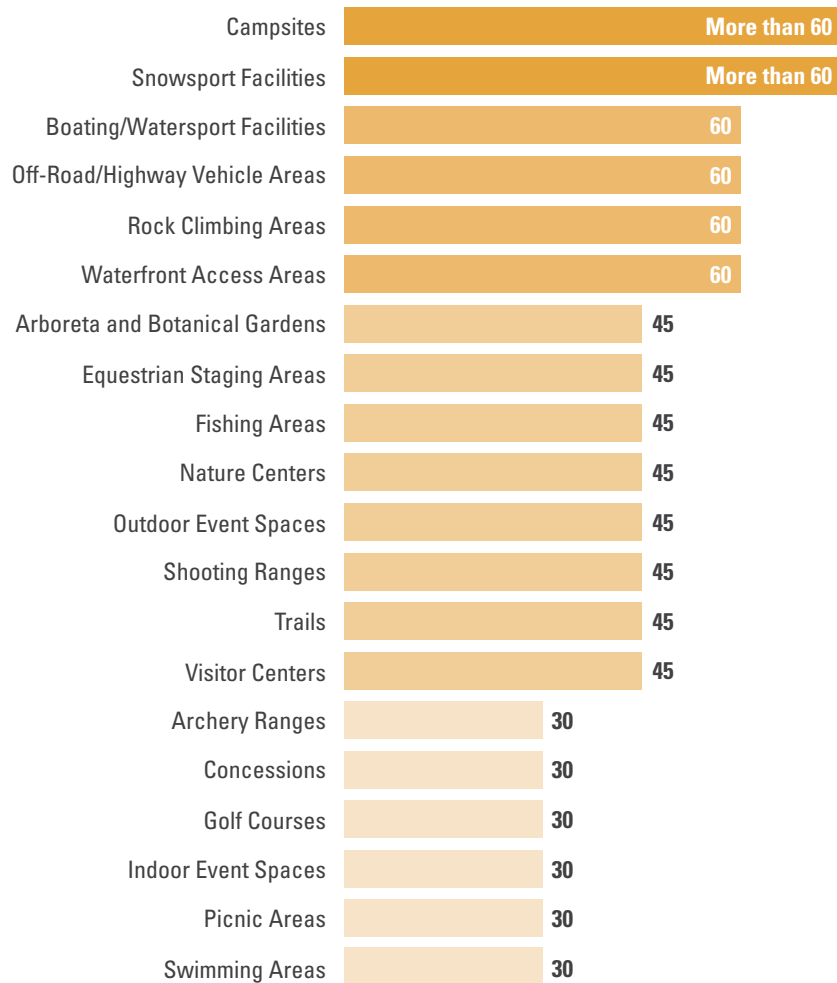
The first chart below shows total survey responses, and the second shows responses based on how people identify by race/ethnicity.



4.0 Regional Recreation

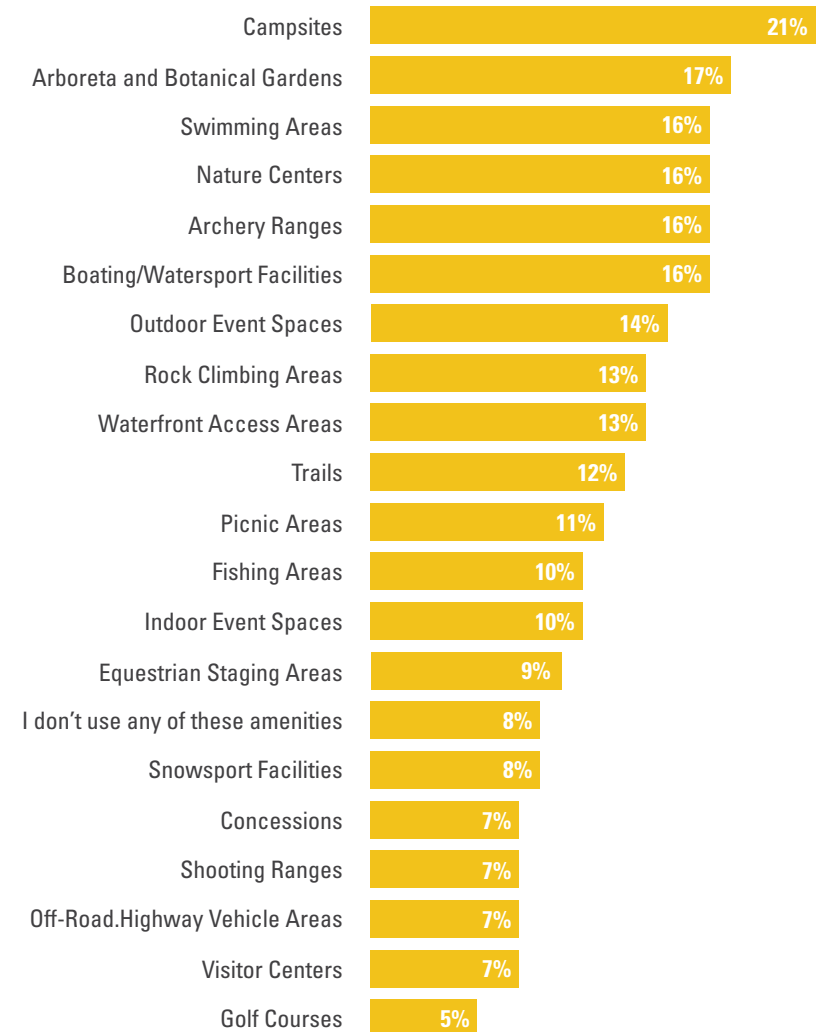
► *Travel to Parks (continued)*

I'm willing to travel this many minutes to parks and amenities...



► *Regional Parks Needs*

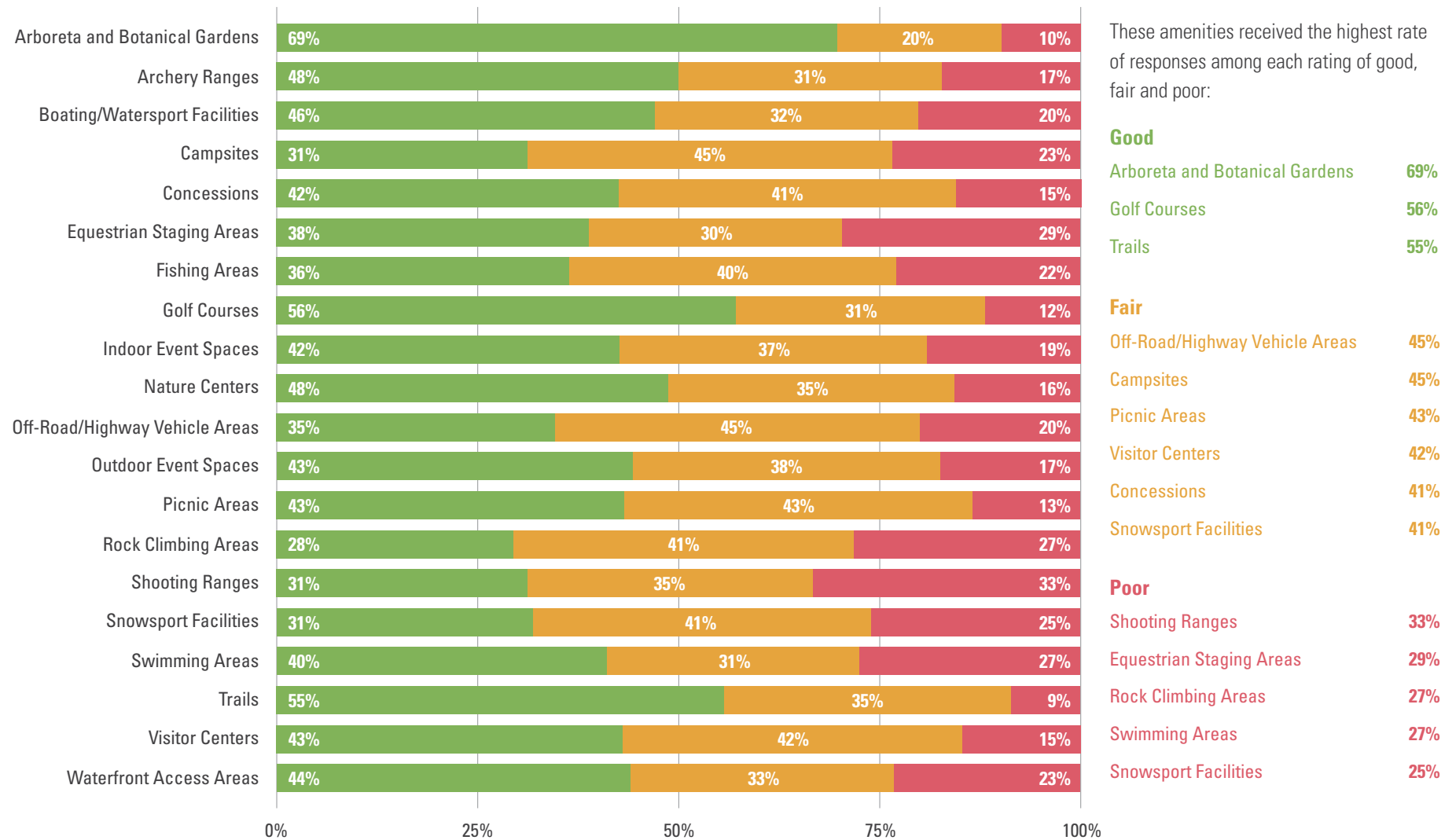
The greatest parks needs in my Community include...



► *Quality of Parks Amenities*

How would you rate the quality of park amenities?

Responses here show how people rate the quality of amenities, either good, fair or poor.



4.0 Regional Recreation

4.5 REGIONAL RECREATION PRIORITY ANALYSIS

The information and analysis that has been presented in this chapter demonstrates that the level of provision of Regional Recreation Sites and Trails and the wide range of benefits that they provide, varies considerably throughout Los Angeles County. While this is in part due to the diverse range of ecosystems that the County encompasses and historic settlement patterns throughout the region, there is also a legacy of discriminatory practices that has shaped the quality of the environments that are accessible to people who reside in different communities.

In the following sections, several aspects of the analysis are combined to identify parts of the County that are high priority for enhancing regional recreation opportunities.

► Regional Recreation Need Analysis

Areas with:



REGIONAL RECREATION PRIORITY AREAS

In order to address the equitable provision of the benefits associated with Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas and Regional Trails, this analysis identifies areas to be high priority for enhancing regional recreation opportunities at the intersection of where County residents: 1) are experiencing high levels of barriers and vulnerability, 2) live in low proximity to regional recreation facilities and, 3) visit regional recreation facilities infrequently.

HIGH POPULATION VULNERABILITY

As described earlier in this chapter, population data from the California Health Places Index (HPI) was analyzed to identify areas of the County that are experiencing Health and Environmental Vulnerability as well as Social and Transportation Barriers to accessing regional recreational opportunities.

Areas are identified as experiencing a “moderate” level for a given population vulnerability dimension if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for more than one of the indicators that comprise that dimension.

Areas are identified as experiencing a “high” level for a given population vulnerability dimension if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for the majority of indicators that comprise that dimension.

For instance, the Transportation Barriers dimension consists of the following indicators: Limited Active Commuting, Limited Automobile Access, Limited Public Transit Access, Traffic Density, Pedestrian Injuries. If a census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for more than one of these indicators, the residents of that census tract are identified as experiencing a moderate level of population vulnerability for the Transportation Barriers dimension. If a census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for any three or more of these five indicators, residents of that area are identified as experiencing a high level of population vulnerability for the Transportation Barriers dimension.

This map identifies the census tracts in which residents are experiencing **a moderate or high level of Population Vulnerability in all four of the dimensions** that we examined. Nearly 1.2 million people reside in areas where there are compounding challenges associated with accessing the benefits that parks and open space provide. It is especially critical in these areas to employ multi-faceted approaches to reducing barriers in order to positively influence the health and well-being of residents.

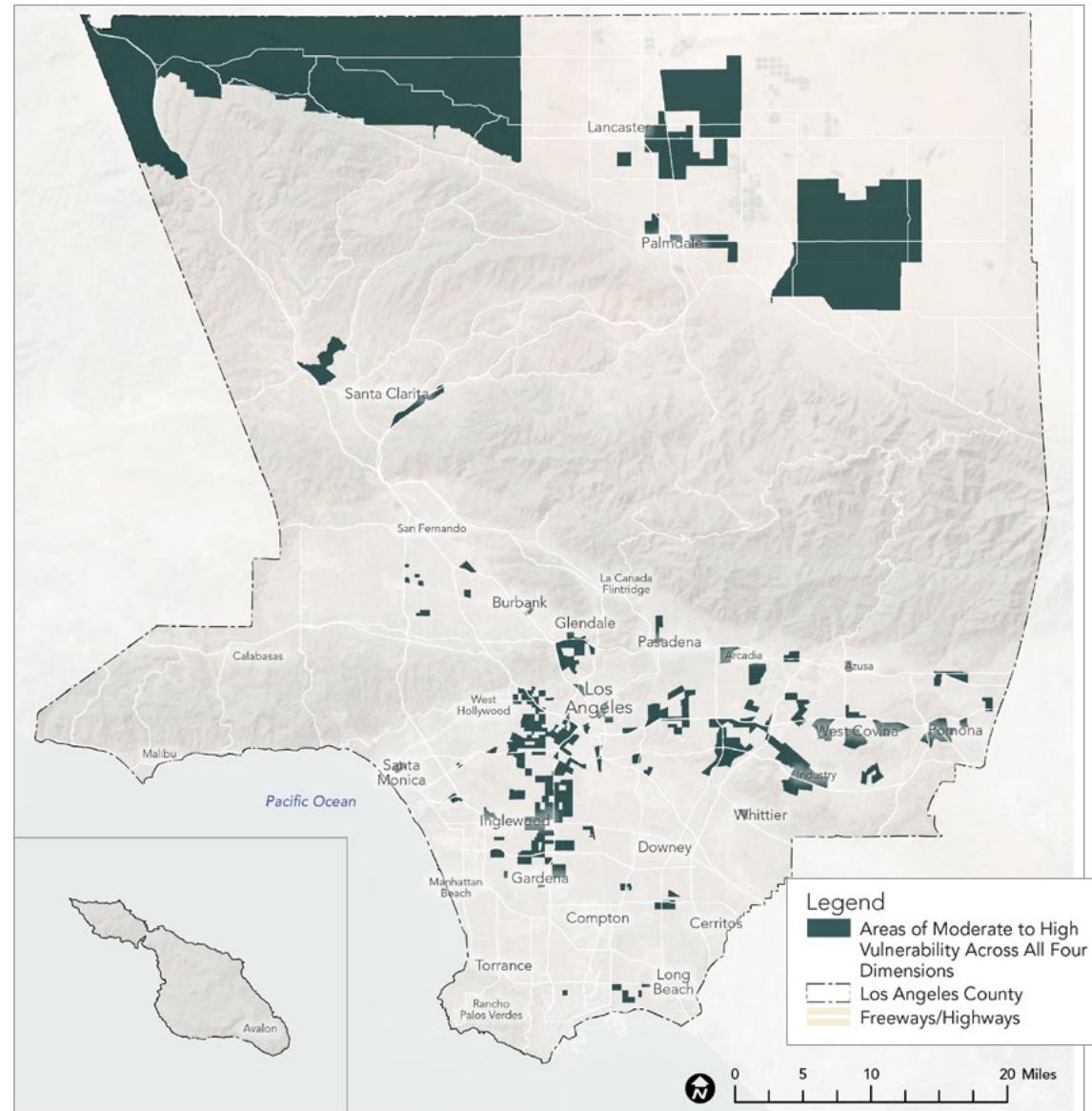


**High Levels
of Social and
Transportation
Barriers**



**High Levels
of Health and
Environmental
Vulnerability**

Figure 4-59: Areas Experiencing High Levels of Population Vulnerability



Map source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

LOW PROXIMITY TO REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES

In the preceding sections of this chapter, areas of the County that are located within three distance thresholds, 0.5-mile walk, 2.5-mile bicycle ride and 5-mile drive, of entry points to Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas and Regional Trails were identified.

This map combines each of the previous analyses to identify the areas of the County that are located **beyond a 2.5-mile bicycle ride to any of these three types of regional recreation facilities**. In these areas of the County, residents must rely heavily on access to private vehicles or public transportation in order to access opportunities for regional recreation and the benefits that they provide. This presents a barrier to residents who are unable to access private transportation or high-quality public transportation options. In addition, reliance on vehicular access increases pollution levels and diminishes the potential health benefits associated with active transportation alternatives.



Low Proximity to Regional Recreation Sites

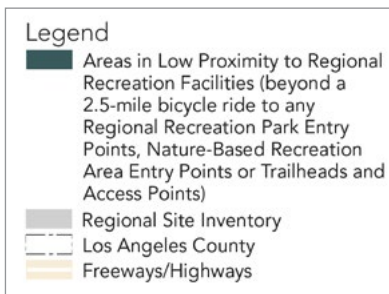
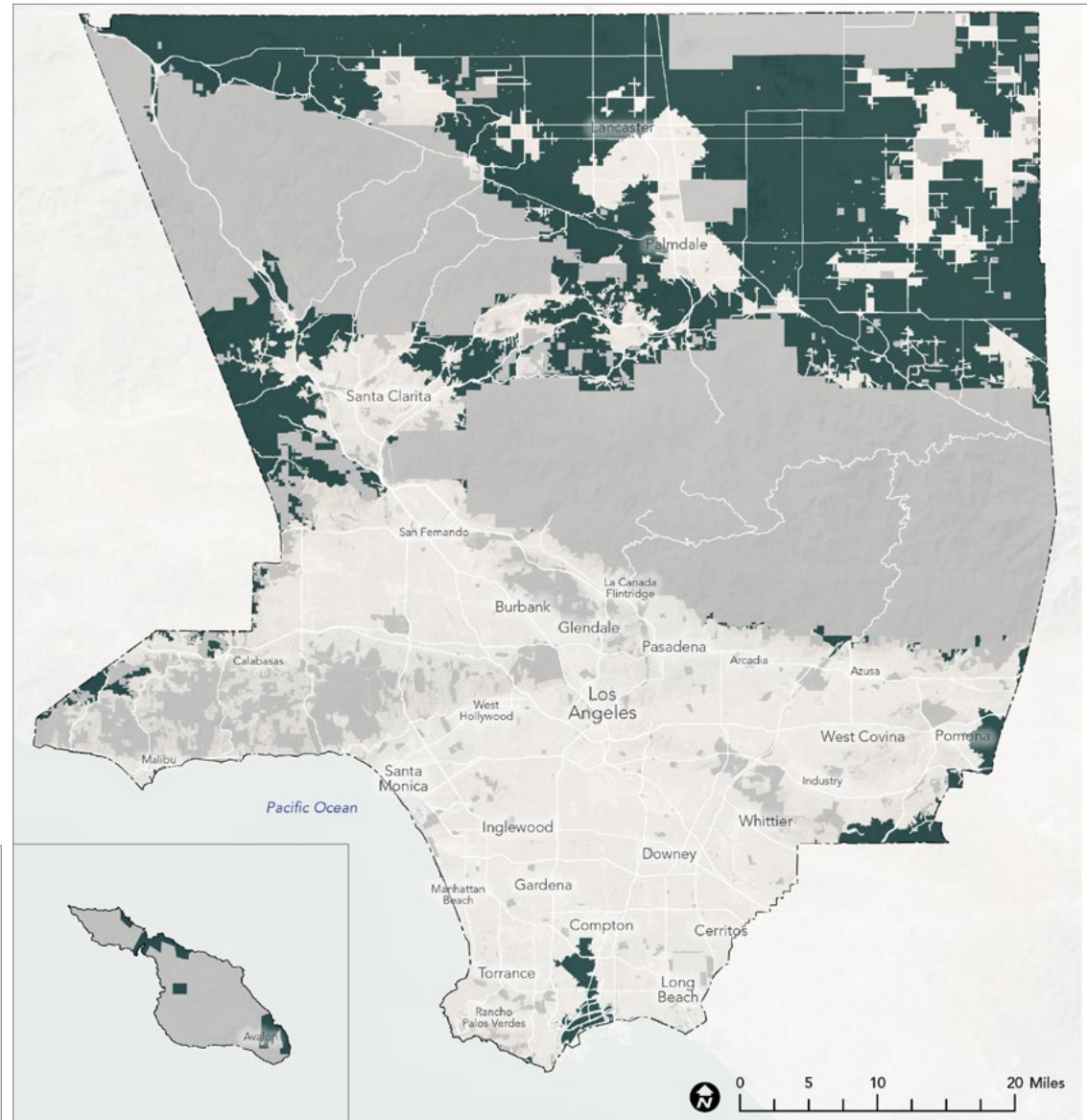


Figure 4-60: Areas Located in Low Proximity to Regional Recreation Facilities



Map source: ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

INFREQUENT REGIONAL SITE VISITORSHIP

In the preceding sections of this chapter, the rates of visitorship to 41 sample recreation sites located throughout Los Angeles County were presented. These rates were determined by dividing the number of observed visits to the sample sites that were made by residents of a defined area of the County by the total population of that area.

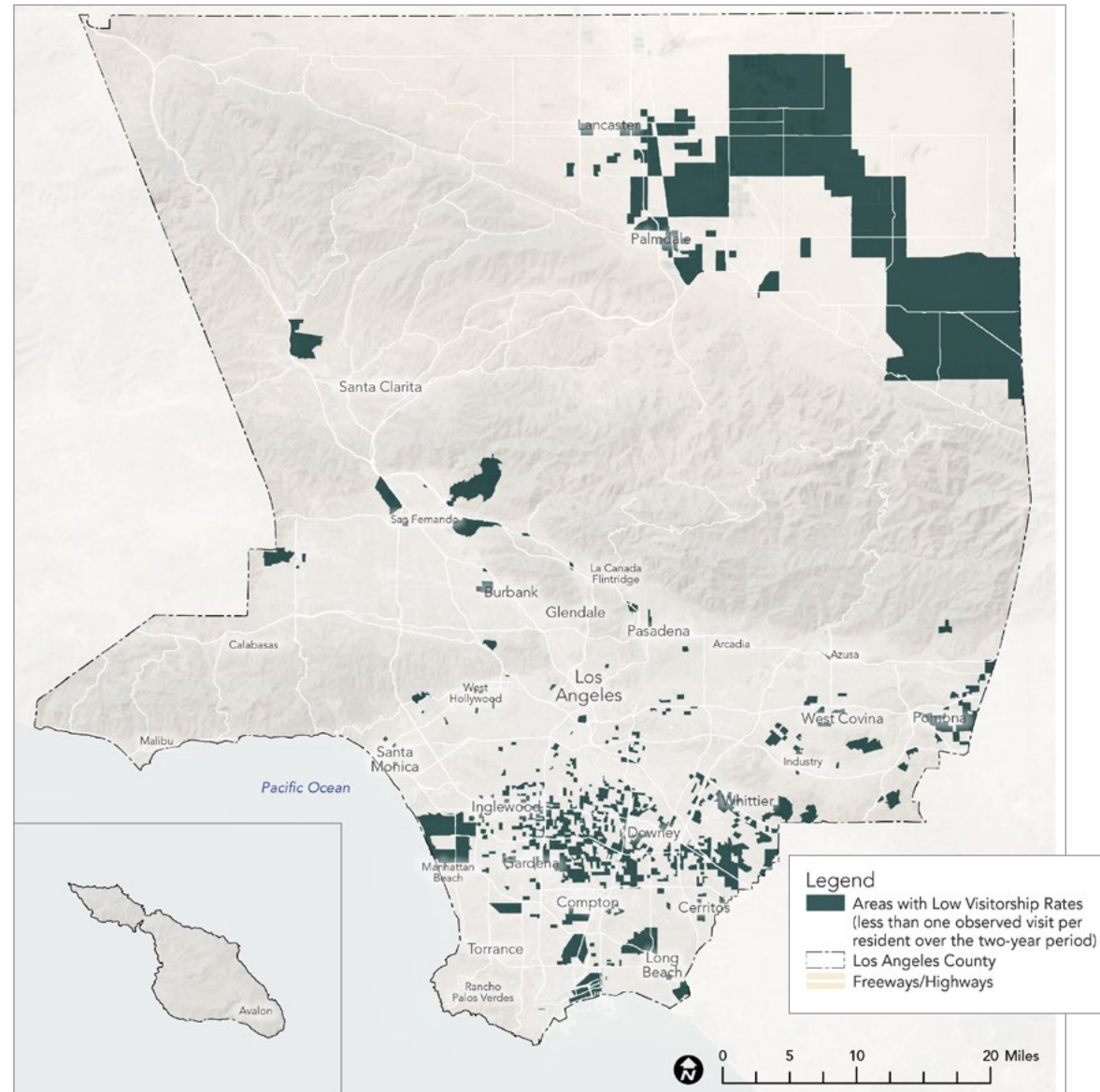
This map includes the areas of the County that demonstrated the lowest rates of visitorship to the 41 sample sites. In these areas, there was **less than one observed visit per resident** over the course of the two-year period (2019-2020) for which data was analyzed.

Residents of these areas of the County are underrepresented at the 41 sites that we analyzed. County residents experience many barriers to park and open space access including lack of transportation and information, lack of free time and the costs associated with entry, travel and gear. Further outreach and community engagement is necessary to understand with greater specificity why residents of these areas are less likely to take advantage of the recreational opportunities available at these sites than residents of other parts of the County.



Low Visitorship Rates to Regional Recreation Sites

Figure 4-61: Areas with Low Rates of Regional Site Visitorship



Map source: Unacast, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.0 Regional Recreation

REGIONAL RECREATION NEEDS: HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

In a few areas of the County, residents are experiencing a combination of all of the three indicators of regional recreation need described above. In these areas, residents:

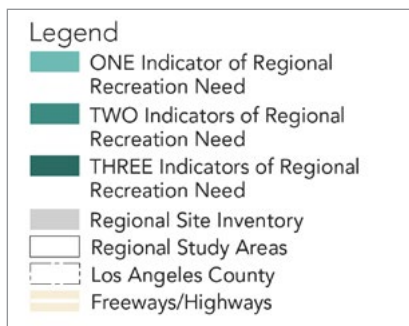
- 1) are experiencing high levels of barriers and vulnerability,
- 2) live in low proximity to regional recreation facilities and,
- 3) visit regional recreation facilities infrequently.

While relatively few areas are located at the intersection of all of three indicators of regional recreation need, many areas experience some combination of factors as demonstrated on this map of High Priority Areas. In these parts of the County, multi-faceted strategies are necessary to increase the number of residents who are able to take advantage of the many benefits provided by regional recreation resources.

The following pages present some possible strategies to address regional recreation needs in areas that are impacted by compounding challenges.

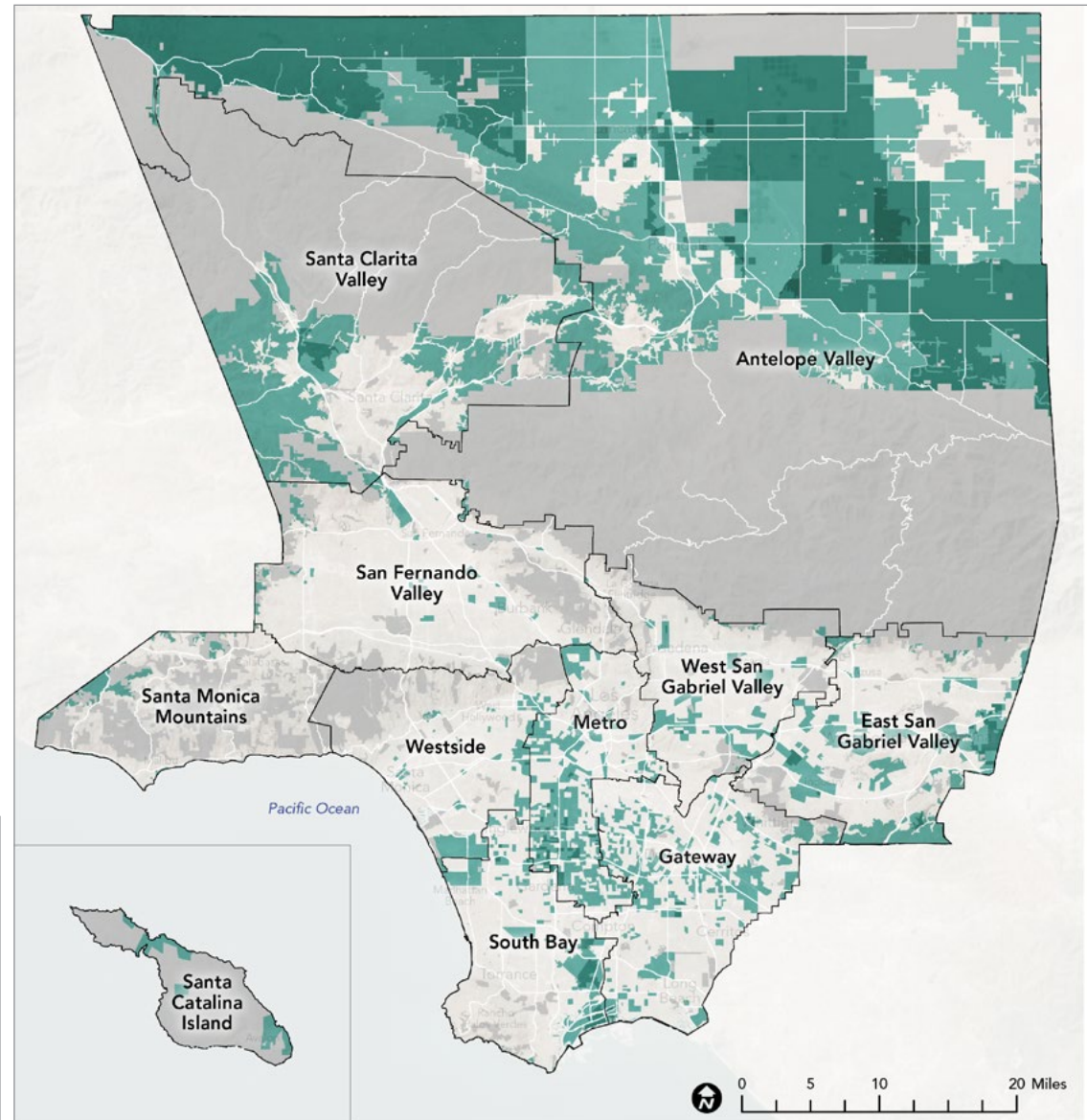


Areas of High Regional Recreation Priority



Note: No area has all four indicators of Regional Recreation Need.

Figure 4-62: High Priority Areas for Addressing Regional Recreation Needs



Map source: HPI, 2021; Unacast, 2021; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO REGIONAL RECREATION BENEFITS

REMOVE SOCIAL BARRIERS TO REGIONAL RECREATION ACCESS

There are numerous factors which prevent Los Angeles County residents from visiting and using Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas, and Regional Trails. During the community engagement process, members of the public cited the following social barriers:

- » Cost
- » Lack of information or awareness
- » Feeling unsafe
- » Lack of representation or a feeling of being welcome
- » Limitations due to age and ability
- » Lack of equipment or gear
- » Lack of knowledge or skills
- » Lack of free time



BASED ON THE INFORMATION THAT WAS COLLECTED FOR THE REGIONAL SITE INVENTORY,

35%

OF REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS AND

21%

OF NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREAS REQUIRE AN ENTRY FEE



ONLY

8%

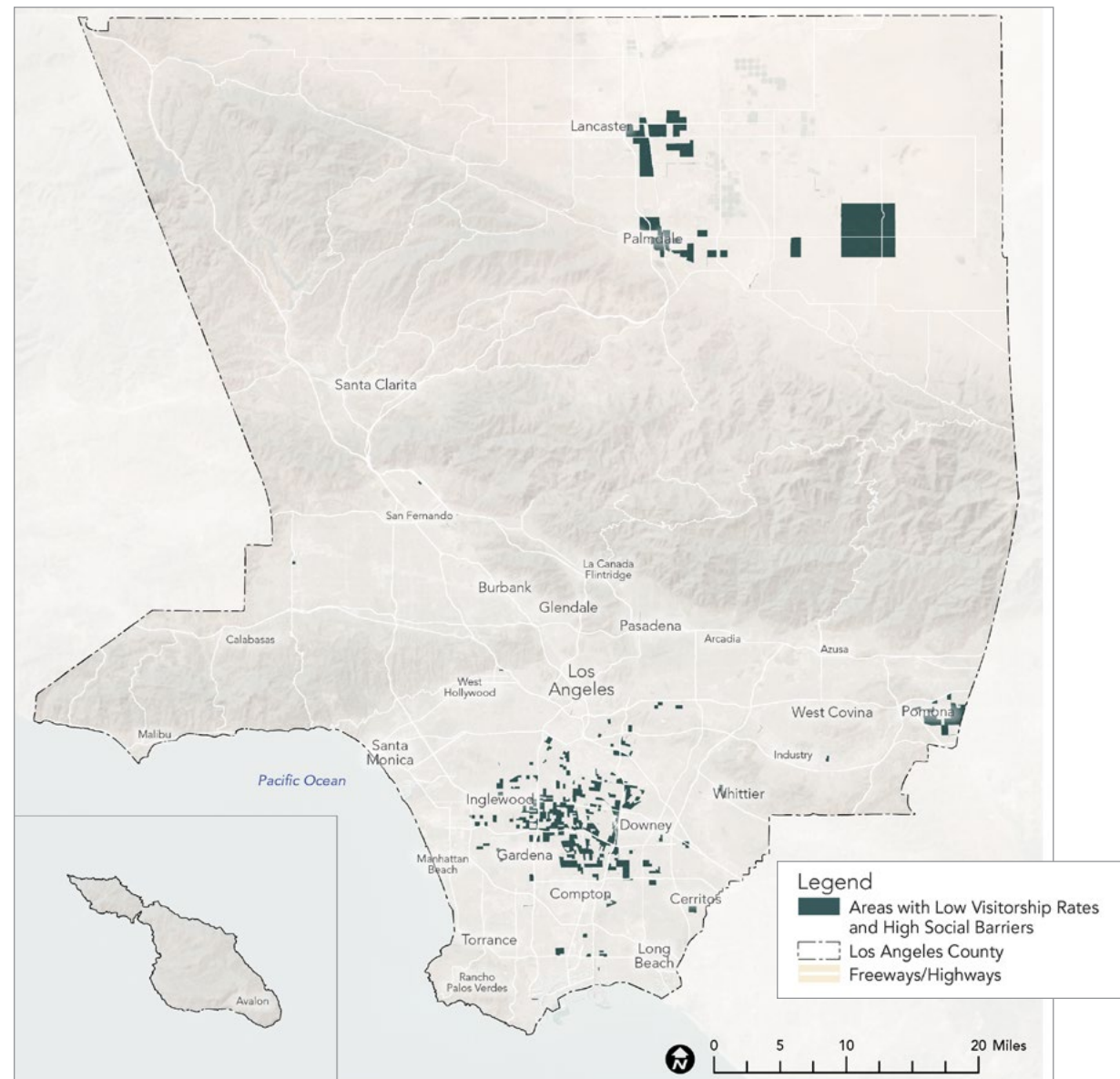
OF TRAILS INCLUDED IN THE REGIONAL TRAIL INVENTORY WERE IDENTIFIED AS ADA ACCESSIBLE.

4.0 Regional Recreation

The accompanying map identifies areas of the County where residents experience High Levels of Social Barriers and demonstrate Low Rates of Visitorship to the sample of 41 Regional Sites that were included in the analysis presented in Chapter 3: Regional Recreation and Conservation.

In these areas, strategies that reduce common social barriers to accessing the benefits of parks and open spaces, like free or reduced cost guided programs, may be effective at increasing participation. Focused engagement with residents of each community is critical in order to identify specific social barriers that need to be addressed to effectively increase participation in regional recreational opportunities.

Figure 4-63: Areas Experiencing High Level of Social Barriers and Low Rates of Visitorship



Map source:

REMOVE TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS TO REGIONAL RECREATION ACCESS

Access to safe, reliable, affordable, and convenient transportation is necessary in order for residents to take advantage of many of the regional recreational opportunities that are available throughout Los Angeles County. Based on the data and analysis presented in this Chapter:

79%

OF REGIONAL RECREATION PARK ENTRY POINTS ARE LOCATED WITHIN A 1/2 - MILE WALK OF A PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP

15%

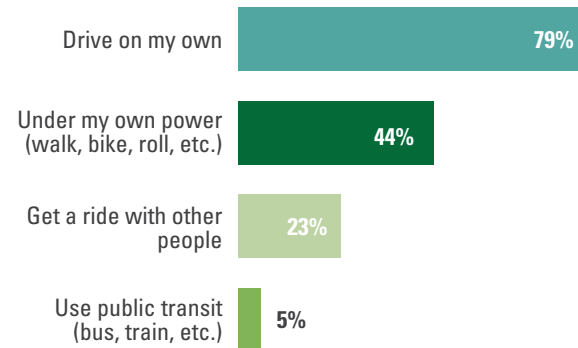
OF NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREA ENTRY POINTS ARE LOCATED WITHIN A 1/2 - MILE WALK OF A PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP

30%

REGIONAL TRAILHEADS AND ACCESS POINTS ARE LOCATED WITHIN A 1/2-MILE WALK OF A PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP

► Travel to Parks

When I travel to parks, these are all the ways I get there...



4.0 Regional Recreation

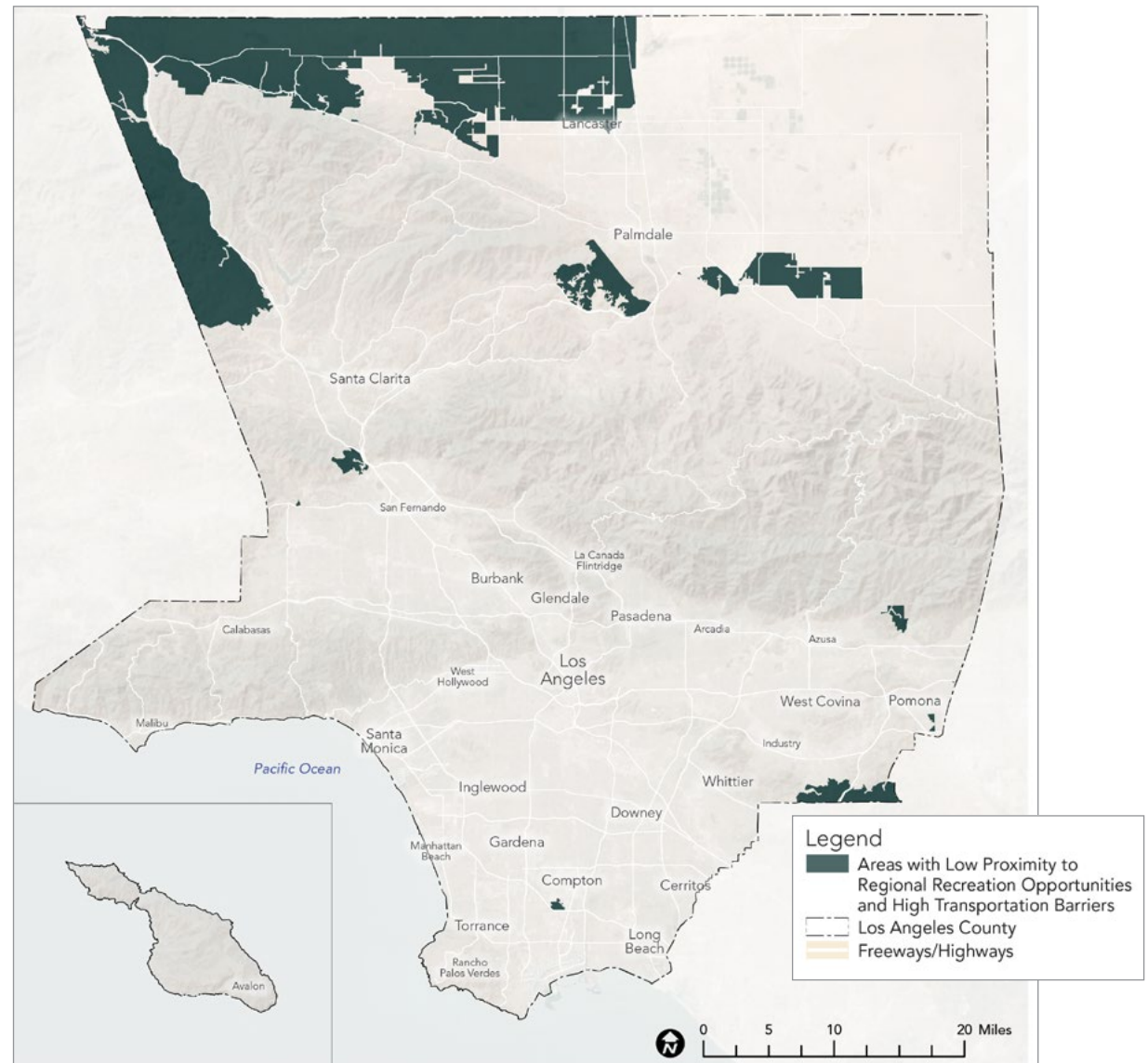
These findings indicate that for residents who do not live within walking or cycling distance to regional parks and open spaces, access to private vehicles is necessary in order to reach the majority of the points of entry to these resources. In addition to contributing to overall traffic and pollution levels within the County, this reliance on private vehicles presents a significant barrier for many residents and also places pressure on sites with limited parking capacity and surrounding neighborhoods.

Additionally, though this analysis has identified the percentage of entry points that are located within a ½-mile walk of a public transit stop, the frequency, convenience and cost of the service provided to these destinations also influence whether residents are able to rely on them for accessing regional parks and open spaces. Metro completed a Transit to Parks Strategic Plan in 2019 that examines these factors associated with countywide public transit service to parks in more detail and offers potential solutions/strategies..

The accompanying map identifies areas of the County where residents experience High Levels of Transportation Barriers and live in Low Proximity to Regional Recreation Facilities as identified through the analysis presented in Chapter 3: Regional Recreation and Conservation.

In these areas, strategies that reduce transportation barriers to accessing the benefits of parks and open spaces, like free or reduced cost park shuttle programs, may be effective at increasing participation. Focused engagement with residents of each community is necessary in order to identify specific transportation barriers that need to be addressed to effectively increase participation in regional recreational opportunities.

Figure 4-64: Areas Experiencing High Level of Transportation Barriers and Low Proximity to Regional Recreation Facilities



Map source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

IMPLEMENT PROJECTS THAT OFFER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS TO HIGH PARK NEED AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

In the areas of Los Angeles County identified on the accompanying map, characteristics of the physical environment serve as barriers and deter residents from safely engaging in active living and outdoor recreation. The characteristics included in the Environmental Vulnerability analysis as presented in Chapter 3: Regional Recreation and Conservation include:

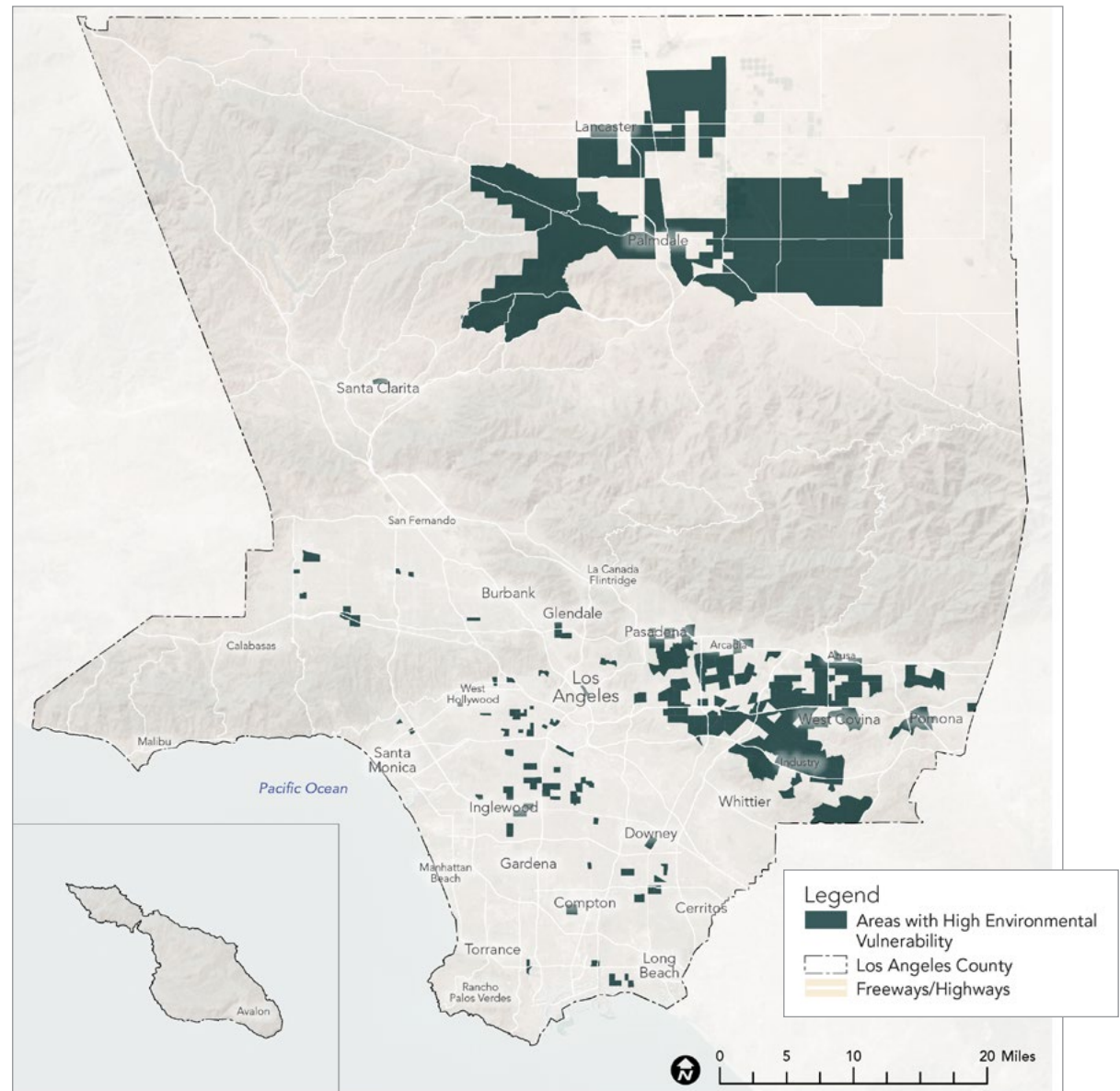
- » Limited Access to Parks
- » Limited Tree Canopy
- » High Percentage of Impervious Surface (Paved Areas)
- » High Number of Excessive Heat Days
- » High Urban Heat Island Index Score

The need for shade and other cooling elements, especially in areas of excessive heat, was frequently identified by participants in the Community Engagement effort. Rising temperatures associated with climate change are anticipated to drive even greater need for cooling features in the coming decades.

Successful strategies for addressing barriers to active living in areas experiencing High Levels of Environmental Vulnerability involve modifications to the physical environment that are designed to mitigate excessive temperatures, filter air and water pollution and provide comfortable settings for outdoor recreation.

In highly urbanized areas, “leftover” spaces such as vacant parcels, utility corridors and transportation rights of way can often be leveraged to increase shade plantings and to provide neighborhood green spaces.

Figure 4-65: Areas Experiencing High Levels of Environmental Vulnerability



Map source: HPI, 2021

4.0 Regional Recreation

IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE TRAIL NETWORK FOR ENHANCED RECREATION, MOBILITY, AND PUBLIC HEALTH

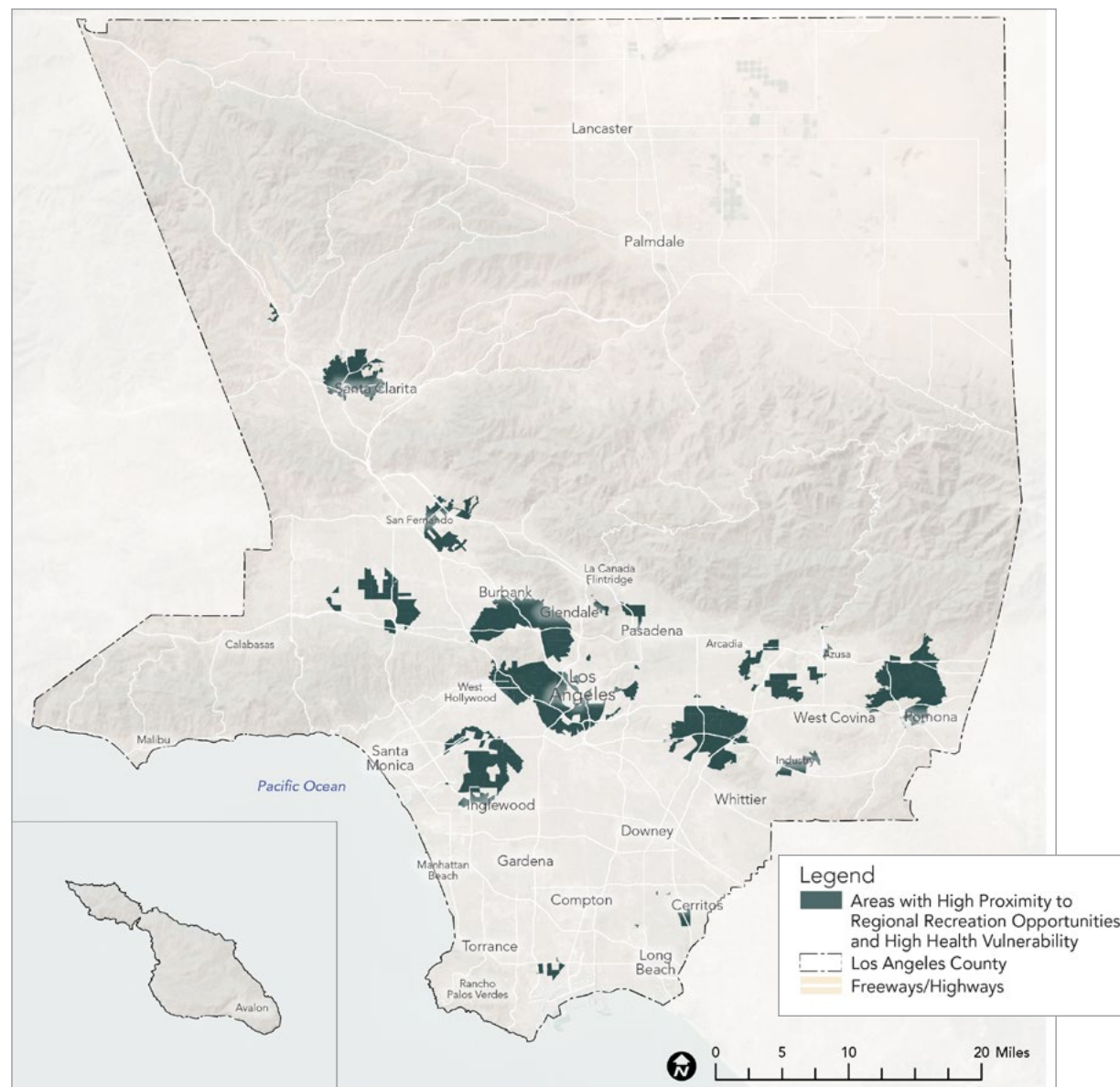
In the areas of Los Angeles County that were identified as demonstrating High Levels of Health Vulnerability, residents are exposed to higher-than-average levels of pollution and have lower-than-average life expectancies at birth. The drivers of the systemic health disparities that are reflected through the Health Vulnerability indicators are complex, though barriers to active living and regular outdoor recreation may exacerbate efforts aimed at improving personal health and well-being.

Parks and open spaces, along with active transportation infrastructure including trails and bikeways, can be leveraged to support routine physical activity and time in nature if they are safe, convenient and inviting for residents to visit.

The accompanying map identifies portions of the County where residents are experiencing High Levels of Health Vulnerability and also live within cycling distance (2.5 miles) of the regional recreation opportunities provided through Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas and Regional Trails.

In these areas, strategies aimed at increasing public awareness of nearby resources and encouraging their use through culturally relevant and neighborhood specific health promotion messaging may increase participation in recreational opportunities. Strategies to ensure that there are safe routes that are designed to support active transportation and connect residents to parks and open spaces are also critical.

Figure 4-66: Areas Experiencing High Levels of Health Vulnerability and High Proximity to Recreation Opportunities



Map source: HPI, 2021; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

4.7 REGIONAL STUDY AREAS

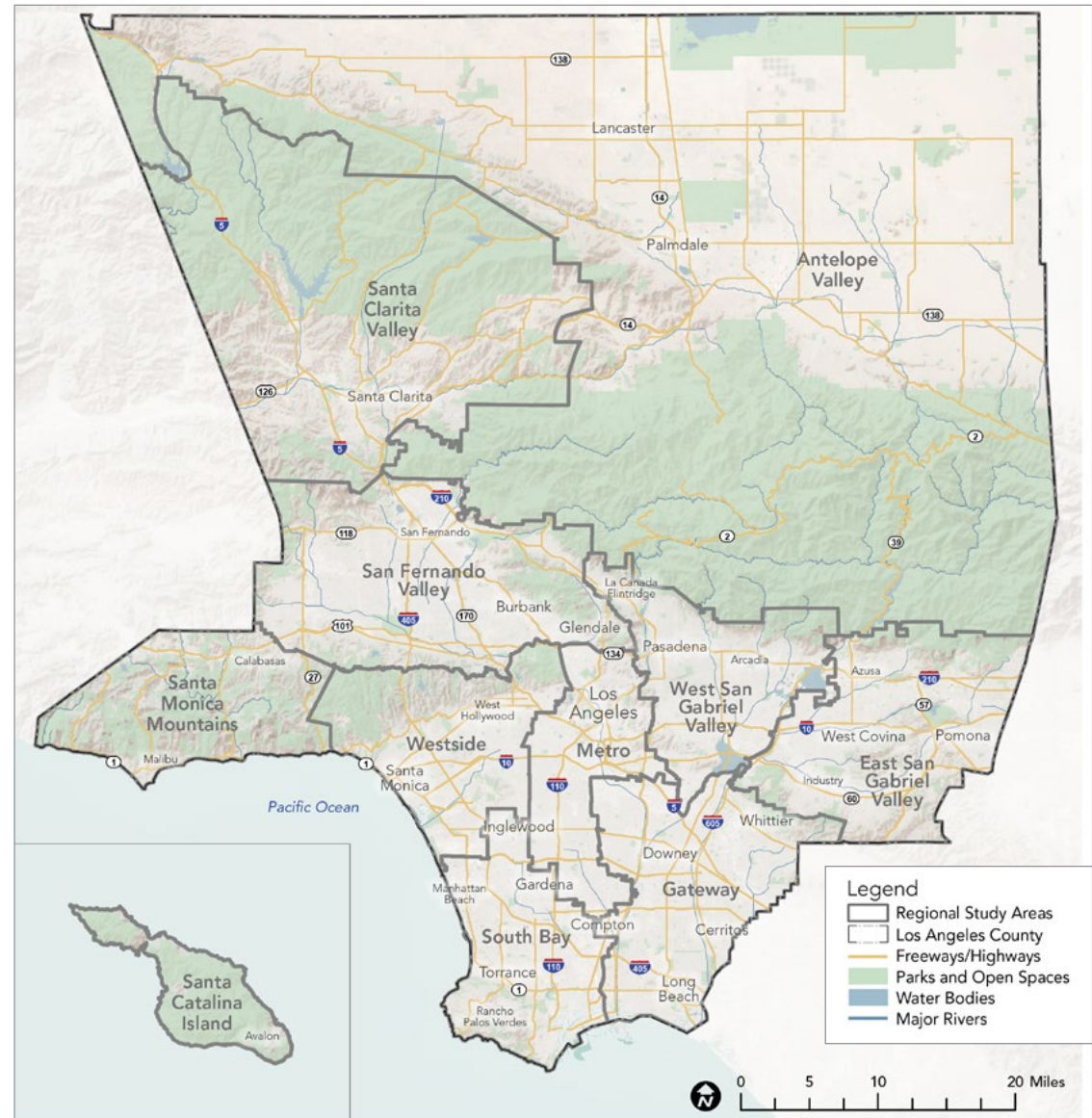
REGIONAL STUDY AREA PROFILES

For the purposes of the PNA+, Los Angeles County has been divided into eleven Regional Study Areas. To allow for alignment with current and future planning efforts, the Regional Study Areas are consistent with the Planning Areas identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan.

Regional Study Area Profiles have been prepared to provide a more detailed description of regional recreation and conservation needs for each of the eleven areas of the County identified on the map. The following information is included in each Regional Study Area Profile and can be found in Appendix A.

- » Study Area Description
- » Study Area Demographics
- » Population Vulnerability
- » Regional Site Inventory
- » Environmental Benefits
- » Environmental Burdens
- » Regional Recreation Parks
- » Regional Recreation Park Access
- » Nature-Based Recreation Areas
- » Nature-Based Recreation Area Access
- » Regional Recreation Amenities
- » Regional Trails
- » Regional Trail Access
- » Regional Site Visitorship
- » Community Engagement Themes
- » Regional Recreation Priorities
- » Environmental Conservation and Restoration Priorities

Figure 4-67: Regional Study Areas



Map source: US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021

Note: All Regional LA County maps in this chapter include and refer to sources listed here as basemap layers.





5.0
RURAL
RECREATION

5.0 Rural Recreation

5.1 RURAL CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS

Los Angeles County includes over 140 unincorporated areas spanning 2,638 square miles. An estimated population of over one million people, or approximately 10 percent of the County's total population, lives in the unincorporated areas of the County. While not all unincorporated areas are rural in nature, rural communities and land uses are a significant feature of unincorporated Los Angeles County.

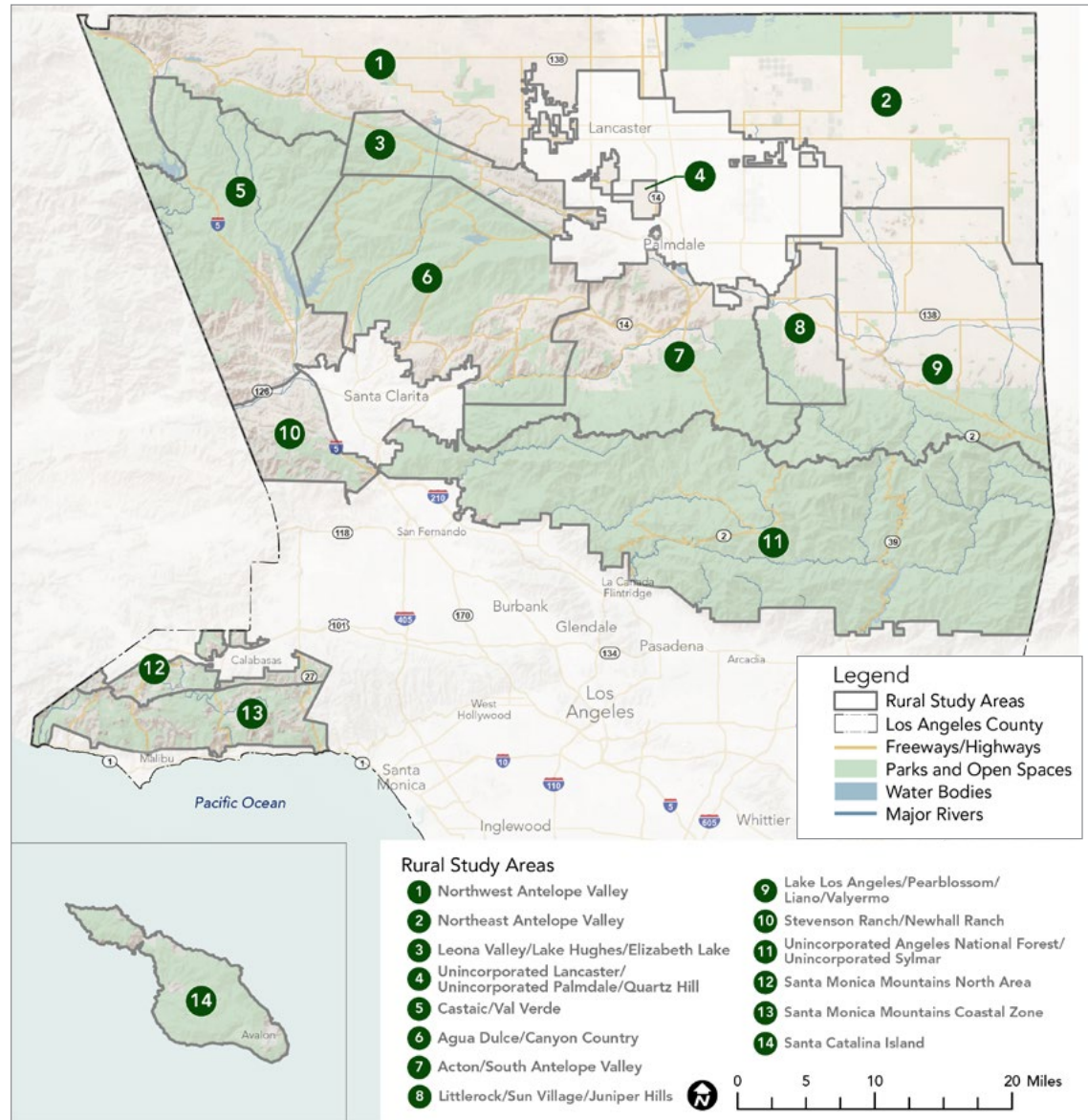
Rural Los Angeles County includes the socially and physically diverse outlying regions surrounding the Los Angeles Basin. These regions encompass over 1.5 million acres of the County and include the Antelope Valley, the Santa Clarita Valley, the San Gabriel Mountains, the Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island. Geographically, rural Los Angeles County is characterized by high desert in the Antelope Valley, sprawling valley floor and foothills in the Santa Clarita Valley, rugged terrain and narrow valleys in the San Gabriel Mountains and Santa Monica Mountains, and hilly terrain on Santa Catalina Island.

For the purposes of the PNA+, 14 Rural Study Areas were established based on a review of the 2016 Los Angeles Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) study area boundaries, rural land use categories from the General Plan¹ and Community Standards Districts, and Rural Outdoor Lighting District boundaries as detailed in the Los Angeles County Zoning Code².

¹ Los Angeles County General Plan 2035, Land Use Element, Adopted October 2015. http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan-ch6.pdf

² Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances, Title 22: Planning and Zoning. https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/codes/code_of_ordinances

Figure 5-1: Rural Study Areas

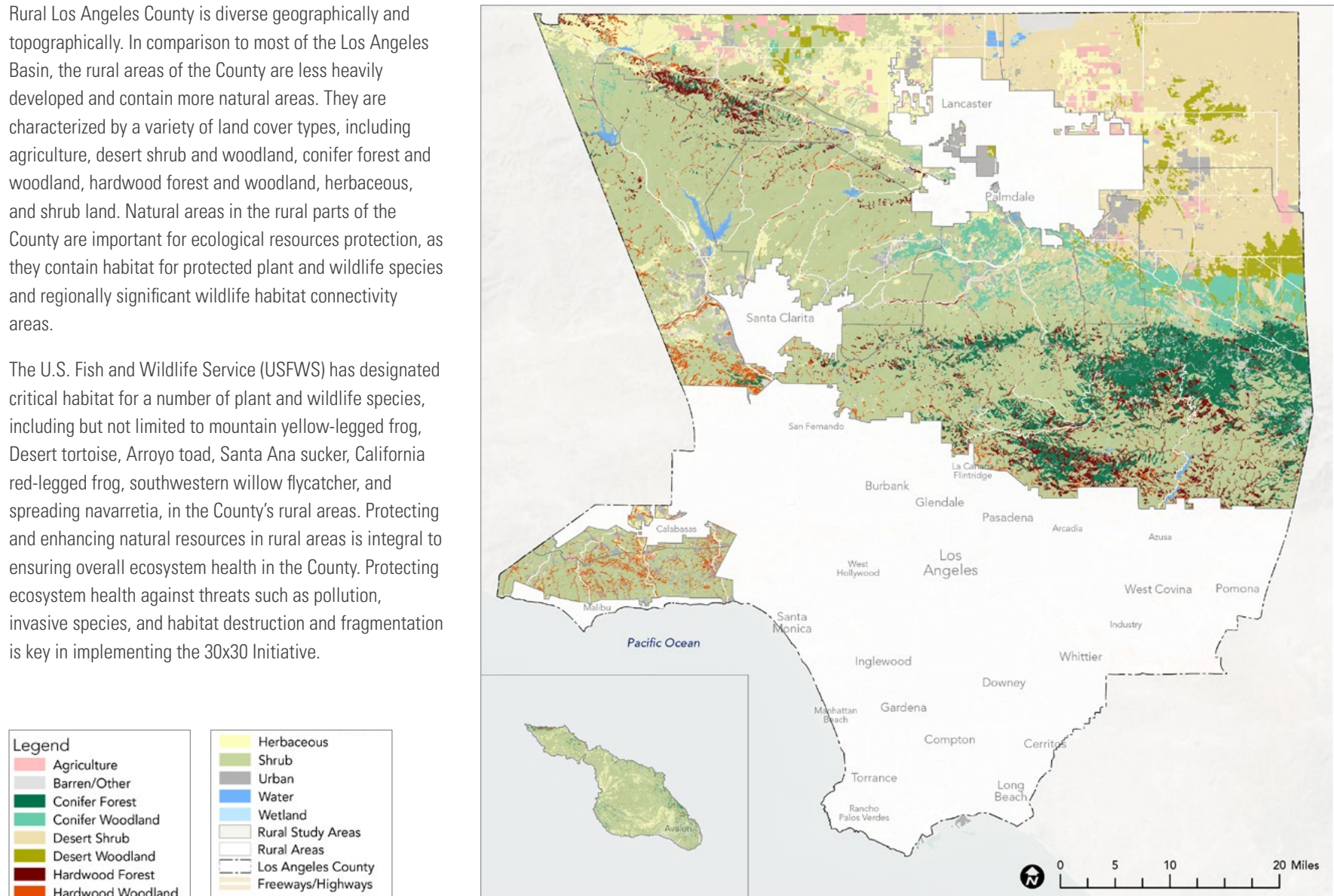


ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Rural Los Angeles County is diverse geographically and topographically. In comparison to most of the Los Angeles Basin, the rural areas of the County are less heavily developed and contain more natural areas. They are characterized by a variety of land cover types, including agriculture, desert shrub and woodland, conifer forest and woodland, hardwood forest and woodland, herbaceous, and shrub land. Natural areas in the rural parts of the County are important for ecological resources protection, as they contain habitat for protected plant and wildlife species and regionally significant wildlife habitat connectivity areas.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has designated critical habitat for a number of plant and wildlife species, including but not limited to mountain yellow-legged frog, Desert tortoise, Arroyo toad, Santa Ana sucker, California red-legged frog, southwestern willow flycatcher, and spreading navarretia, in the County's rural areas. Protecting and enhancing natural resources in rural areas is integral to ensuring overall ecosystem health in the County. Protecting ecosystem health against threats such as pollution, invasive species, and habitat destruction and fragmentation is key in implementing the 30x30 Initiative.

Figure 5-2: Landcover



Map source: CalFire FRAP 2015-2027

5.0 Rural Recreation

SOCIAL CONTEXT

The 14 Rural Study Areas are home to an estimated 163,431 individuals according to population estimates included in the PNA. Residents of the County’s rural areas comprise approximately 1.6 percent of the County’s population of 10.4 million people. These rural areas are not homogenous and vary in their demographics, location, topography, history, and park and recreation needs and preferences. In other words, no two rural communities are exactly the same and each has unique needs. As shown in Figure 5-1, rural communities can be found in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island.

Rural communities in Los Angeles County are relatively small compared to urban communities in the Los Angeles Basin and typically have populations of anywhere from several dozen to several thousand people; though, some communities in rural areas have populations of over ten thousand people. The County’s rural land use designations were developed to maintain low” rural residential densities, resulting in large residential lots and spatially dispersed residences. In terms of land uses, the County’s rural areas consist of rural communities interspersed among open space and recreational areas, protected natural areas, and agricultural lands.

The following is breakdown of the population of rural Los Angeles County by race, ethnicity, age, income, gender, and education level.

Figure 5-3: Rural Los Angeles County Demographics

► Race and Ethnicity

	Hispanic or Latino		Non-Hispanic or Latino					
	Any Race	White	Asian	Black	Two or More Races	Other	American Indian and Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander
Rural	35.1%	48.2%	7.1%	4.4%	4.1%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
LA County	48.0%	25.6%	14.7%	7.6%	3.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census redistricting data

► Age

	Under 15 years	15 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80+
Rural	16.4%	7.1%	12.6%	11.7%	12.8%	16.8%	13.5%	6.2%	3.0%
LA County	18.2%	6.4%	15.5%	14.7%	13.5%	12.9%	10.0%	5.4%	3.5%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Gender Identity

	Male	Female
Rural	52.9%	47.1%
LA County	49.3%	50.7%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Income

	Less than \$24,999	\$25,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000 +
Rural	13.6%	26.6%	18.2%	13.7%	28.0%
LA County	19.5%	33.7%	18.8%	10.8%	17.3%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

► Education

	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate or equivalent	Some college no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Rural	13.1%	21.6%	23.9%	9.0%	19.4%	12.9%
LA County	20.9%	20.6%	19.0%	7.0%	21.2%	11.3%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year subject tables

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF RURAL RECREATION PRIORITIES

One aim of the PNA+ is to reconsider and focus on the specific recreational needs of the population living in the rural areas of the County. Key considerations for the rural context include public health challenges associated with population vulnerability factors, limited community resources for park development, and barriers to the use of active travel options.

POPULATION VULNERABILITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

According to the 2017 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health publication *Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area*³, residents of the Antelope Valley experience higher than average rates of unemployment, poverty, housing instability, and food insecurity. Chronic health issues are also prevalent, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer’s disease, suicide, depression, respiratory disease, and cancer. As a result, the overall mortality rate is higher in the Antelope Valley than any other service planning area in the County.

Such health vulnerabilities are common in rural areas of the United States. Researchers have identified rural residents as a “priority population” for public health interventions, including improvements to the physical environment that support active recreation.

LIMITED COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT

Many rural communities, especially in unincorporated areas, lack the tax base to develop and maintain the same level of park amenities and recreation facilities that are commonly found in urban areas. For this reason, many rural areas in Los Angeles County are rich in terms of acres of park land but lack the amenities to meet diverse recreational needs.

Often, to overcome the challenges associated with limited resources, it is necessary for public services in rural areas to be provided through community hubs such as schools, libraries, community centers, public health offices and other facilities that simultaneously serve multiple purposes. Similarly, regional parks and open spaces often also serve local park needs in rural areas. Using a regionalized approach to pool shared resources, multi-use sites can often be leveraged to enhance recreational and social opportunities for geographically isolated residents.

Schools are particularly important opportunity sites because they typically include recreational amenities such as playgrounds and sports fields and children are able to access these settings on a daily basis. Also, some rural areas lacking parks may have schools that can serve both educational and recreational needs. This depends on factors such as the willingness of school districts to open facilities for community use and the availability of recreational space and amenities on school campuses.

Another approach to enhancing recreational opportunities in rural areas with limited resources for capital improvements involves the activation of underused public spaces through the provision of temporary play elements and programmatic offerings. A recently published study “Guide to Implementing Play Streets in Rural Areas”⁴ notes the value of these elements in enhancing community relationships and connections in contexts where residents may be physically isolated.

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE TRAVEL

Findings from the 2017 National Household Travel Survey⁵ indicate that “rural households were much more dependent on private vehicle travel, whereas people in urban households were more likely to walk or bike daily or use other modes of transportation such as a train, bus, or taxi.” While 34 percent of urban dwellers reported walking or biking, only 10 percent of rural residents reported using active modes of travel. Additionally, due to low population density, the length of an average trip in rural areas of California is 21 miles compared with only nine miles in urban areas.

³ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. *Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area*; January 2017. Available online: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2015lachs/keyindicator/ph-kih_2017-sec%20updated.pdf

⁴ Pollack Porter KM, Umstattd Meyer MR, et al. *Guide to Implementing Play Streets in Rural Communities*. San Diego, CA: Physical Activity Research Center, Johns Hopkins University and Baylor University; 2019. Available at: <https://www.baylor.edu/publichealth/RuralPlayStreetsGuide>

⁵ Federal Highway Administration. (2017). *2017 National Household Travel Survey*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC. Available online: <https://nhts.ornl.gov>

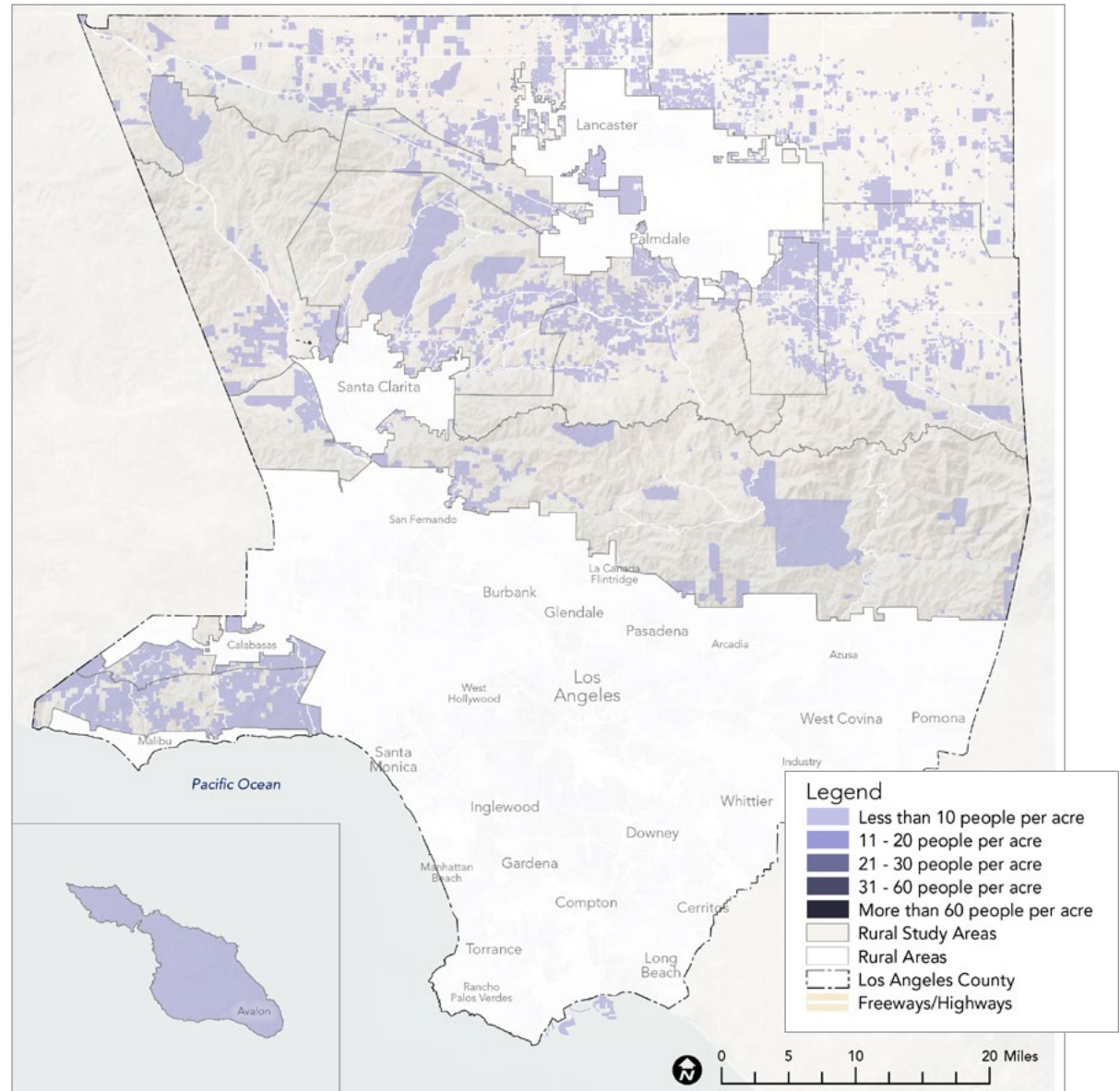
5.0 Rural Recreation

Findings reported in a 2015 Active Living Research Brief entitled *Promoting Active Living in Rural Areas*⁶ indicate that “since active transportation (walking and biking to destinations) is often difficult to achieve in dispersed rural and remote areas where residents live far from schools, worksites, and other common destinations, there is a need for environments that support active recreation, even if residents must drive to get to them.” Contrary to this report, rural residents have indicated that they need environments that support active recreation without the need to drive to access them, specifically noting trails as a key means of connectivity.

Because of the dispersed nature of rural communities and the travel behavior of rural residents, park equity frameworks that emphasize the importance of walking distance as the primary indicator of park access may not adequately account for the inherent limitations to active travel modes in rural areas. In low-density contexts, barriers to physical activity, including isolation, lack of transportation options, lack of access to places with physical activity opportunities, climate and terrain, cost and safety fears such as high traffic speeds, the threat of loose dogs and wild animals, crime concerns, and lack of sidewalks and lighting may have a more significant impact on park use than immediate proximity.

⁶ Yousefian Hansen, A. & Hartley, D. *Promoting Active Living in Rural Communities*. San Diego, CA: Active Living Research; 2015. Available at www.activelivingresearch.org

Figure 5-4: Rural Population Density



Map source: US Census ACS, 2014

APPROACH TO RURAL RECREATION PRIORITY ANALYSIS

In response to the considerations outlined above, the project team, in collaboration with the Technical Advisory Committee, identified a layered approach to analyzing rural recreation priorities that considers the following factors:

Population Vulnerability

Though the total population of rural Los Angeles County is low and more widely dispersed in comparison to urban areas of the County, many residents experience barriers to accessing the benefits of parks and open spaces. Areas in which residents are experiencing social and transportation barriers to access as well as health and environmental vulnerabilities are identified in the rural recreation priority analysis that follows.

Distribution of Rural Recreation Sites

In rural Los Angeles County, community resources often serve multiple purposes. For this reason, an inventory of Rural Recreation Sites that includes both local and regional parks and open spaces has been developed. The distribution of these sites by acreage across the Rural Study Areas and in relation to the population is presented in this section.

Note: Mapping regarding proximity to the various recreation opportunity types is based primarily on data collected from park-managing agencies. As such, the accuracy of the analyses is dependent upon the availability and quality of data provided. For example, while we were informed that certain amenities existed in a park or recreation area, the available data did not show where the amenities were specifically located. Thus, there are some limitations to our analysis which may have overstated or understated the availability of certain recreation opportunity types in some places, especially in areas within or in proximity to large recreation and conservation areas such as the Angeles National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains.

Proximity of Residents to Rural Recreation Sites

To supplement the analysis of the total acreage of Rural Recreation Sites that exist in each of the Rural Study Areas, the PNA+ acknowledges that residents must often travel greater distances with limited pedestrian infrastructure to reach public services in rural Los Angeles County than in urban communities. For this reason, an analysis of the proximity in which residents live to Rural Recreation Sites is evaluated for multiple travel modes and associated travel distances. In addition, an evaluation of the number of Rural Recreation Sites that are served by public transit is included in the priority analysis that follows.

Distribution of Rural Recreation Amenities and Opportunity Types

There is great diversity in the range of parks and open spaces that are located in rural Los Angeles County. For this reason, the recreational opportunities available at each Rural Recreation Site vary considerably. To better understand the types of recreational opportunities that residents of rural Los Angeles County are able to access, amenities that afford visitors similar opportunities have been grouped into nine Rural Recreation Opportunity Types. Rural Recreation sites that offer amenities of each type have been mapped and areas that fall within a 5-mile drive have been analyzed. Areas of rural Los Angeles County that are located within proximity to fewer Recreation Opportunity Types have been identified in the priority analysis.

Community Priorities

While the analysis of Rural Recreation Sites and Opportunity Types provides useful information for identifying areas of high priority, the perspectives and experiences of the residents of rural Los Angeles County provide critical insight into specific needs. Themes that arose during the outreach efforts for the PNA+ as described in Chapter 2, as well as priorities that were identified as part of the community engagement effort for the PNA, are included in the discussion of priorities that follows.



⁷ Public Health Alliance of California. The California Healthy Places Index (HPI). <https://healthyplacesindex.org/>

5.0 Rural Recreation

POPULATION VULNERABILITY

Residents of rural Los Angeles County experience, to varying degrees, social and physical vulnerabilities that may take on different dimensions to those relevant in the urban context. Lack of public infrastructure, including active travel infrastructure, limited community resources, and social isolation may impact the mental and physical well-being of rural residents. Researchers have identified rural residents as a “priority population” for public health interventions.

The California Healthy Places Index (HPI) is a web-based tool, developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California in partnership with the Virginia Commonwealth University’s Center on Society and Health, to examine community conditions that affect life expectancy at birth. It is intended to help guide and prioritize public and private investments, resources, and programs⁷.

Population data from the HPI was analyzed to identify areas of the County that experience high levels of Health and Environmental Vulnerability as well as Social and Transportation Barriers to accessing rural recreational opportunities. By mapping areas of the County according to these dimensions, strategies can be better tailored to address the specific conditions that commonly prevent residents from taking full advantage of the County’s parks and open spaces.

The project team conducted a rural population vulnerability analysis using indicators integral to equitable park access. Areas of the County are included in the analysis if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for a given indicator. The following maps indicate the number of indicators for which a census tract meets these criteria for each of the Population Vulnerability Dimensions outlined.

Areas of the County are identified as experiencing a “moderate” level of vulnerability if the census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for more than one of the indicators that comprise a Population Vulnerability Dimension and a “high” level of vulnerability if the census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for the majority of indicators that comprise a Population Vulnerability Dimension.

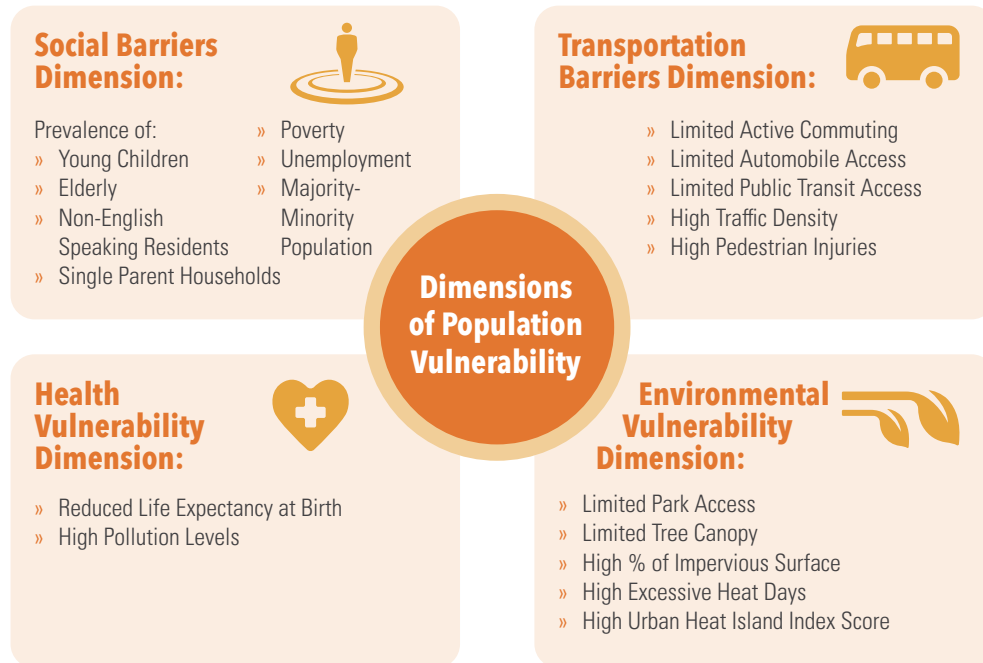
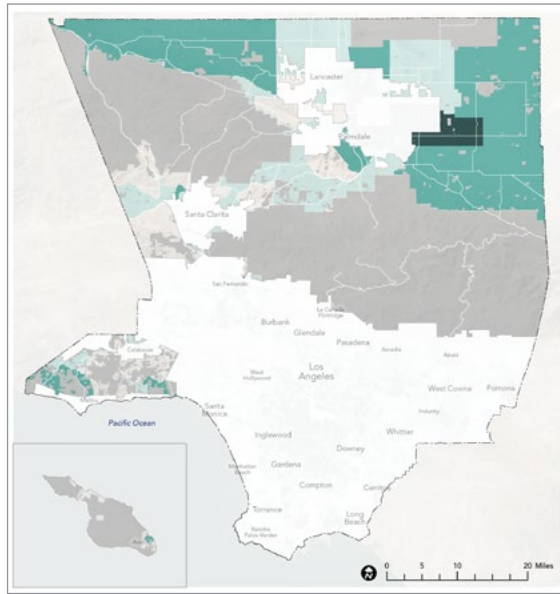


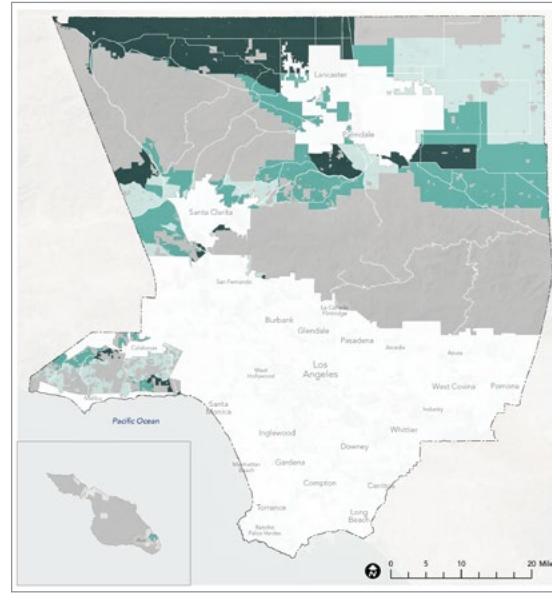
Figure 5-5: Population Vulnerability: Social Barriers Dimension



Indicators:

- » High Poverty Rate
- » High Unemployment Rate
- » Majority-Minority Population
- » High % of Young Children
- » High % of Elderly Residents
- » High % of Non-English-Speaking Residents
- » Low % of Two-Parent Households

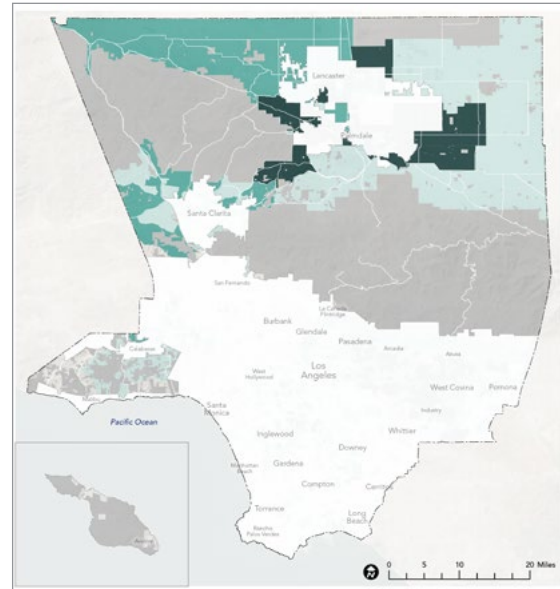
Figure 5-6: Population Vulnerability: Transportation Barriers Dimension



Indicators:

- » Low Automobile Access
- » Low Public Transit Access
- » Low Active Commuting Rate
- » High Traffic Density
- » High Pedestrian Injuries

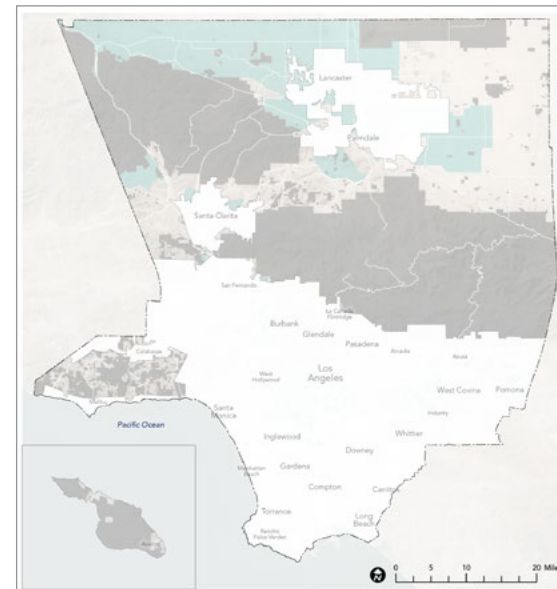
Figure 5-7: Population Vulnerability: Environmental Vulnerability Dimension



Indicators:

- » Low Park Access
- » Low Tree Canopy
- » High % Impervious Surface
- » High Number of Excessive Heat Days
- » High Urban Heat Island Index Score

Figure 5-8: Population Vulnerability: Health Vulnerability Dimension



Indicators:

- » Reduced Life Expectancy at Birth
- » High Pollution Levels



Maps source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology, individual indicators, and additional sources.

5.0 Rural Recreation

COMPOSITE POPULATION VULNERABILITY

While some areas of the County experience a single dimension of Population Vulnerability, in census tracts where multiple dimensions overlap, residents face compounding challenges. In these areas, multi-faceted approaches to reducing the barriers and increasing the benefits of access to parks and open space are critical to positively influencing the health and well-being of residents.

Overall, rural areas that experience the highest level of population vulnerability include most communities in the Northwest Antelope Valley RSA and western Northeast Antelope Valley RSA, the Lake Los Angeles/Pearblossom/Llano/Vlayermo RSA (the communities of Lake Los Angeles and Pearblossom, specifically), and the Littlerock/Sun Village RSA.

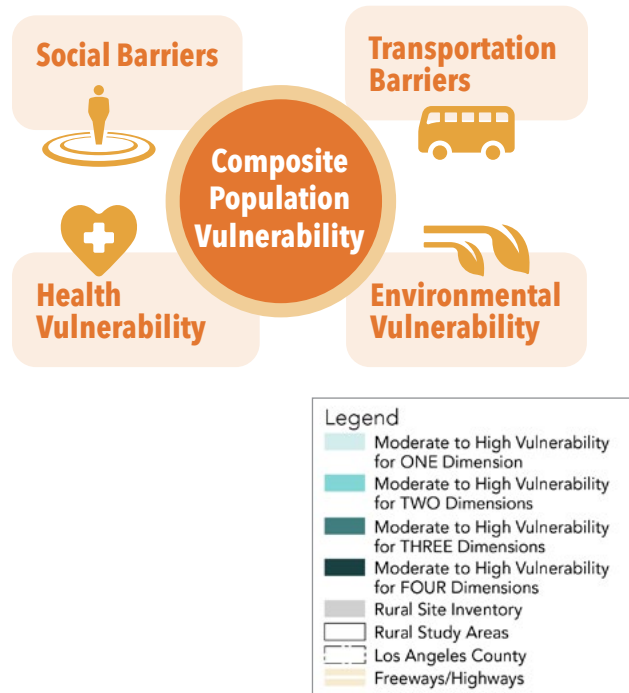
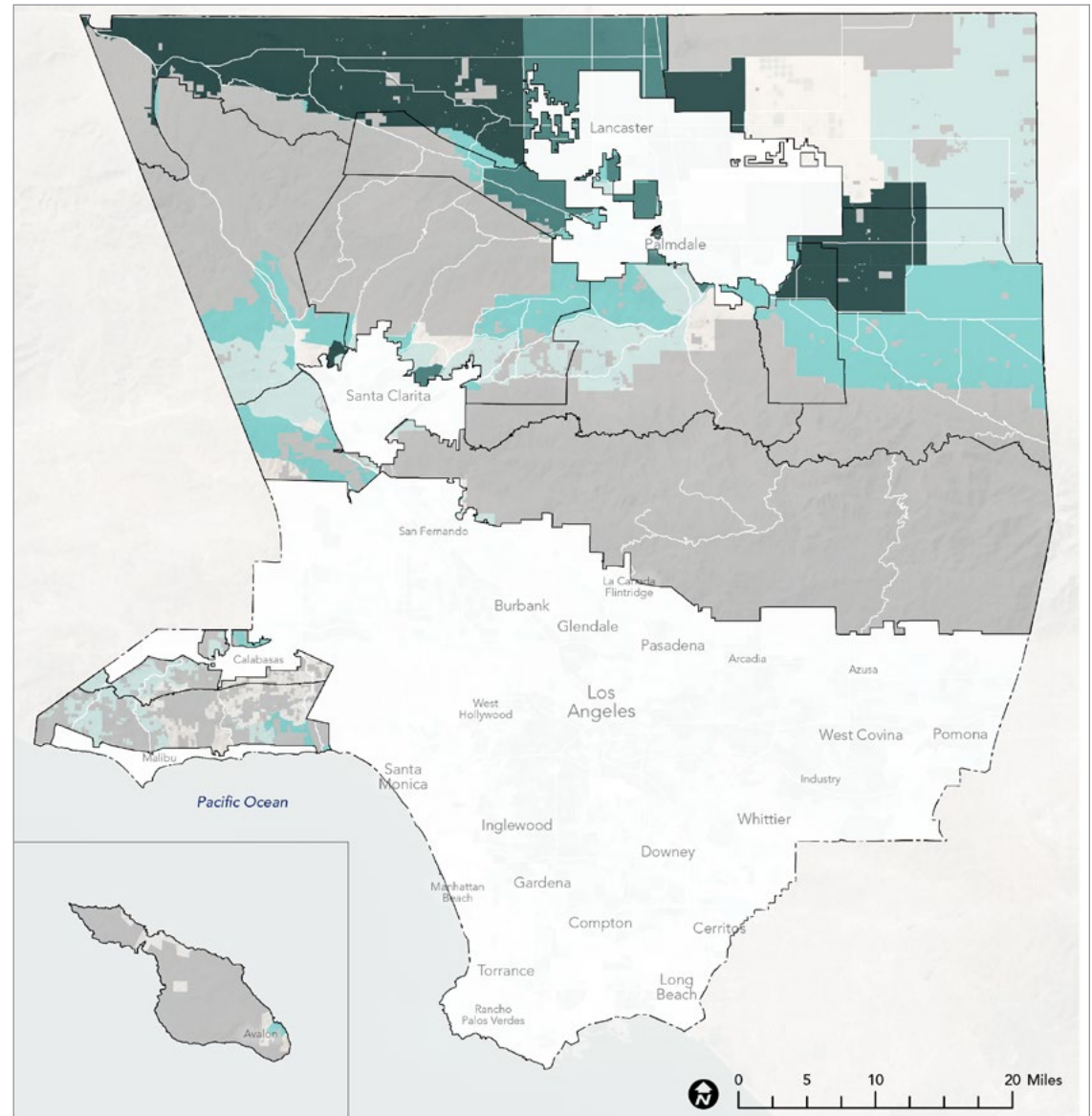


Figure 5-9: Areas of Rural Los Angeles County with the Most Vulnerable Populations



Map source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology, individual indicators, and additional sources.

5.2 RURAL SITE INVENTORY

The 2016 PNA inventoried and categorized over 3,000 parks and open spaces as: 1) local parks, 2) regional recreation parks, 3) regional open space, or 4) natural areas. As described in Chapter 3 (Regional Recreation and Conservation), the project team re-categorized over 1,400 sites identified in the PNA and incorporated additional relevant sites from public land use databases to develop a Regional Site Inventory.

The PNA+ aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of park access and need related to the rural areas of the County. For this reason, the Rural Site Inventory developed for this analysis incorporates the Local Parks identified in the PNA as well as the re-categorized site types included in the Regional Site Inventory that fall within the areas identified as a Rural Study Area in Los Angeles County. In total, the Rural Site Inventory includes nearly 700 recreation and conservation sites.

RURAL SITE INVENTORY DEFINITIONS

CONSERVATION AREA (431 SITES/149,952 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Habitat, Wildlife and Resource Conservation

Lands that are protected from development for the purpose of conserving sensitive habitat, wildlife and/or natural/cultural resources. Recreational access to these natural areas is limited or prohibited.

NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREA (160 SITES/635,512 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Nature-Based Recreation and Education

Formal and informal parks and open spaces of any size that primarily provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education. Amenities may include visitor centers, trails, picnic areas, campsites, access to natural water bodies, wildlife viewing areas, interpretive elements and others.

REGIONAL RECREATION PARK (2 SITES/12,655 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Formal Outdoor Recreation: Multi-Use

Parks that are over 100 acres and contain at least three recreation amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

REGIONAL SPECIALIZED RECREATION AREA (11 SITES/13,316 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Formal Outdoor Recreation: Single-Use

Parks that contain a specialized recreation or cultural facility as the primary use. Examples include golf courses, historic sites, equestrian centers, and amphitheaters that are stand-alone (not contained within a larger park).

OTHER PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (52 SITES/49,012 ACRES)

Primary Purpose: Institutional or Infrastructural Use

Lands that are held in public or institutional ownership and are typically used for infrastructure or institutional purposes. This includes undeveloped park land, utility corridors, cemeteries and other open spaces that are not designated for recreation or conservation.

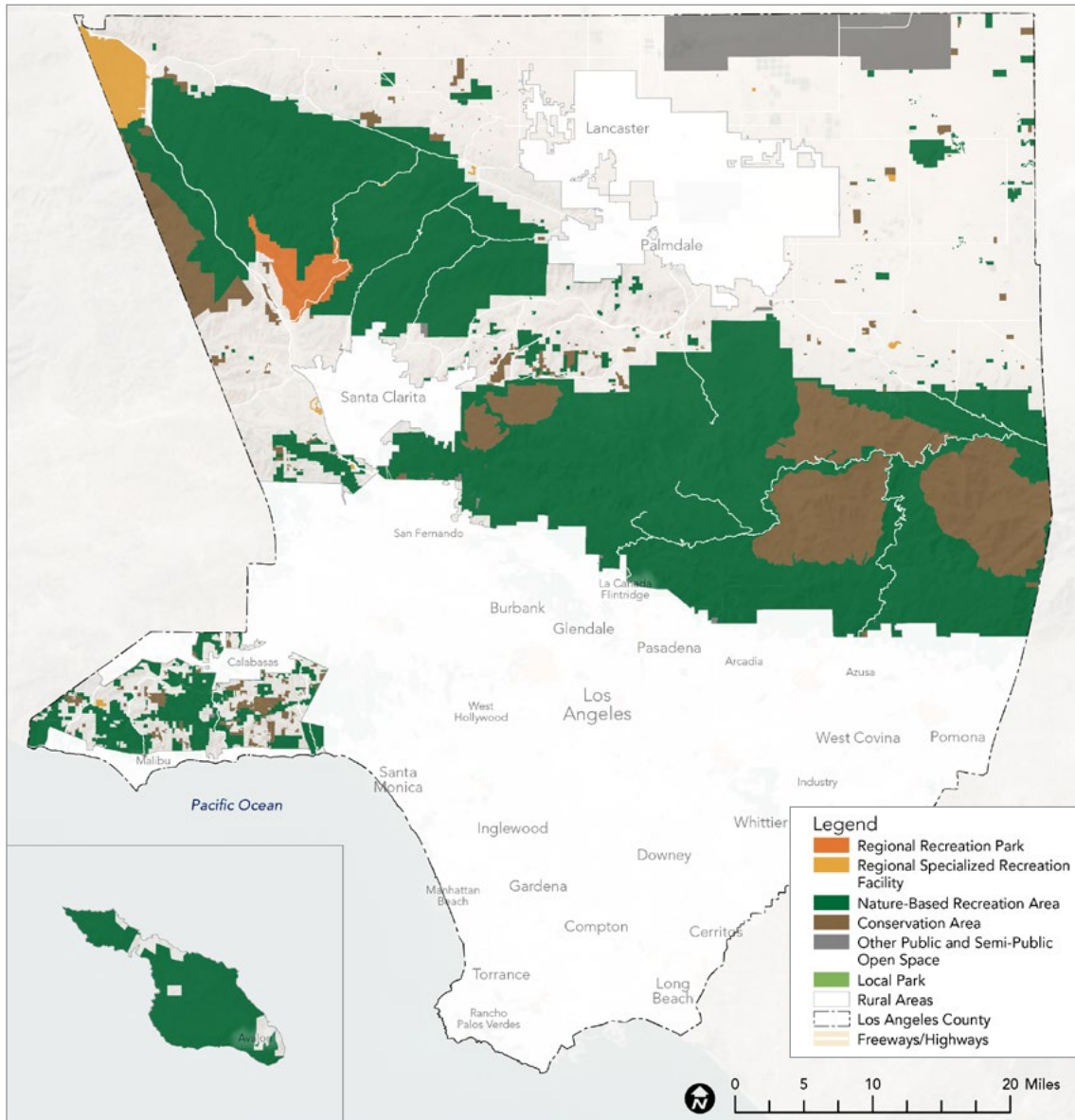
LOCAL PARKS (34 SITES/1,096 ACRES)

Primary Purpose:

Parks that are under 100 acres and contain active amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

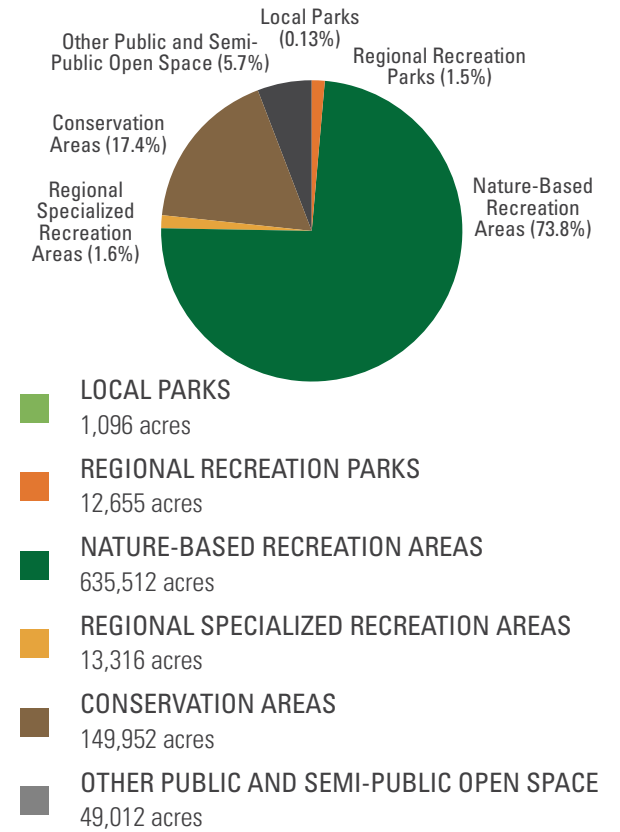


Figure 5-10: Rural Site Inventory



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

Figure 5-11: Acres by Site Type, Rural Los Angeles County



- LOCAL PARKS
1,096 acres
- REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS
12,655 acres
- NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREAS
635,512 acres
- REGIONAL SPECIALIZED RECREATION AREAS
13,316 acres
- CONSERVATION AREAS
149,952 acres
- OTHER PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
49,012 acres

▶ *Recreation and Conservation Land within rural Los Angeles County*

56%
of total
land area

861,545
acres

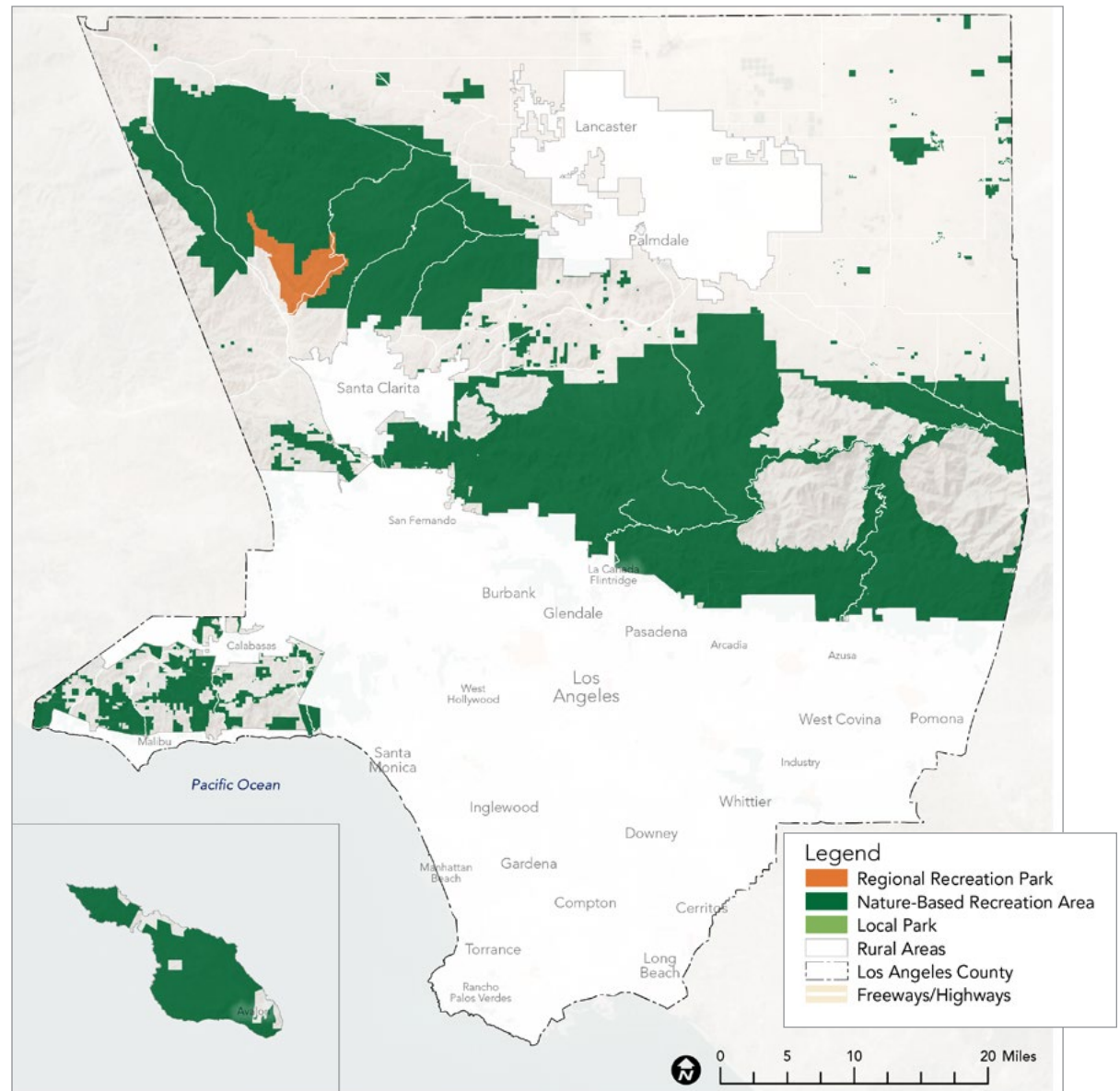
5.3
acres per
resident

RURAL RECREATION SITES

Of the six site categories included in the Rural Site Inventory, three types (Local Parks, Regional Recreation Parks, and Nature-Based Recreation Areas) are intended to provide general recreation opportunities through the provision of amenities that appeal to a wide-range of users while recreational amenities are typically limited in Regional Specialized Recreation Areas and are not provided in Conservation Areas and Other Public and Semi-Public Open Space. For this reason, sites within rural Los Angeles County that are categorized as Local Parks, Regional Recreation Parks, and Nature-Based Recreation Areas are collectively referred to as Rural Recreation Sites for the purposes of this analysis.

The following sections discuss the distribution of each type of Rural Recreation Site with respect to total population across the fourteen Rural Study Areas.

Figure 5-12: Rural Recreation Sites



Map source: 2021 RRE Inventory

5.0 Rural Recreation

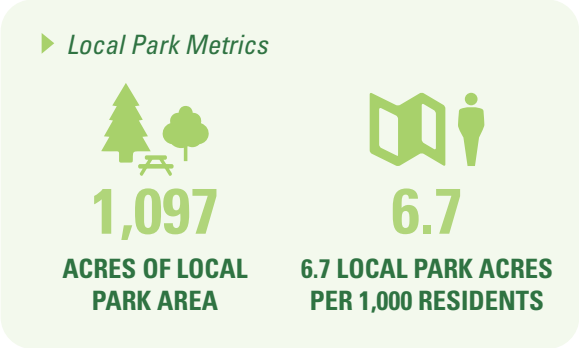
LOCAL PARKS

Local Parks are parks that are under 100 acres and contain active amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

There are Local Parks located in ten of the fourteen Rural Study Areas. The Rural Study Areas that do not have Local Parks include:

- » The Northwest Antelope Valley RSA
- » The Northeast Antelope Valley RSA
- » The Leona Valley/Lake Hughes/Elizabeth Lake RSA
- » The Agua Dulce/Canyon Country RSA

On average, there are over 6 acres of Local Park area per 1,000 rural County residents. However, with the exception of the Unincorporated Angeles National Forest/Unincorporated Sylmar RSA and Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone RSA, most Rural Study Areas are below this average. Overall, none of the Rural Study Areas are particularly rich in Local Parks in relation to their populations and Local Parks have few amenities.



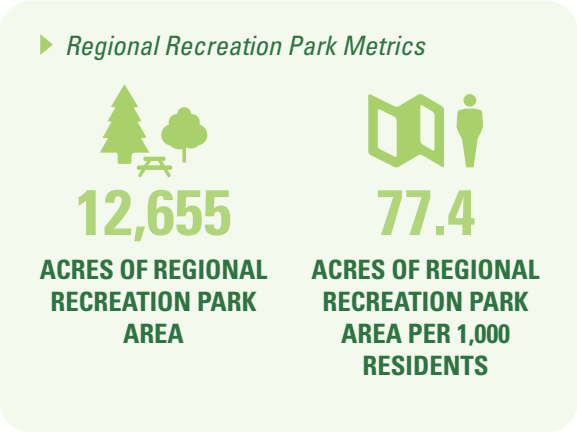
REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS

Regional Recreation Parks are multi-use parks with formal recreational opportunities. These large parks encompass an area of over 100 acres and contain at least three formal recreation amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools.

Regional Recreation Parks are located in only two of the Rural Study Areas (RSA):

- » Castaic/Val Verde RSA
- » Agua Dulce/Canyon Country RSA

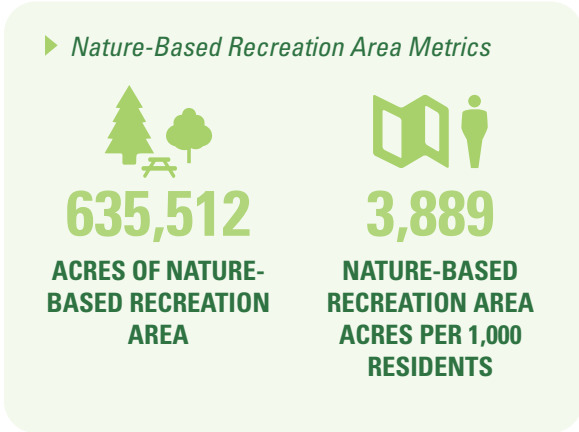
In total, there are over 77 acres of Regional Recreation Parkland per 1,000 residents of rural Los Angeles County. Of the two Rural Study Areas in which there is a Regional Recreation Park, the number of acres per 1,000 residents is much higher than average for the County's rural areas.



NATURE-BASED RECREATION AREAS

Nature-Based Recreation Areas are both formal and informal parks and open spaces of any size that primarily provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education. Amenities may include visitor centers, trails, picnic areas, campsites, access to natural water bodies, wildlife viewing areas, interpretive elements, and others.

There are Nature-Based Recreation Areas located in all Rural Study Areas with the exception of the Unincorporated Lancaster/Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill RSA. On average, there are over 3,888 acres of Nature-Based Recreation Areas per 1,000 rural County residents, though this ratio ranges dramatically by Rural Study Area from over 90,563 acres per 1,000 residents in the Unincorporated Angeles National Forest/Unincorporated Sylmar RSA to 0 acres per 1,000 residents in Unincorporated Lancaster/Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill RSA.



The number of acres of Nature-Based Recreation Area per 1,000 residents is well below the average for the County's rural areas in

- » South Unincorporated Lancaster/Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill RSA (0 acres)
- » Northeast Antelope Valley RSA (660 acres)
- » Stevenson Ranch/Newhall Ranch RSA (320 acres)
- » Santa Monica Mountains North Area RSA (934 acres)

and well above average in the

- » Unincorporated Angeles National Forest/Unincorporated Sylmar RSA (90,563 acres)
- » Agua Dulce/Canyon Country RSA (10,560 acres)

Overall, the Rural Study Areas are particularly rich in Nature-Based Recreation Area in relation to their populations. The presence and size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests significantly increases the acres per 1,000 rural County resident figures.



5.0 Rural Recreation

PROXIMITY TO RURAL RECREATION SITES

The PNA+ expands on the PNA analysis of park access in rural Los Angeles County to include automobile, bicycle, and public transit travel modes in addition to pedestrian travel. The ability of rural residents to access parks via walking, cycling, driving, or public transit is influenced by physical distance, transit infrastructure, weather conditions, safety, affordability, and vehicle availability, among other factors. As reflected in the rural community engagement themes, most residents drive a vehicle to access rural recreation sites. Physical distance is one of the main predictors of the mode of transportation that people choose in order to access a recreational facility. The greater the physical distance from home to a recreational facility, the less likely people will choose active transportation options to reach their destination.

The project team measured the percentage of the population that lives within a 0.5-mile walk, 2.5-mile bicycle ride and 5-mile drive of a Rural Recreation Site. Given that the average trip in rural areas is more than twice that in urban areas, the service area distance thresholds analyzed extend beyond the two-mile “walkable” zone of the PNA to account for dispersed resources and the necessity of vehicular travel. The specific distances used for the proximity thresholds were derived from travel behavior studies and community input on travel times in rural areas. The distance from each household to a recreational facility in the Rural Study Areas was calculated along walkable roads, bicycle routes, and road networks rather than “as the crow flies” to give an accurate representation of the distance to a park or facility.

Rural Recreation Site entry points were also analyzed to determine whether they are served by public transit. For the purposes of the PNA+, entry points to Rural Recreation Sites are considered to be served by public transit if they are located within a 0.5-mile walk of a public transit stop. Many other characteristics of Public Transit service, including frequency, cost and convenience, also influence whether people choose this mode of transportation, though these considerations are beyond the extent of the PNA+ analysis.

WALKING DISTANCE

On average, only 19% of rural County residents live within a 0.5-mile walk of a rural recreation site. By comparison, according to the 2016 PNA report, 49% of residents County-wide live within a 0.5-mile walk of a local park.

The percentage of residents that live within walking distance of a rural recreation site varies widely by Rural Study Area ranging from 1% in Northwest Antelope Valley RSA to 39% in the Santa Catalina Island RSA. Areas located beyond walking distance to a Rural Recreation Site are distributed widely throughout the Rural Study Areas.

CYCLING DISTANCE

On average, 71% of rural County residents live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride of a rural recreation site. This percentage also varies widely across the Rural Study Areas from 11% in Northwest Antelope Valley RSA to 94% in Santa Monica Mountains North RSA and Unincorporated Lancaster/Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill RSA. It should be noted that this analysis only accounts for travel distance. Residents who live within a 2.5-mile bicycle ride of a rural recreation site, may face other barriers that prevent cycling from being an accessible or safe mode of travel.

DRIVING DISTANCE

An average of 90% of rural County residents live within a 5-mile drive of a rural recreation site. Notable exceptions in which a lower-than-average percentage of residents live within a 5-mile drive of a Rural Recreation Site include the Northwest Antelope Valley RSA (53%) and Unincorporated Angeles National Forest/Unincorporated Sylmar (75%).

Most parts of the Rural Study Areas are located within driving distance of a Rural Recreation Site; however, there are communities along the northern County line in the Antelope Valley, in the western reaches of the Santa Clarita Valley, and in the northern Santa Monica Mountains that are located beyond 10 miles from any site.

PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

Rural residents overwhelmingly lack public transit access to Rural Recreation Sites, with only two percent of Rural Recreation Site access points being served by public transit (defined as being located within a 0.5-mile walk of a public transit stop). Many other characteristics of public transit service, including frequency, cost and convenience, also influence whether people choose this mode of transportation, though these considerations are beyond the scope of this analysis using GIS.

While most Rural Study Areas lack public transit service to any Rural Recreation Sites, a small percentage are served in the following Rural Study Areas:

- » Castaic/Val Verde RSA (13%)
- » Agua Dulce/Canyon Country (3%)
- » Santa Monica Mountains North Area (2%)
- » Santa Catalina Island (22%)

Figure 5-13: Proximity to Rural Recreation Sites: Walking Distance

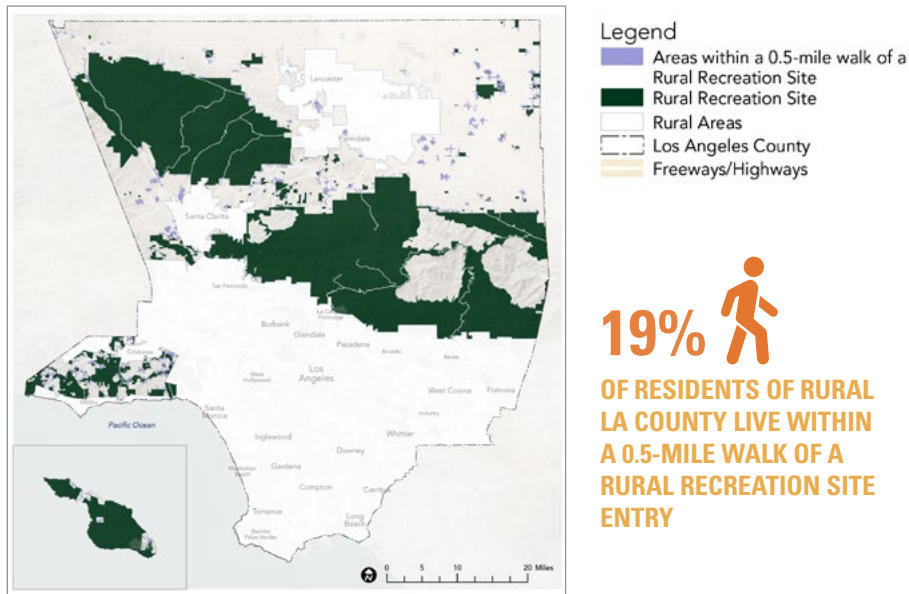


Figure 5-14: Proximity to Regional Recreation Sites: Cycling Distance

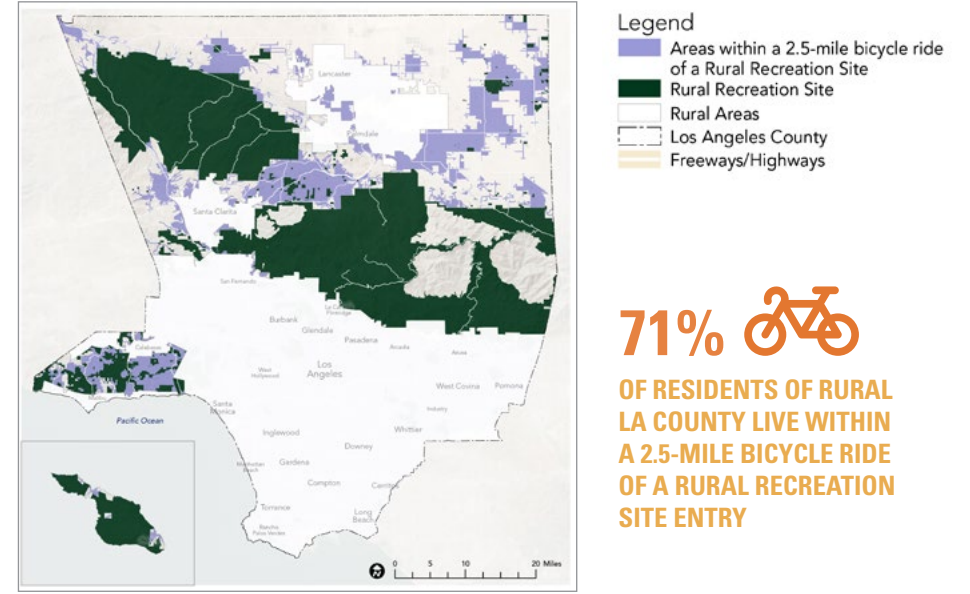


Figure 5-15: Proximity to Rural Recreation Sites: Driving Distance

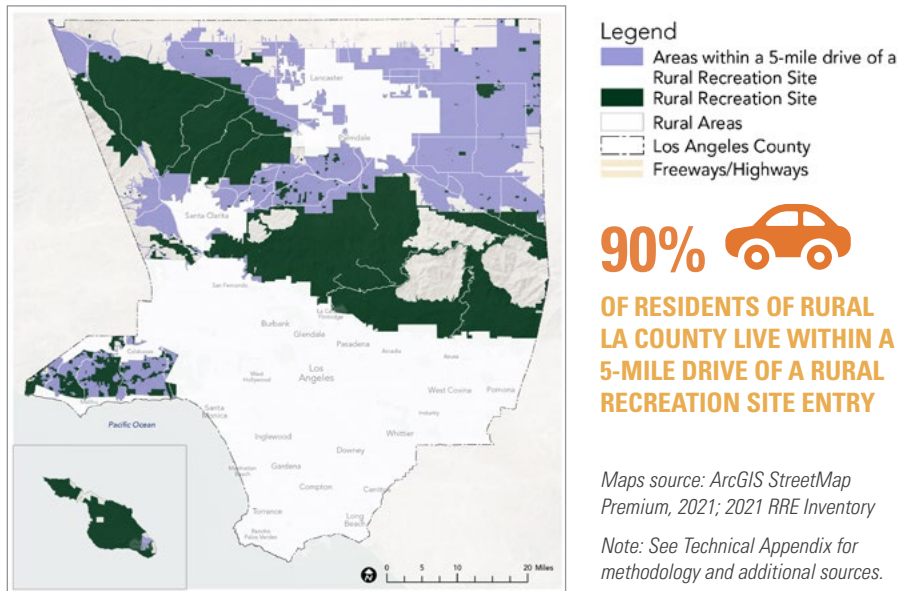


Figure 5-16: Transit Service to Rural Recreation Sites

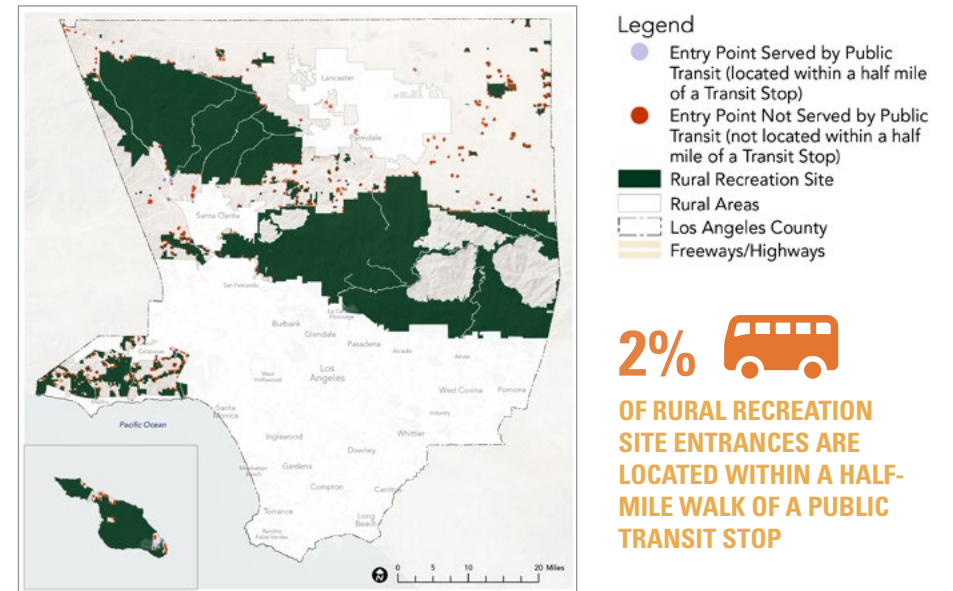
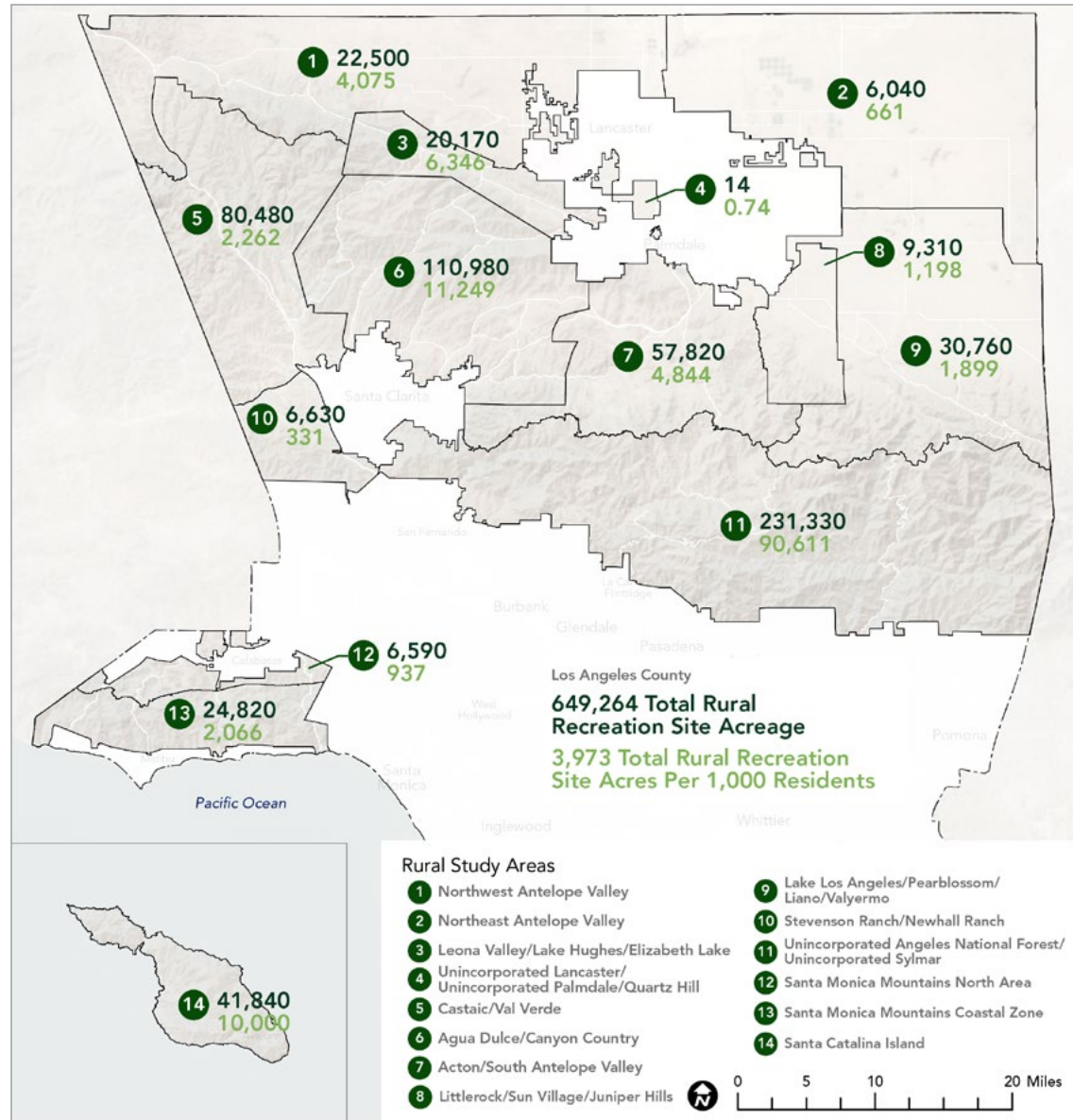


Figure 5-17: Rural Recreation Metrics by Study Area



Legend

- Total Rural Recreation Site Acreage Per Rural Study Area
- Total Acres Per 1,000 Residents Per Rural Study Area
- Rural Study Areas
- Rural Areas
- Los Angeles County
- Freeways/Highways

Map source: PNA, 2016; LAC DPR, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory





Figure 5-18: Rural Recreation Access Metrics by Study Area

This table presents a comparison of Rural Recreation Site metrics for Rural Los Angeles County and each of the fourteen Rural Study Areas. These metrics include: 1) the number of acres of Rural Recreation Site land, 2) the

number of acres of Rural Recreation Site land per 1,000 Rural Study Area residents, 3) the percentage of residents that live within walking distance (0.5 miles), cycling distance (2.5 miles) and driving distance (5 miles) of a Rural

Recreation Site entry point, and 4) the percentage of Rural Recreation Site entry points that are located within walking distance (0.5 miles) of a public transit stop.

► *Rural Recreation Site Area and Access*

Study Area	Total Acres	Acres Per 1,000 Residents	% of Residents that Live Within:			% of Park Entry Points:
			 0.5 mile Walking Distance	 2.5 mile Cycling Distance	 5 mile Driving Distance	 Within 0.5 mile Walking Distance of a Transit Stop
Rural Los Angeles County	649,264	3,973	14%	96%	99%	30%
1 Northwest Antelope Valley	22,500	4,075	5%	57%	89%	1%
2 Northeast Antelope Valley	6,040	661	8%	86%	97%	11%
3 Leona Valley/ Lake Hughes/Lake Elizabeth	20,170	6,346	21%	97%	98%	35%
4 Unincorporated Lancaster/ Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill	14	0.74	20%	90%	98%	35%
5 Castaic/Val Verde	80,480	2,262	17%	100%	100%	38%
6 Agua Dulce/Canyon Country	110,980	11,249	6%	99%	99%	35%
7 Acton/South Antelope Valley	57,820	4,844	13%	100%	100%	30%
8 Littlerock/Sun Village	9,310	1,198	12%	92%	100%	18%
9 Lake Los Angeles/ Pearblossom/Llano/Valyermo	30,760	1,899	14%	97%	100%	51%
10 Stevenson Ranch/ Newhall Ranch	6,630	331	22%	100%	100%	46%
11 Unincorporated Angeles National Forest/ Unincorporated Sylmar	231,330	90,611	0%	73%	73%	33%
12 Santa Monica Mountains North Area	6,590	937	30%	91%	99%	2%
13 Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone	24,820	2,066	18%	98%	99%	0%
14 Santa Catalina Island	41,840	10,000	0%	71%	71%	100%

5.0 Rural Recreation

RURAL RECREATION AMENITIES

The health benefits and recreational opportunities that a park or facility affords are largely influenced by the number and type of amenities it provides. For instance, aquatics centers typically serve a single need, to provide water-based recreation in the forms of pools, spas, and/or water slides, while a regional park may serve multiple needs by providing a combination of sports fields, play environments, trails, and fitness facilities in one location. A rugged nature-based recreation area with challenging trail-based amenities would best serve adults, off-road cyclists, and equestrians, while a local park with a multipurpose turf field, picnic tables, and shaded areas would likely serve a broader segment of the community, including families with children.

It is useful to evaluate the provision of Rural Recreational Amenities by analyzing how they are distributed throughout the Rural Study Areas as well as the percentage of the population that resides within a given proximity to different recreation opportunity types based on transportation mode. The residents within the area, or “amenity-shed,” all place potential demand on the amenity. Evaluating amenity-sheds provides a more detailed understanding of the demand on key amenities and the distance that residents in rural areas must currently travel to access different types of recreational opportunities.

The project team has grouped the park amenities that were inventoried during the PNA and additional amenities inventoried for the PNA+ into the following nine broad Rural Recreation Opportunity Types, which are defined on the following page:

- » Gathering Spaces
- » Sports Facilities
- » Trails and Pathways
- » Water-Based Recreation
- » Overnight Accommodations
- » Experiential Learning Opportunities
- » Support Facilities
- » General Recreation
- » Health and Fitness



► *Rural Recreation Amenities*





 **GATHERING SPACES**

-  Group Picnic Areas
-  Individual Picnic Areas
-  Indoor Event Spaces
-  Outdoor Event Spaces

 **SPORTS FACILITIES**

-  Shooting Ranges
-  Archery Ranges
-  Snowsport Facilities
-  Sports Courts and Fields



 **TRAILS AND PATHWAYS**

-  Rock Climbing Areas
-  Trails and Trailheads
-  Walking Paths
-  Off-Road Vehicle Areas


 **WATER-BASED RECREATION**

-  Boating Areas
-  Swimming Areas (Natural and Developed)
-  Watersport Facilities
-  Waterfront Access Areas
-  Fishing Areas
-  Splash Pads

 **OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS**

-  Tent Campsites
-  RV Campsites





 **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

-  Visitor Centers
-  Environmental Learning Facilities
-  Gardens

 **HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES**

-  Senior Centers
-  Fitness Zones
-  Gymnasiums
-  Community Centers
-  Recreation Centers

 **GENERAL RECREATION FACILITIES**

-  Multipurpose Fields
-  Skate Parks
-  Dog Parks
-  Playgrounds

 **SUPPORT FACILITIES**

-  Concessions
-  Parking Spaces
-  Restrooms

5.0 Rural Recreation

Figure 5-19: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Gathering Spaces

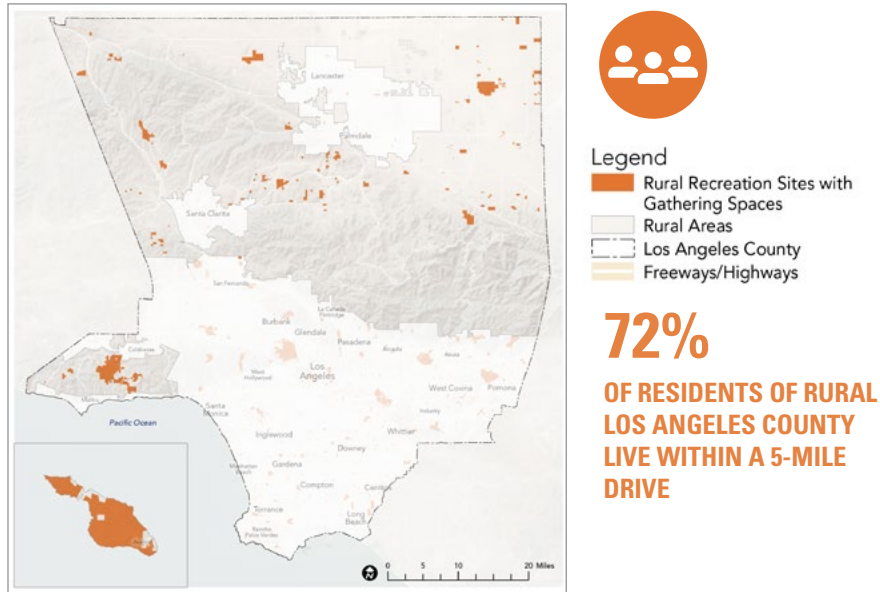


Figure 5-20: Proximity Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Gathering Spaces

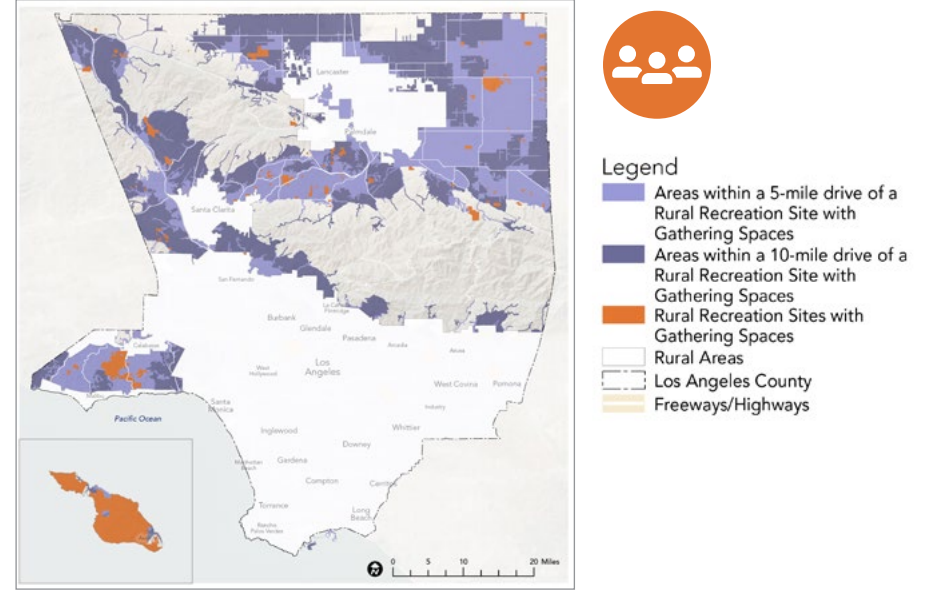


Figure 5-21: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Sports Facilities

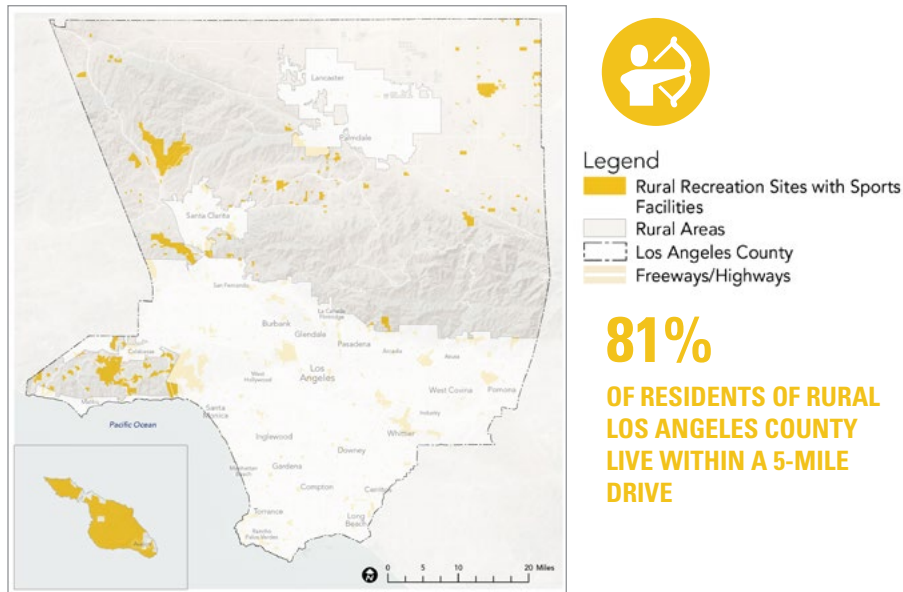
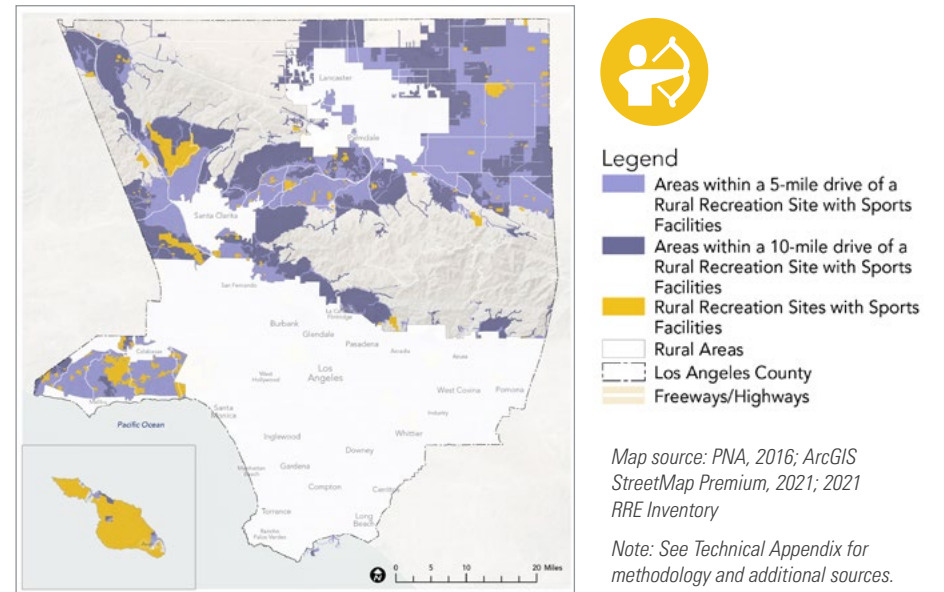


Figure 5-22: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Sports Facilities



Map source: PNA, 2016; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

Figure 5-23: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Trails and Pathways

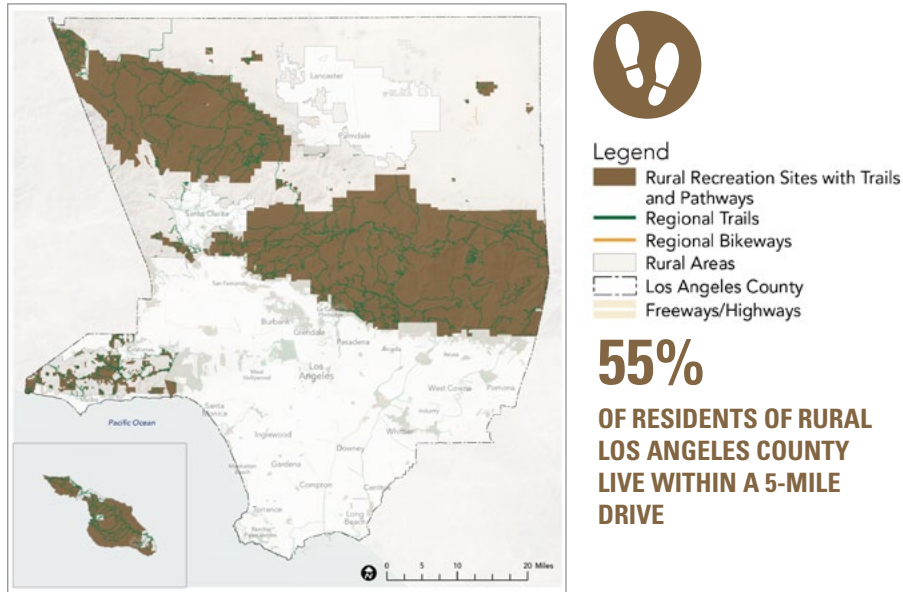


Figure 5-24: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Trails and Pathways

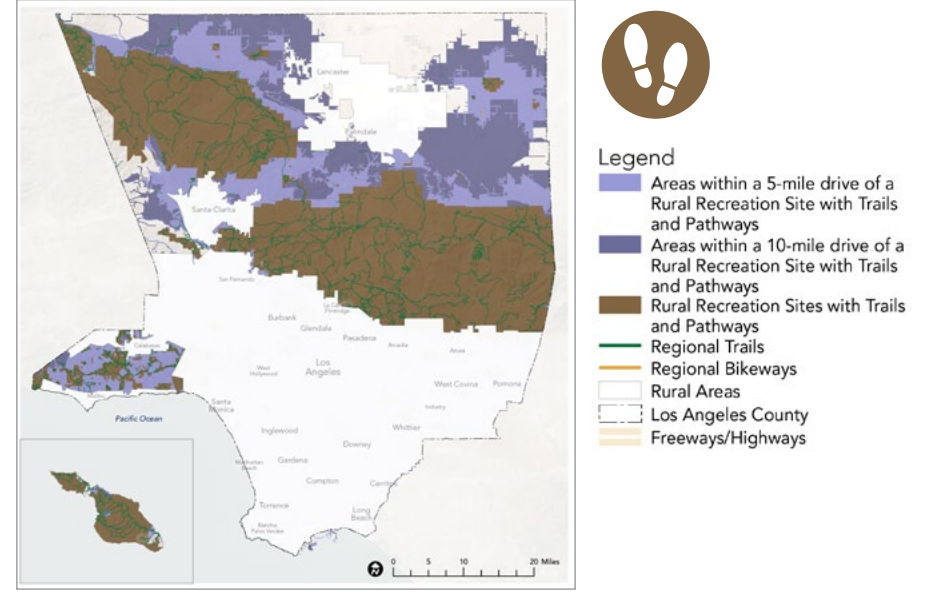


Figure 5-25: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Water-Based Amenities

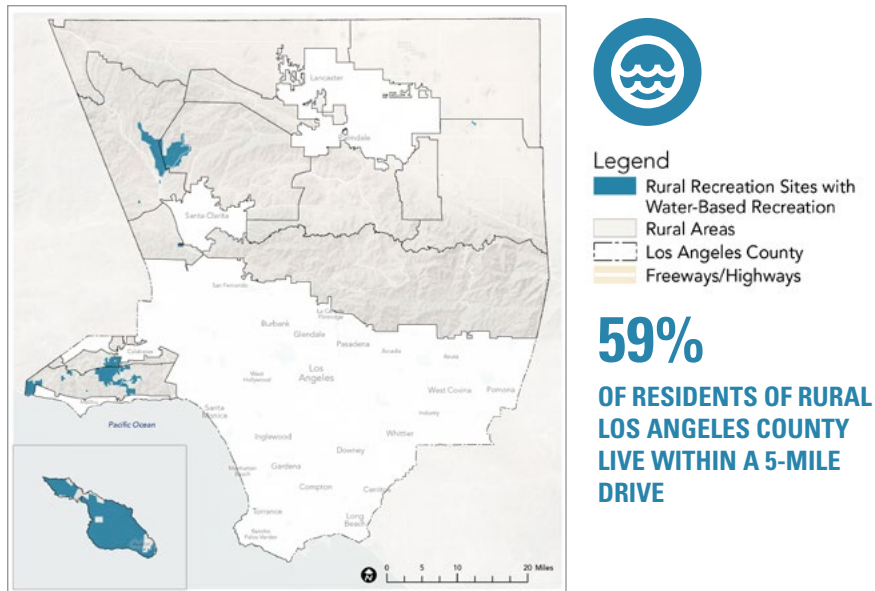
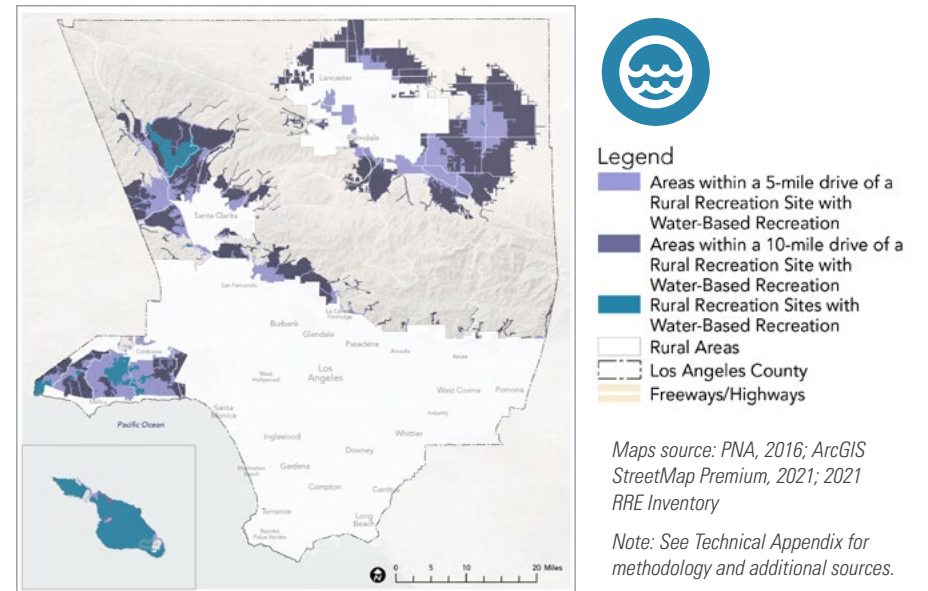


Figure 5-26: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Water-Based Amenities



Maps source: PNA, 2016; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

5.0 Rural Recreation

Figure 5-27: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Overnight

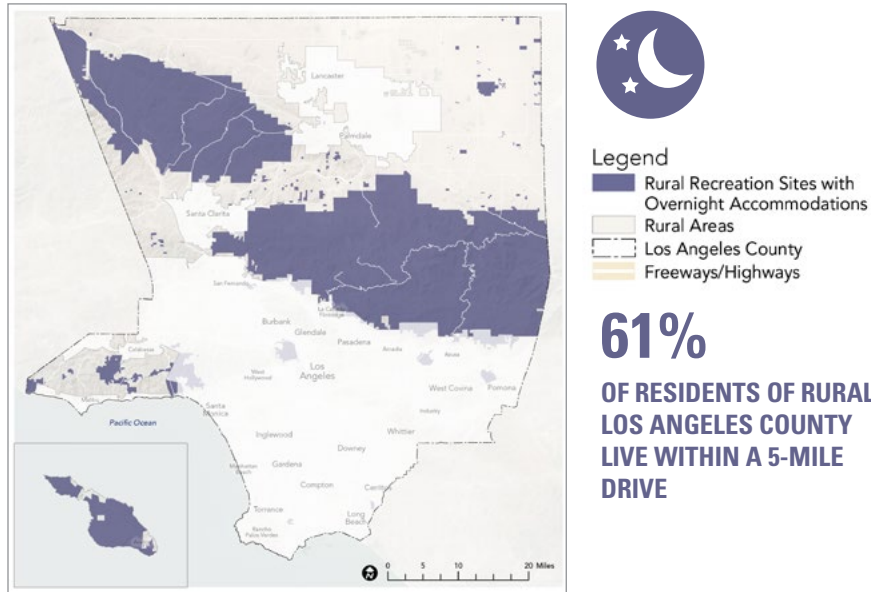


Figure 5-28: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Overnight Accommodations

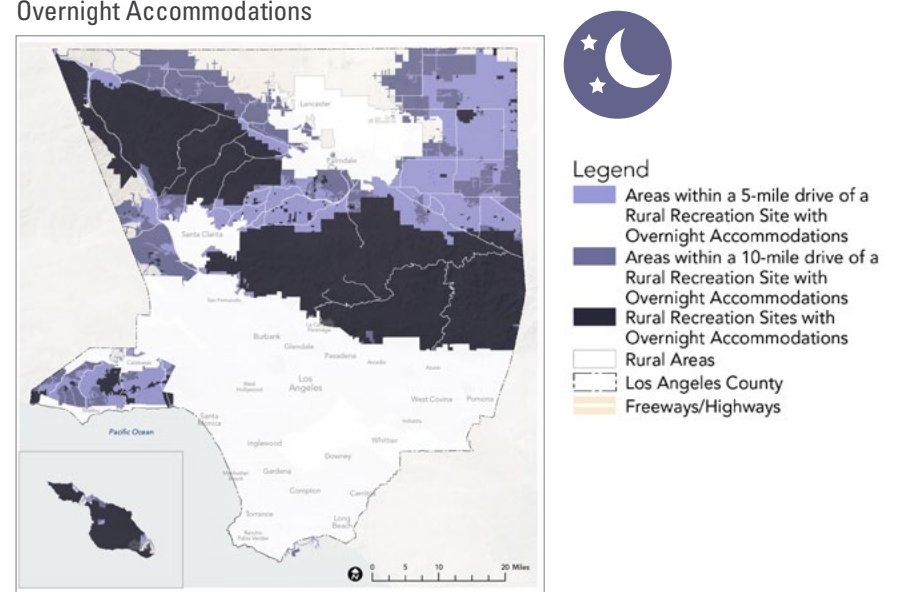


Figure 5-29: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Experiential Learning Opportunities

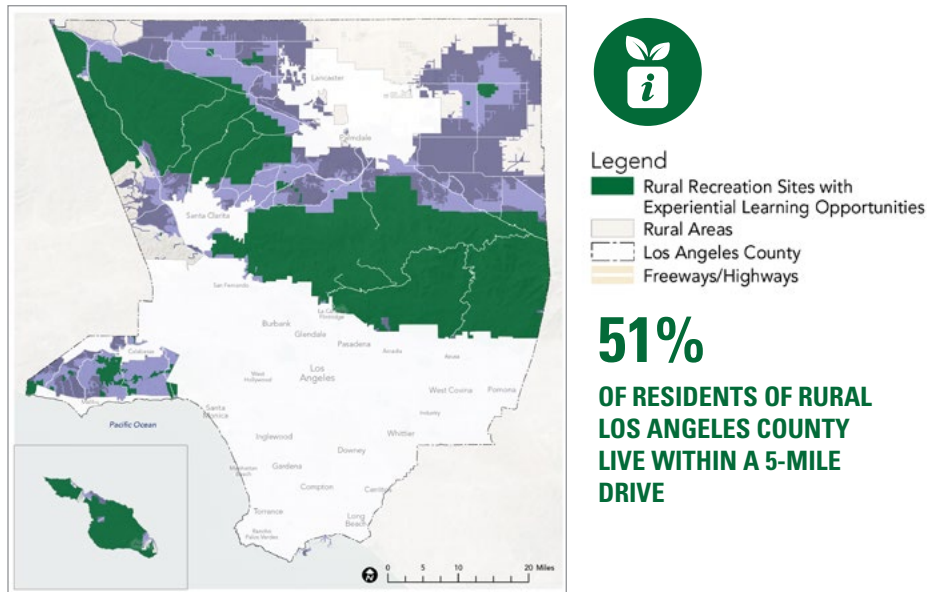
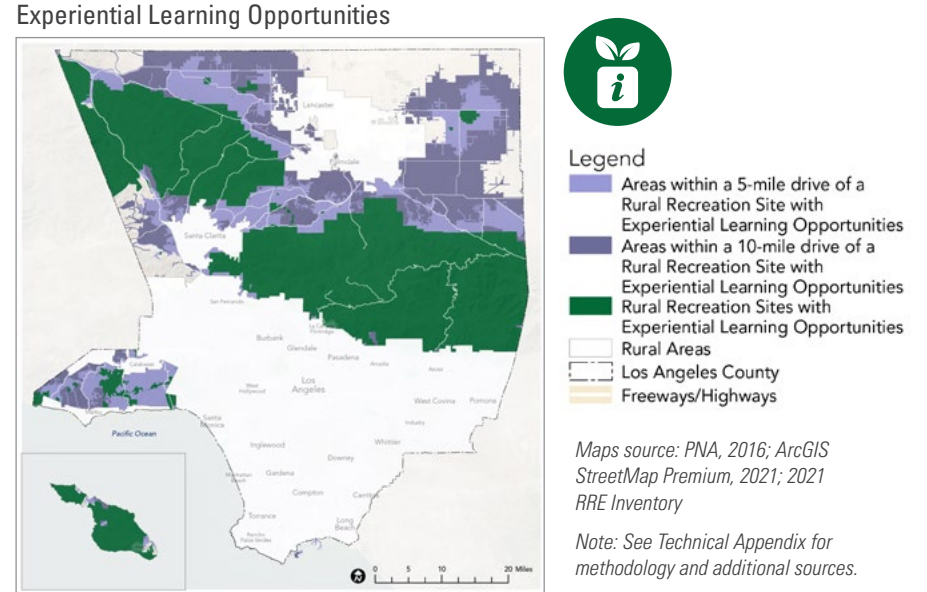


Figure 5-30: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Experiential Learning Opportunities



Maps source: PNA, 2016; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

Figure 5-31: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Health and Fitness Facilities

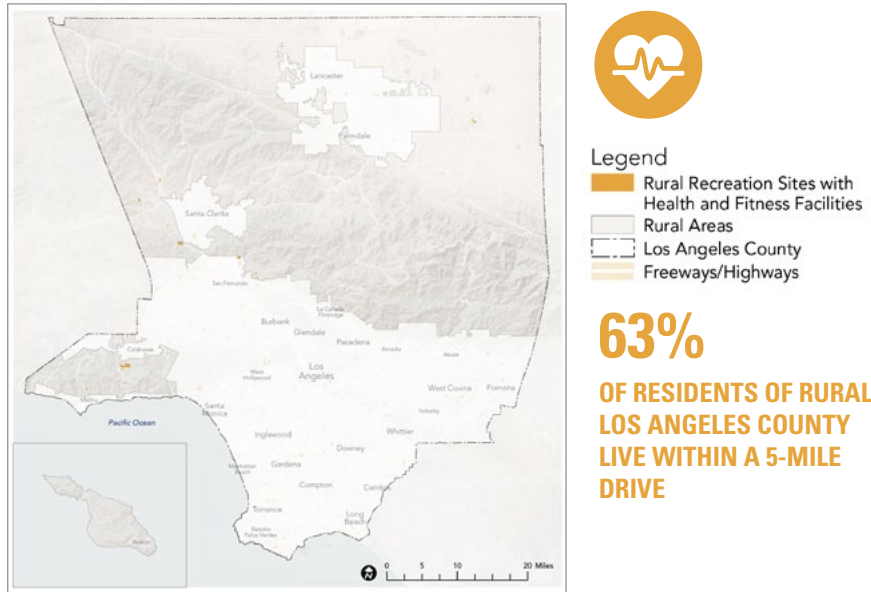


Figure 5-32: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Health and Fitness Facilities

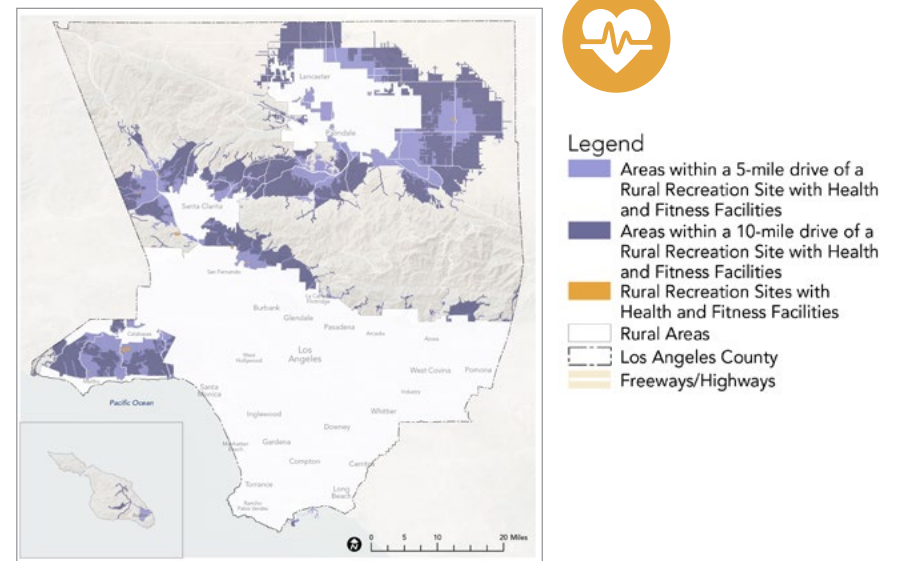


Figure 5-33: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: General Recreation Facilities

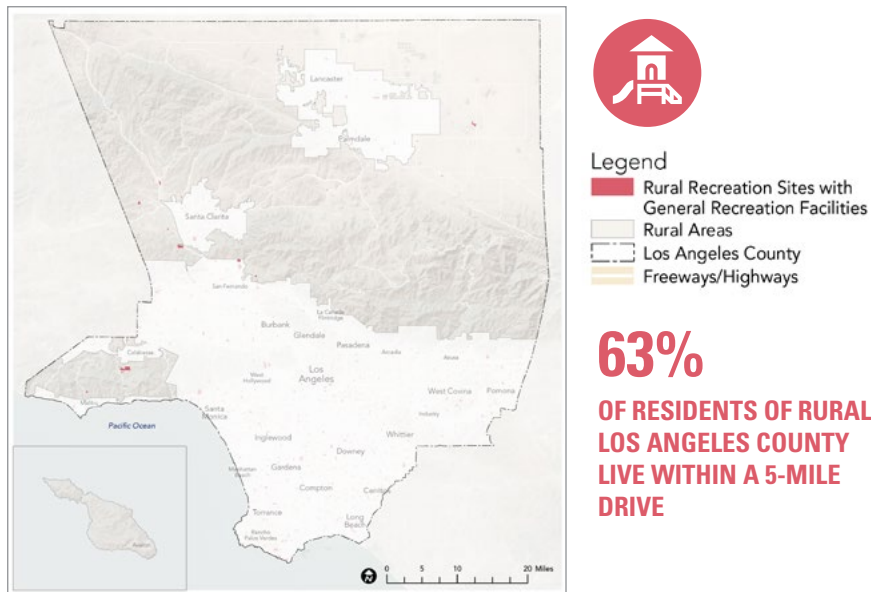
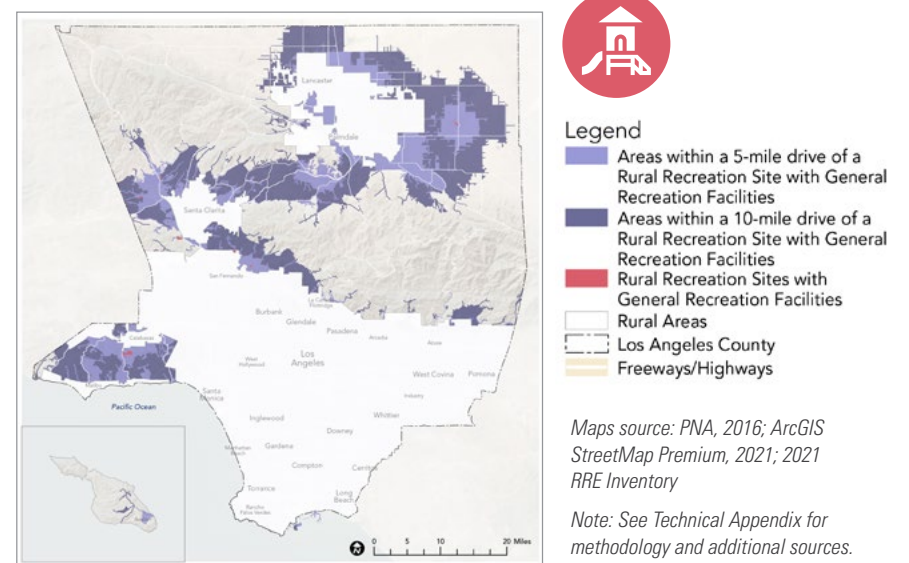


Figure 5-34: Proximity to Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: General Recreation Facilities



Maps source: PNA, 2016; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

Figure 5-35: Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Support Facilities

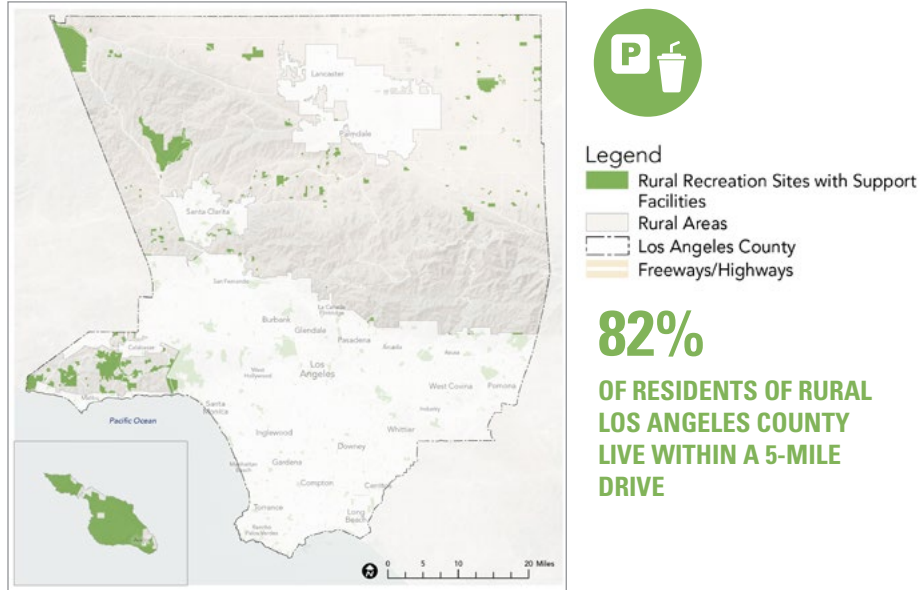
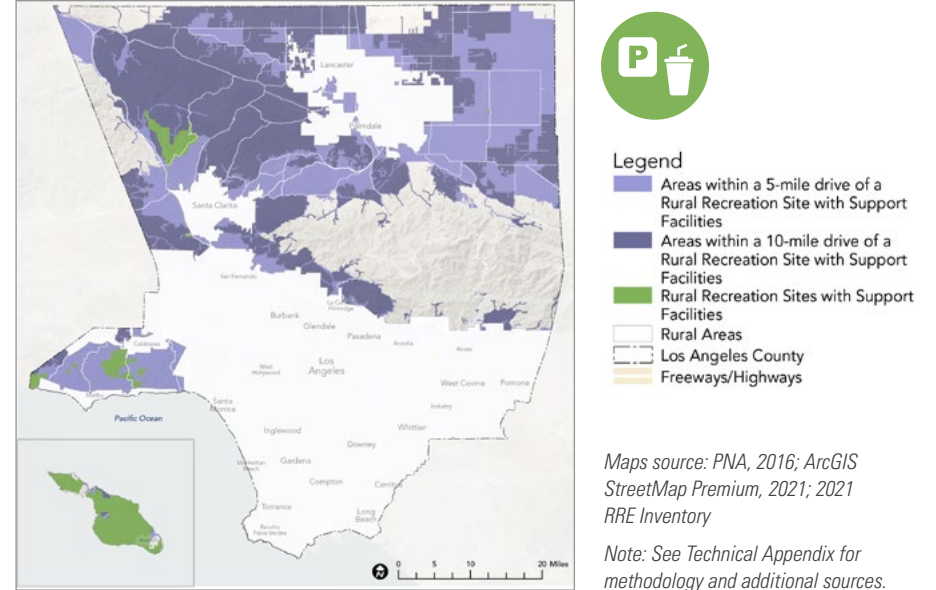


Figure 5-36: Proximity Rural Recreation Opportunity Types: Support Facilities



Maps source: PNA, 2016; ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

Note: See Technical Appendix for methodology and additional sources.

5.3 COMMUNITY USE AND PERCEPTIONS

The project team employed a mixed methods approach to gain an understanding of how rural populations perceive and use parks and recreational spaces and the amenities they provide. The rural community engagement effort included several methods to reach rural County residents:

- » Community engagement workshops with participants from Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, the Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island
- » Meetings with rural town councils, the Association of Town Councils and with community partner organizations
- » Outreach events held by community partners to gather input
- » Interviews with key rural recreation stakeholders
- » One online, map-based community survey, publicized across a variety of media platforms and one in-person survey shared by community partners

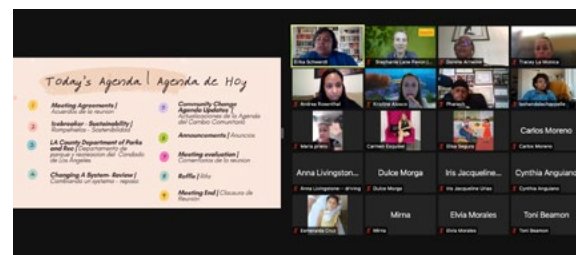
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Throughout engagement with rural communities in LA County, community members provided extensive feedback on popular recreational activities, recreation needs, and barriers to park use and recreation participation. Commonalities among community member perspectives obtained from workshops and community meetings, stakeholder interviews, community partner outreach and community surveys are presented in this section.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

The project team held online workshops and joined community partner meetings to engage the public about park use and needs in Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Catalina Island. Key themes from these sessions, as well as additional insights from community partner outreach, are described below in three sections. The first table includes the reasons why people use local parks and facilities. A second table of themes focuses on barriers to using parks. The last section looks at what participants suggest they need to use or improve their experiences at local parks in rural communities.

Figure 5-37: Community Meeting



Reasons Rural Community Residents Use Local Parks



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Parks provide space to spend time with family and friends, and opportunities for active recreation for all ages.



CONVENIENCE

Neighborhood parks are usually nearby, within walking distance and provide quick and convenient access to green space.



AFFORDABILITY

Parks are usually free, and an opportunity for family time without the need to spend money.



SHADE

Some parks have shade which is hard to come by in desert communities.



AQUATIC AND WATER ACTIVITIES

Parks provide places for kids and families to cool off, including splash pads and pools, and access to activities like fishing.



DIVERSITY

Residents enjoy the diversity of people they see using parks.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Parks provide places for cultural celebrations, concerts and festivals, and many offer educational programs by park staff.



CULTURAL PRIDE

Parks provide opportunities to learn about local history and honor the lands of Indigenous peoples and build a collective sense of stewardship and purpose.



WILDLIFE AND NATURE

Parks offer opportunities for bird watching and other wildlife viewing, and local wildlife reserves and conservation areas capture the natural essence of the region.



RELAXATION AND REFLECTION

Parks provide benefits to mental health, and spaces to spend time in nature away from technology and business of everyday life.

Barriers Rural Residents Experience To Using Parks and Facilities



DISTANCE

Parts of the Antelope Valley have few parks of any size, and many residents and families have to travel long distances to parks and facilities.



LACK OF TRANSIT

Public transit wait times to parks can be up to two hours or more and there are few options for carpooling or shuttles. Most rural residents have to drive to access parks and facilities, but not everyone has access to a car.



LIMITED PARKING

There is not enough parking for cars or horse trailers, and the high cost of parking at facilities is a barrier for lower income residents.



LACK OF SHADE

There are no shade structures in seating and play areas, and trails and paths in parks do not always have shade.



LIMITED ACCESS TO WATER

There is a lack of water facilities and features like fountains, pools and splash pads to keep residents cool and hydrated in hot months.



SAFETY CONCERNS

More lighting at parks is needed, especially after dark. Better trailhead maintenance and coordination among different types of trail users is needed to improve trail safety, especially for equestrians and hikers.



LACK OF INFORMATION

There is not enough information about events and facilities at local parks, or how to get there.



INADEQUATE SIGNAGE

Signage is not maintained or provided in multiple languages.



LIMITED ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Better wheelchair and disabled access is needed in parks and on trails.



LIMITED NATIVE AMERICAN AND TRIBAL ACCESS

Tribal members do not have land access for ceremonial purposes and other practices and need privacy during gatherings and activities.

Community Suggestions to Increase and Improve Visits to Rural Parks and Facilities



TRANSIT OPTIONS

Improved and more frequent public transit service, carpools and shuttle options to parks.



INCREASED PARKING

Affordable parking options with ample space for horse trailers and electric car charging stations.



MORE SHADE

Shaded seating, play areas and walking trails, and shaded greenbelts between and around parks.



ACCESS TO WATER

More hydration stations for people and animals, and additional water facilities and features like pools and splash pads to keep residents cool in hot months and provide swimming lessons.



ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Improved lighting at parks, more desert walking paths, and better maintenance of trailheads.



BETTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

More information about events at local parks, mini-transit (like Metro Micro) to parks and walking and hiking opportunities at wildlife sanctuaries. More publicity about community workshops and other opportunities to provide feedback.



ENHANCED SIGNAGE

Signage maintained and provided in multiple languages, as well as additional interpretive and wildlife identification signage needed along trails.



ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Trails and parks with better wheelchair and disabled access, and playground equipment that is accessible.



NATIVE AMERICAN AND TRIBAL ACCESS

Privacy for ancestral practice, and land access for gatherings and events.



MORE CULTURAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

More community events like art shows and concerts.



IMPROVED MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Better upkeep of restroom facilities, improved lighting on streets and paths, trash and vegetation overgrowth removal in parks and on trails.



ENHANCED TRAILS AND TRAIL SAFETY

Protected and safe bike trails to connect users to parks, and conflicts between trail users addressed to ensure trails are safe for horses, riders and other users.



MORE FACILITIES FOR EQUESTRIAN USE

A staging area for horses and trailers at trailheads with trees, water, and picnic tables, and a place to host horse shows and equestrian events.



ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

More park activities and programs available to all ages.



EXPANDED RECREATION FACILITIES

More tennis and pickleball courts, swimming facilities.

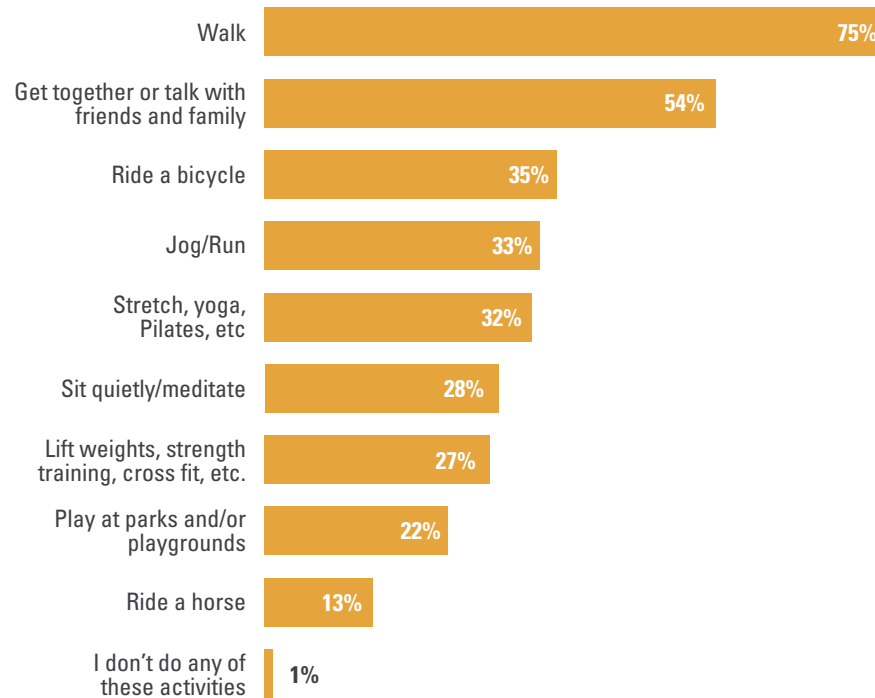
COMMUNITY SURVEYS

The following section includes highlights of the results of one online and one in-person survey focused on rural communities' local parks access and use. These surveys included questions which asked rural community residents and parks users in LA County about the types of parks and facilities they use, how they get to parks and who they go with, what barriers they experience to using parks and facilities, and what types of parks and amenities are most needed in their community. Many of these questions asked people to choose as many answers as they wanted. The results are organized into six themes:

- » Park Use and Activities
- » Barriers to Use
- » The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Recreation Choices
- » Travel to Parks
- » Local Parks Needs
- » Quality of Local Parks and Amenities

► Parks Use and Activities

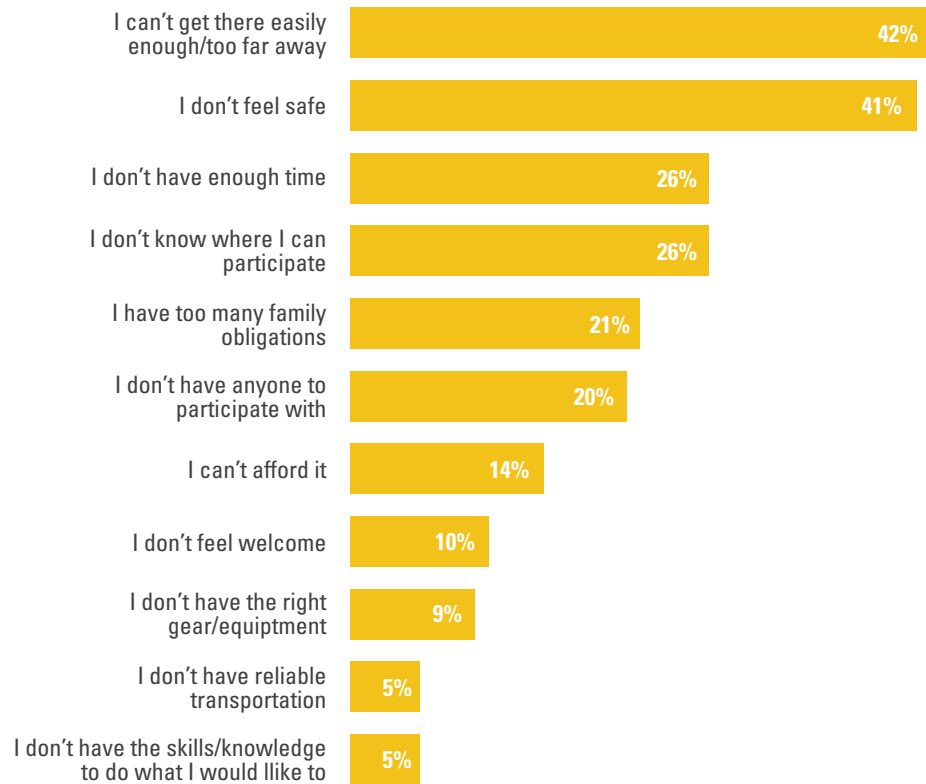
What do you and your household like to do for health and wellness?



5.0 Rural Recreation

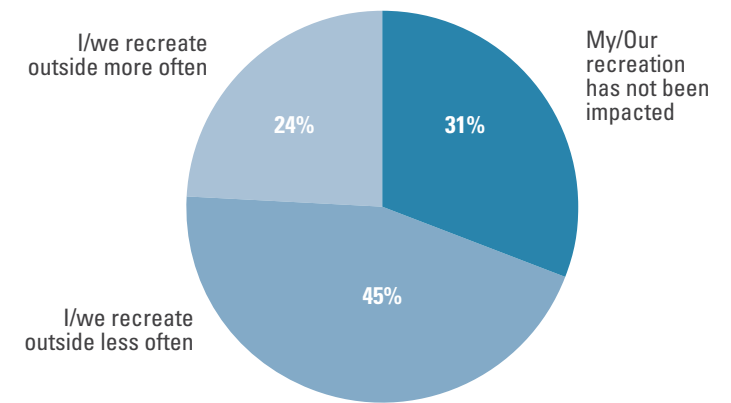
► Barriers to Park Use

What keeps you from doing more activities?

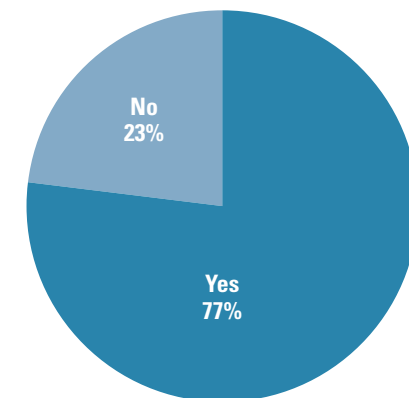


► COVID-19 Impacts on Recreation

COVID has affected how I recreate...

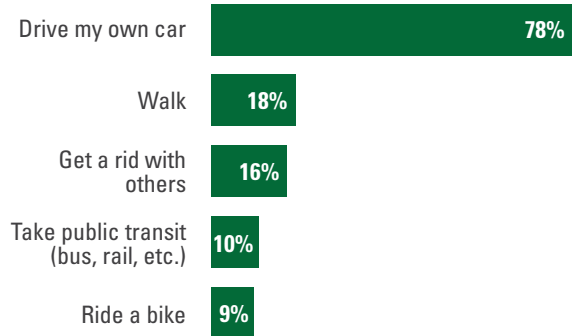


Because of COVID I am looking for recreation opportunities closer to home...



► *Travel to Parks*

When I go to parks, I...

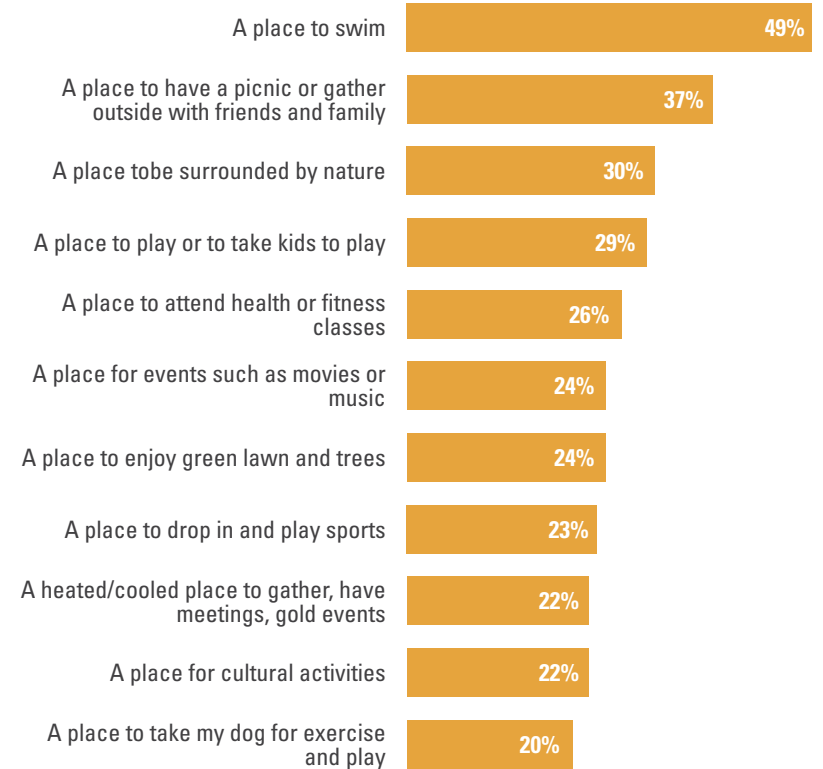


I'm willing to travel this many minutes to...



► *Local Park Needs*

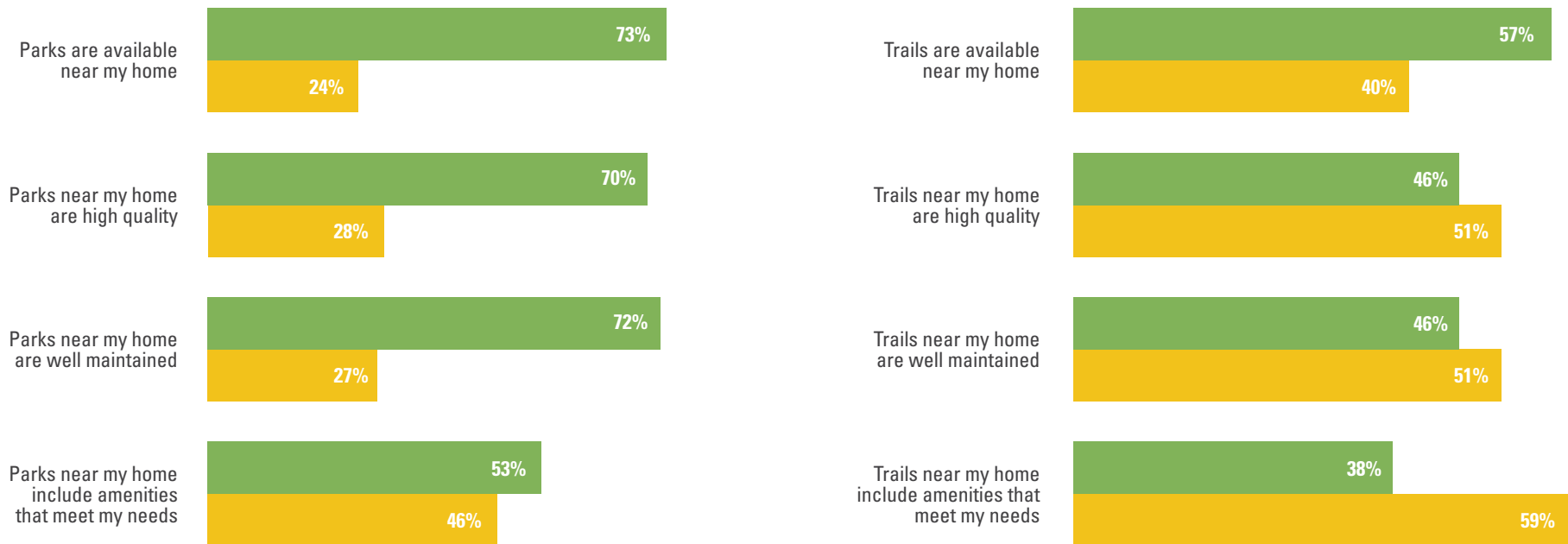
The greatest park needs in my community include...



5.0 Rural Recreation

► Local Park Quality

Local Parks and Trails Quality: Do you agree or disagree that...



INPUT FROM RURAL TOWN COUNCILS

Over the course of several months, the project team reached out to community groups and town councils of rural communities. The Association of Rural Town Councils (ARTC) and various individual town councils provided feedback on rural recreation needs from the viewpoint of local community and political leaders. Feedback from the rural town council members provides insights into parks and open space planning and implementation at the community level. Key themes garnered from the rural town councils are listed and described below.

Require and Prioritize Continuity of Trails

In general, continuity of trails in rural areas should be prioritized in parks planning. New residential areas, commercial uses, renewable energy projects, and other forms of development should require construction of connector trails through Conditional Use Permit requirements and mitigation measures to offset the impacts of said development on local communities.

Physical Context Influences the Suitability of Park Projects

The vast range of weather and geographical conditions in the rural areas should be considered when planning open space areas, park facilities, bike lanes, trails, swimming pools, and splash pads, and when planning for walkability.

Walkability in Rural Areas Requires Special Consideration

Many communities do not have densely populated centers; therefore, evaluation of walkability based on a 1/2-mile distance metric for rural needs requires rethinking.





5.0 Rural Recreation

Cross-Entity Collaboration is Essential for Successful Parks Planning

Facilities planning must involve deliberate collaboration between all County departments, including Public Works, Regional Planning and town councils and rural residents.

Out of Town Visitors Increase Use of Rural Recreation Facilities

Many visitors from outside the rural areas use rural local park facilities. Use of local park facilities from out-of-town visitors increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outdoor recreation areas are needed to serve not only rural community members, but also to support use contributed by visitors.

Parcel Availability Should be Shared with Stakeholders

The County should share with rural town councils the known availability of parcels, including those within SEAs, with potential for purchase for facilities and open space use.

Consider Land Use Regulations and Constraints in Parks and Open Space Planning

Planners should consider the application of the Antelope Valley Area Plan and the General Plan, including Rural Community Standards Districts regulations, early in the parks and open space planning process to avoid critical issues that may affect project implementation.

RURAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The DPR and the project team determined that key rural recreation stakeholders could provide valuable input on the parks and recreation needs of people in the Rural Study Areas. DPR provided a list of key informants for the rural stakeholder interviews. The project team completed nine stakeholder interviews with key rural area informants, including DPR staff, Supervisorial District (5th District) staff, rural town council members, and individuals with knowledge of recreation needs in the rural areas. Each interview was guided by a questionnaire developed by the project team; however, each stakeholder was given the opportunity to expound on their topics of interest. Generally, the content of the interviews touched on popular facilities in the Rural Study Areas, parks and recreation needs, barriers to recreation in rural areas, and other considerations relevant to rural area park access.

Each stakeholder contributed nuanced insights into rural parks and recreation conditions and needs. Several key themes emerged across the interviews. These key themes are described below.

Overlapping Recreation Needs Provide Opportunities to Leverage Strategically Sited Facilities

Most rural stakeholders noted their communities need more parks and recreation facilities. In general, standard parks with shaded, grassy areas; water-based recreation facilities, such as swimming pools and splash pads; skate parks; equestrian facilities; and recreational programming emerged as parks and recreation needs reported by at least two stakeholders. While each rural community has specific recreation needs, there are many commonalities in needs among rural communities. For example, stakeholders from

many of the communities in Antelope Valley consistently requested water-based recreation facilities. Commonalities among recreation needs provide an opportunity for the County to strategically locate parks and facilities to address the needs of multiple communities, rather than provide each community with a separate facility, which is often infeasible due to budget, staffing, and land use constraints.

Lack of Facilities, Large Travel Distances, and Lack of Transportation Options Are Key Barriers

Rural stakeholders reported that scarcity of parks and recreational facilities is the most significant barrier to people recreating in the Rural Study Areas. Long travel distances and lack of transportation options, such as public transit and private vehicles, are also significant barriers to park access. It should be noted long travel distances and lack of transportation options contribute to another barrier noted by stakeholders: lack of time to recreate due to long commutes to and from work.

5.4 RURAL PRIORITY ANALYSIS

A key goal of the PNA+ is working toward the provision of equitable access to parks and recreation facilities. Participating in recreational activities has personal, social and economic benefits for individuals and communities. To ensure the benefits associated with access to recreational opportunities are equitably distributed among the County's rural residents, the PNA+ identifies areas where the need for recreational opportunities is the greatest based on the analysis presented in this chapter. Targeted interventions to address barriers to rural recreation opportunities can have a positive impact on the health and quality of life of rural residents.

► *Rural Recreation Need Analysis*

Areas with:



RURAL RECREATION PRIORITY AREAS

In order to address the equitable provision of the benefits associated with Regional Recreation Parks, Nature-Based Recreation Areas, and Local Parks, this analysis identifies areas to be high priority for enhancing rural recreation opportunities at the intersection of where rural County residents: 1) are experiencing high levels of social and transportation barriers, 2) are experiencing high levels of health and environmental vulnerability, 3) live in low proximity to Rural Recreation Sites, and 4) live in areas with access to limited types of recreation opportunity types.

HIGH POPULATION VULNERABILITY

As described previously in this chapter, population data from the California Health Places Index (HPI) was analyzed to identify areas of the County that are experiencing Health and Environmental Vulnerability as well as Social and Transportation Barriers to accessing recreational opportunities.

Areas are identified as experiencing a “moderate” level for a given population vulnerability dimension if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for more than one of the indicators that comprise that dimension.

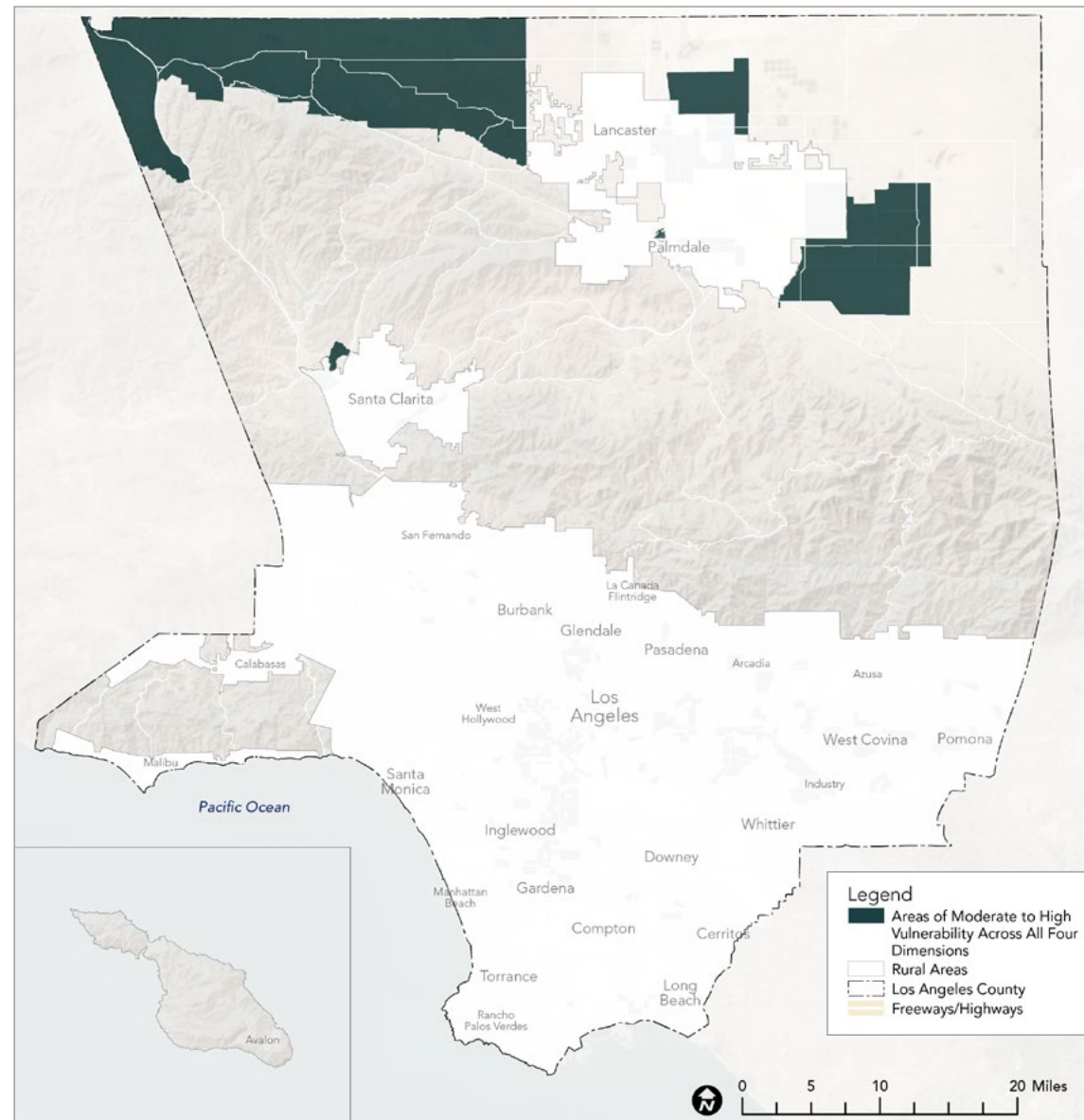
Areas are identified as experiencing a “high” level for a given population vulnerability dimension if they fall within the most vulnerable 25 percent of census tracts in California for the majority of indicators that comprise that dimension.

5.0 Rural Recreation

For instance, the Transportation Barriers dimension consists of the following indicators: Limited Active Commuting, Limited Automobile Access, Limited Public Transit Access, Traffic Density, Pedestrian Injuries. If a census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for more than one of these indicators, the residents of that census tract are identified as experiencing a moderate level of population vulnerability for the Transportation Barriers dimension. If a census tract falls within the most vulnerable 25 percent for any three or more of these five indicators, residents of that area are identified as experiencing a high level of population vulnerability for the Transportation Barriers dimension.

This map identifies the census tracts in which residents are experiencing **a moderate or high level of Population Vulnerability in all four of the dimensions** that we examined. Approximately 34,000 residents of rural Los Angeles County live in areas where there are compounding challenges associated with accessing the benefits that parks and open space provide. It is especially critical in these areas to employ multi-faceted approaches to reducing barriers in order to positively influence the health and well-being of residents.

Figure 5-38: High Population Vulnerability



Map source: HPI, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

LOW PROXIMITY TO RURAL RECREATION SITES

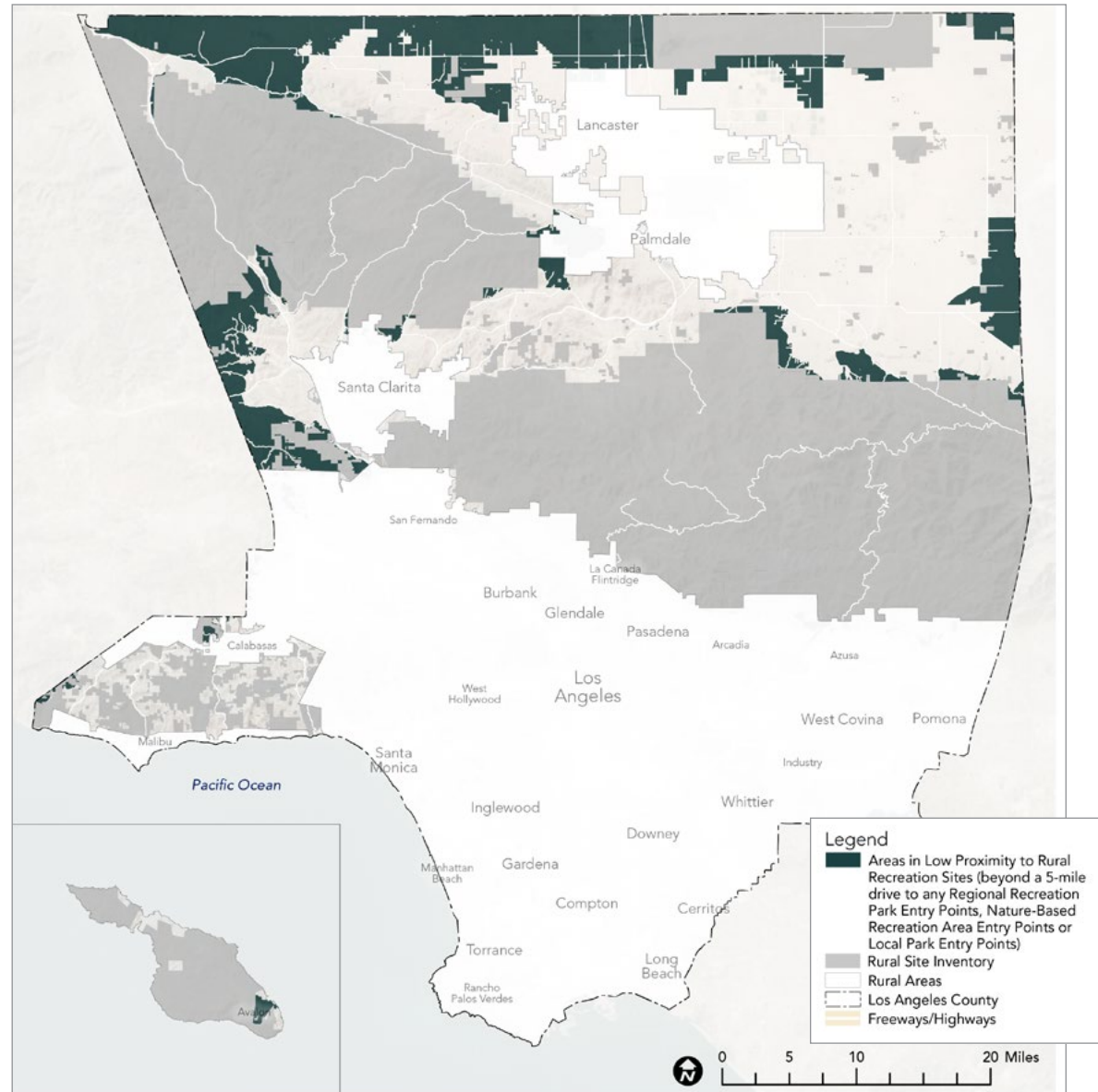
In the preceding sections of this chapter, areas of rural Los Angeles County that are located within three distance thresholds, 0.5-mile walk, 2.5-mile bicycle ride and 5-mile drive, of entry points to Rural Recreation Sites (Local Parks, Regional Recreation Parks and Nature-Based Recreation Areas) were identified.

This map combines each of the previous analyses to identify the rural areas of the County that are located **beyond a 5-mile drive to any of the three types of rural recreation facilities**. In these areas of the County, residents must rely heavily on private vehicles or public transportation in order to access opportunities for recreation and the benefits that they provide. This presents a barrier to residents who are unable to access private transportation or high-quality public transportation options. In addition, reliance on vehicular access increases pollution levels and diminishes the potential health benefits associated with active transportation alternatives.

These communities are largely located in the more remote areas of the County, including:

- » Northwest Antelope Valley RSA
- » Northeast Antelope Valley RSA
- » Castaic/Val Verde RSA
- » Agua Dulce/Canyon Country RSA
- » Lake Los Angeles/Pearblossom/Llano/Valyermo RSA
- » Littlerock/Sun Village RSA
- » Stevenson Ranch/Newhall Ranch RSA
- » Santa Monica Mountains North Area RSA
- » Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone RSA
- » Santa Catalina Island RSA

Figure 5-39: Lowest Proximity to Rural Recreation Sites



Map source: ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

5.0 Rural Recreation

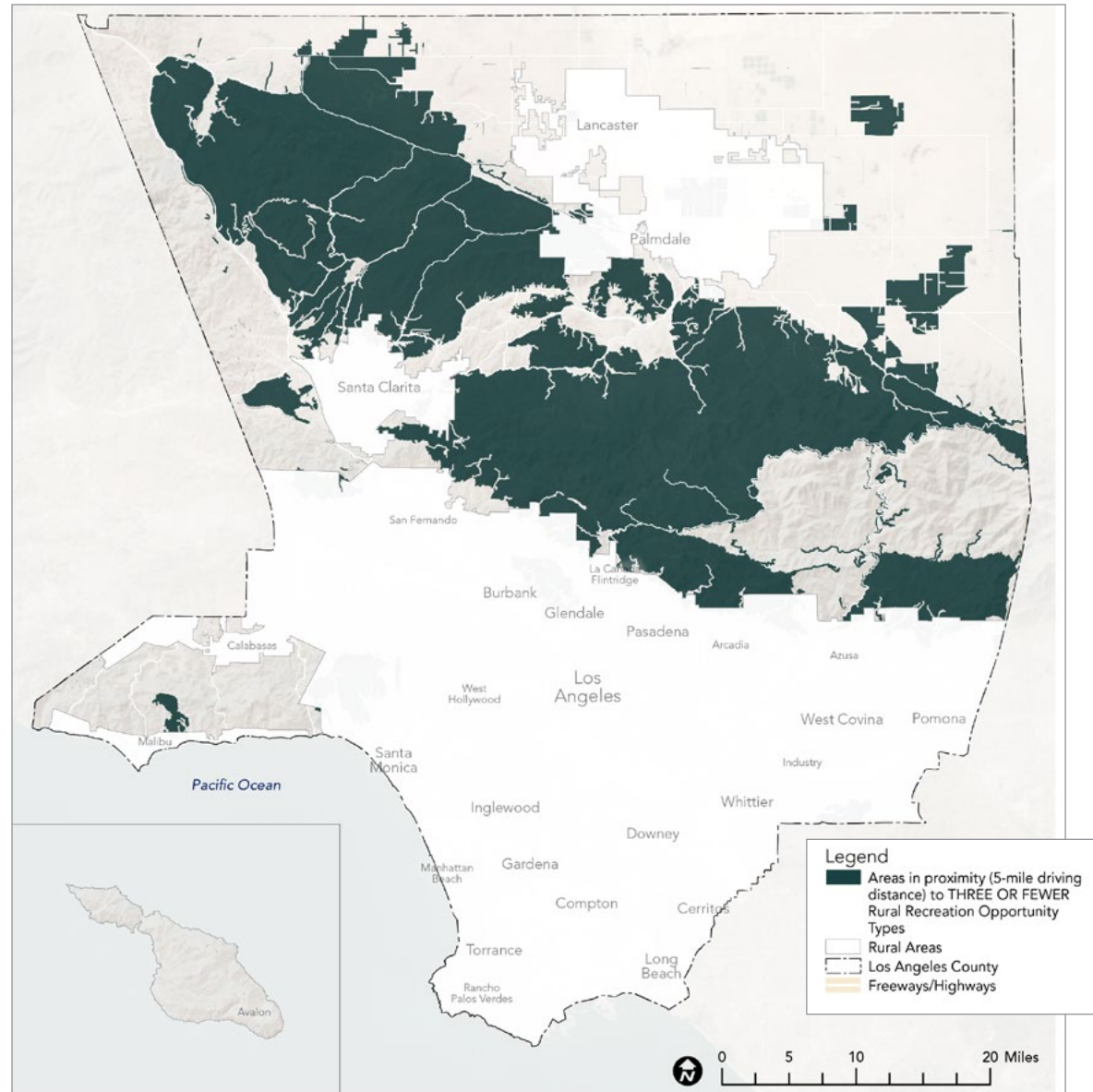
PROXIMITY TO THE FEWEST RURAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITY TYPES

The project team assessed overall proximity to rural recreation amenities by creating a composite overlay of the locations of sites that provide nine different Rural Recreation Opportunity Types and analyzing areas located within a 5-mile drive of each one. Rural areas were then classified by the number of Recreation Opportunity Types that are available within 5- miles: zero (no proximity), one to three (low proximity), four to six (moderate proximity), and seven to nine (high proximity). This map identifies rural areas of the County that are **located in proximity to the fewest recreation opportunity types** (defined as three or fewer).

In general, rural residents who live within proximity to many Recreation Opportunity Types are located in or near more populous rural communities (relative to the overall population of the Rural Study Area in which the community is located), in the Castaic/Val Verde RSA, Acton/South Antelope Valley RSA, Lake Los Angeles/Pearblossom/Llano/Valyermo RSA, Littlerock/Sun Village RSA, Santa Monica Mountains North Area RSA, Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone RSA, and Santa Catalina Island RSA.

All RSAs contain areas where rural residents live within proximity to the fewest Recreation Opportunity Types, though most areas in the Santa Monica Mountains North Area RSA and the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone RSA provide residents access to at least four of the Recreation Opportunity Types.

Figure 5-40: Areas Located in Proximity to the Fewest Rural Recreation Opportunity Types



Map source: ArcGIS StreetMap Premium, 2021; 2021 RRE Inventory

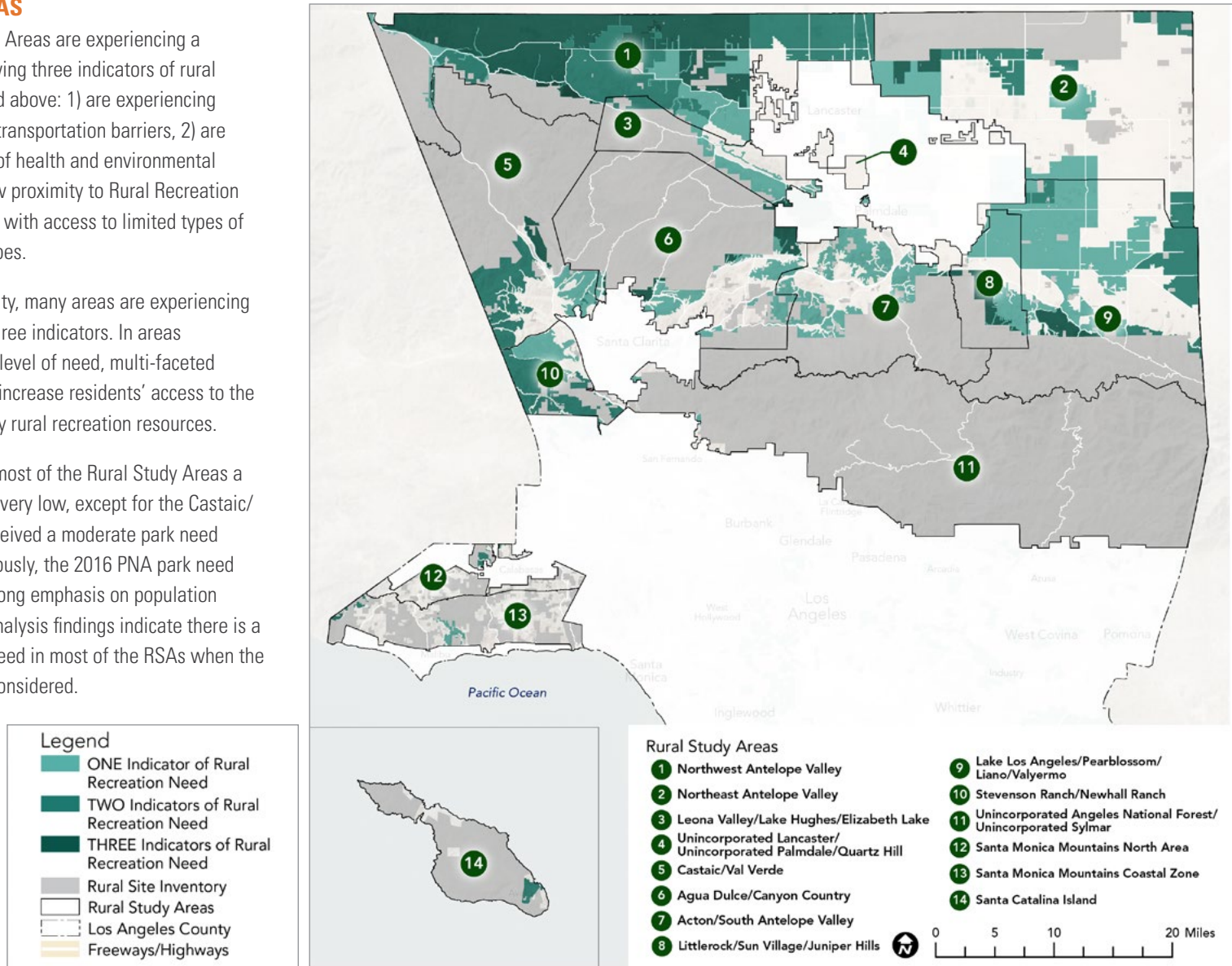
**RURAL RECREATION NEEDS:
HIGH PRIORITY AREAS**

Residents of High Priority Areas are experiencing a combination of the following three indicators of rural recreation need described above: 1) are experiencing high levels of social and transportation barriers, 2) are experiencing high levels of health and environmental vulnerability, 3) live in low proximity to Rural Recreation Sites, and 4) live in areas with access to limited types of recreation opportunity types.

In rural Los Angeles County, many areas are experiencing a combination of these three indicators. In areas experiencing the highest level of need, multi-faceted strategies are needed to increase residents' access to the many benefits provided by rural recreation resources.

The 2016 PNA assigned most of the Rural Study Areas a park need level of low or very low, except for the Castaic/Val Verde RSA, which received a moderate park need level. As discussed previously, the 2016 PNA park need assignments placed a strong emphasis on population density. The rural need analysis findings indicate there is a high level of recreation need in most of the RSAs when the above three factors are considered.

Figure 5-41: High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation



Note: No area has all four indicators of Rural Recreation Need.

5.0 Rural Recreation

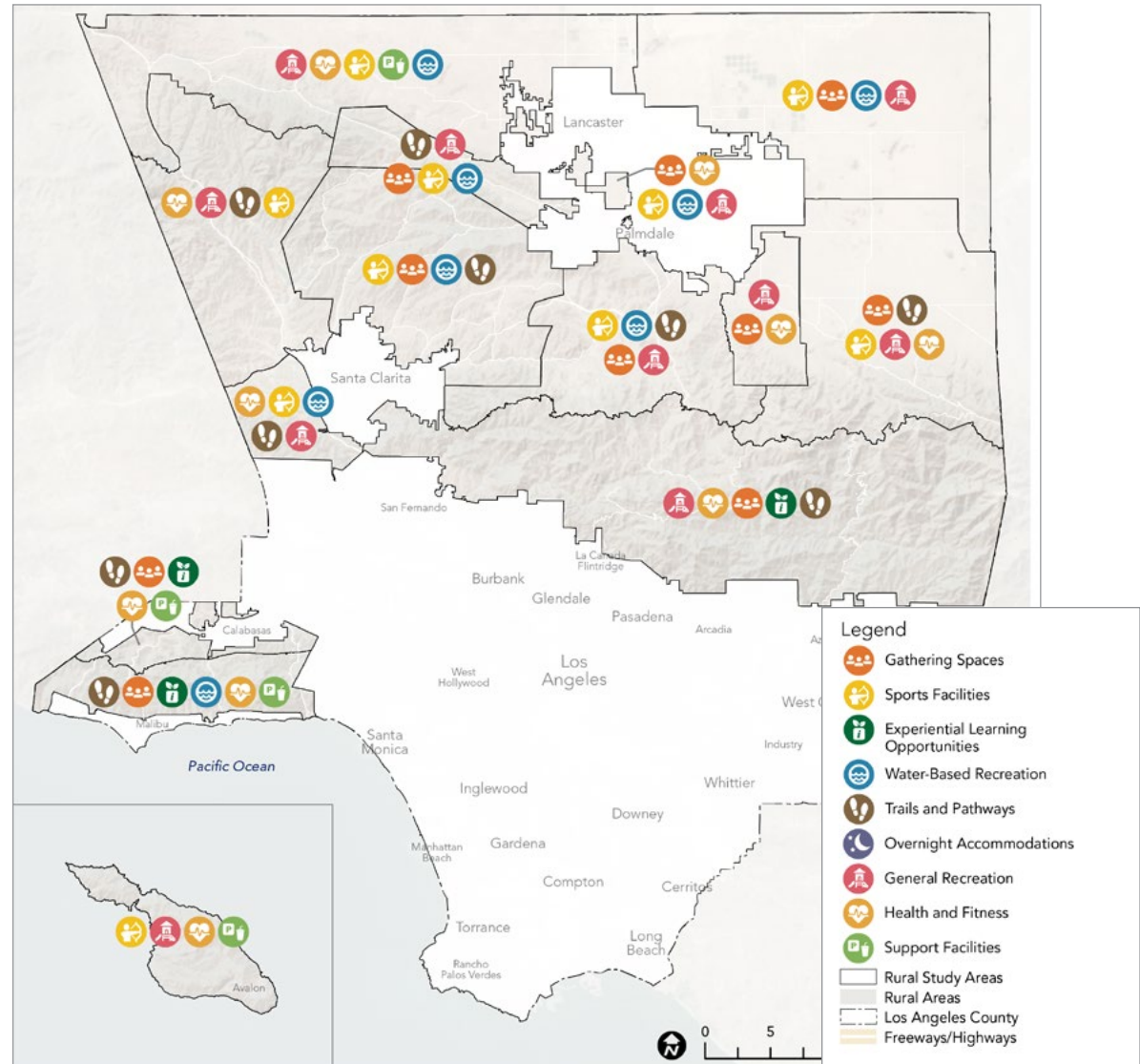
RURAL RECREATION NEEDS: PRIORITY PROJECT TYPES

The 2016 PNA collected a list of prioritized park projects for each PNA Study Area. The projects spanned from the addition or repair of amenities and infrastructure at existing sites to the development of new neighborhood, community, and regional parks with specified amenities. The project team collated the recreation resources requested in the 2016 PNA priority projects lists for the Rural Study Areas, categorized each facility or amenity under the nine Recreation Opportunity Types defined in the PNA+, and mapped the prioritized amenity types across the RSAs. The resulting map shows the common themes among amenity needs identified by the Rural Study Area residents. Most residents listed priority projects with Health and Fitness, followed by Sport Facilities, General Recreation, Trails and Pathways, and Gathering Spaces amenity types.

Where there are overlaps in prioritized amenities between adjacent rural study areas, opportunities may exist to share and leverage resources to serve residents of multiple study areas with centralized facilities that address common needs.

The following section describes various strategies that may be implemented to address rural recreation needs in areas that are impacted by compounding challenges.

Figure 5-42: Rural Recreation: Priority Project Types



Map source: PNA, 2016

Note: See page 5-159 for the specific amenities included in each of these recreation opportunity types

5.5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO RURAL RECREATION BENEFITS

The site inventory and analysis presented in this chapter reveal that the rural areas of the County are home to a significant amount of parkland, including approximately 1,100 acres of local parks, 12,700 acres of regional recreation parks, and 636,000 acres of nature-based recreation areas. While rural areas are rich in park acres, they still have unmet park and recreation needs as many of rural recreation sites lack some of the amenities that residents desire.

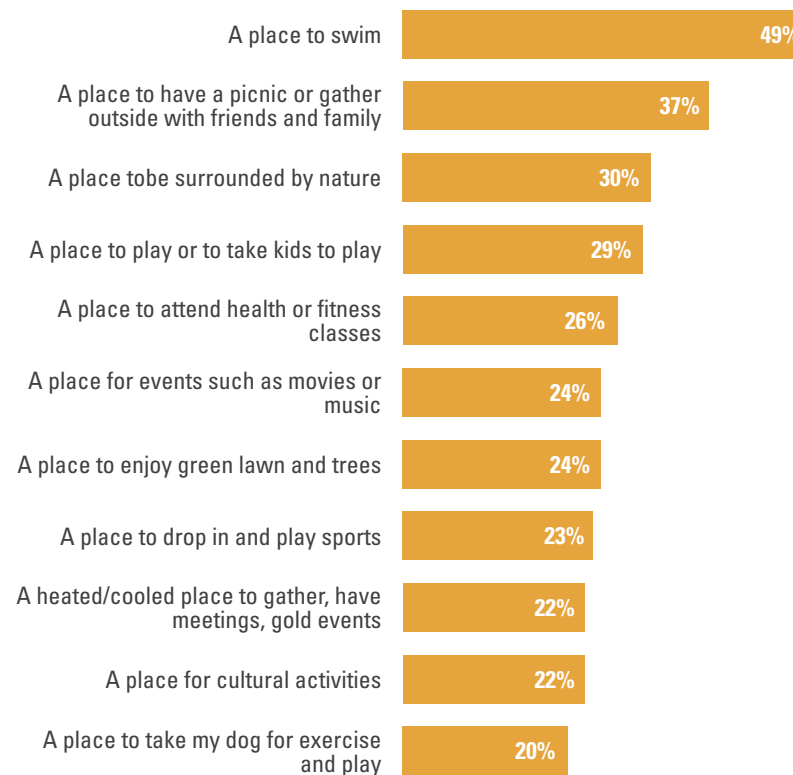
For example, PNA+ has determined that the Antelope Valley is lacking in certain amenities, especially, water-based recreation facilities such as swimming pools and splash pads, shaded seating and play areas, and trails. Also, many of the existing local parks are aging and have deferred maintenance and improvement needs. On Santa Catalina Island, a popular tourist destination, there is an identified need for more park facilities and amenities that provide recreational opportunities for local residents. In addition, residents in the Santa Monica Mountains expressed the urgent need to acquire open space and natural areas to preserve habitats, protect watersheds, and facilitate wildlife movement.

As part of the community engagement process for the 2016 PNA, residents of rural study areas identified their top priorities for addressing unmet park and recreation needs.

Based on the feedback that rural residents provided in 2021, many of these priorities persist as no new local parks have been developed in the rural areas of the County during the five years that have transpired since the PNA was completed. These priorities are summarized by Rural Study Area on Figure 5-42: Rural Recreation Priority Project Types and are further detailed in each Rural Study Area Profile.

► Local Park Needs

The greatest park needs in my community include...



5.0 Rural Recreation

OFFER ADDITIONAL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES TO MEET RURAL AND REGIONAL RECREATION NEEDS

Develop New Parks

One approach to addressing park need is to develop new parks in rural communities which lack such facilities. For example, DPR is pursuing funding to develop a new 3-acre park in the community of Littlerock. Proposed park amenities include a restroom building, shaded picnic areas and children's play areas, an equestrian pen with tie-ups and water, shaded fitness area, art/interpretive elements, picnic tables, bike racks, a gazebo, and porch swings.

Given that the high costs associated with new park development can make it prohibitive for many small, rural communities to undertake such projects individually, approaches that seek to pool resources and address common needs across larger geographical areas may be more feasible and effective at addressing gaps such as the need for water-based recreation facilities like swimming pools.

Another approach to leveraging limited park and recreation development funds is to explore joint use agreements between park and recreation agencies, school districts and other public service providers like library districts and community health organizations. One instance of this type of mutually beneficial arrangement is the gymnasium at Joe Walker Middle School in the Antelope Valley community of Quartz Hill. The facility was developed through a partnership between DPR and the Westside Union School District and allows DPR to provide recreational programs to residents during non-school hours throughout the week and on weekends. This creative pooling of resources extends both the recreational capacity of the school as well as that of the adjacent George Lane County Park.

Improve and Expand Existing Parks

Rural recreation needs can also be better met by enhancing existing parks with new or improved amenities. For instance, DPR has developed a conceptual plan to expand the 9-acre Jackie Robinson Park in the community of Sun Village. The proposed expansion includes the construction of a new splash pad, a community stage, a multi-purpose sports field, new walking paths, picnic tables, a new restroom, a new parking lot, new solar lighting, and drought-tolerant landscaping.

Activate Existing Parks and Other Public Spaces with Programs and Events

While investment in physical park and recreation infrastructure is critical, some needs can be addressed through creative programming that is designed to activate underused parks and other public spaces. Temporary or pop-up games, activities and events can transform public spaces like streets and parking lots with various amenities into lively settings for community interaction. In some communities, mobile recreation programs regularly deliver sports and play equipment like soccer goals, basketball hoops, and skateboard ramps to high need areas that lack permanent amenities. By reaching residents closer to home, these programs overcome common barriers associated with lack of transportation that are often experienced in rural areas.

Replace Destroyed/Damaged Recreational Facilities

Whether due to intense use, deferred maintenance or destructive events like wildfires or floods, park and recreation amenities often require repair or replacement. When developing park and recreation facilities, adequate resources must also be allocated to maintain these assets according to best management practices so that they are able to serve the needs of rural communities rather than deter use. As an example, DPR is working on plans to replace the nature center at Devil's Punchbowl, a popular destination for locals and visitors and a unique 1,310-acre geological wonder which suffered extensive damage during the 2020 Bobcat Fire. DPR will incorporate fire resilient architecture and best practices for building design, including the use of noncombustible materials for the building exterior. Additionally, the new nature center will include new interpretive and educational materials about fire safety, defensible space, fire ecology, and other related topics.

Acquire Open Space

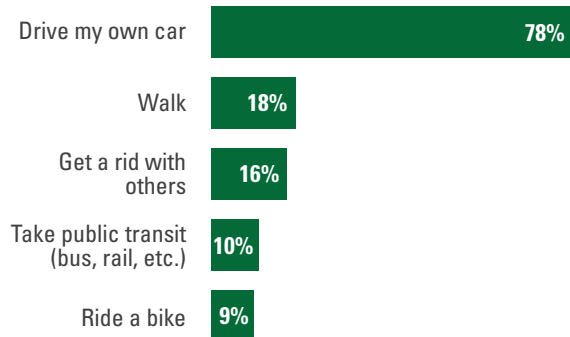
It is also important to acquire open space parcels for conservation. A recent example is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA)'s acquisition of the final 150 acres of the 325-acre Triangle Ranch open space in the Santa Monica Mountains. The area has long been identified as a crucial linkage for habitat preservation, watershed protection, and wildlife movement.

ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR RURAL RESIDENTS TO ACCESS REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES

One of the key issues identified through the PNA+ is the lack of public transit access to recreation sites. Examples of services that can be expanded to address this need include the Beach Bus which takes inland residents to beaches during the summer and on-request micro-transit which serves rural communities by connecting them with important destinations like parks and libraries. Additionally, programs that provide transportation, training and any necessary gear for participants, help to overcome multiple commonly-cited barriers to outdoor participation.

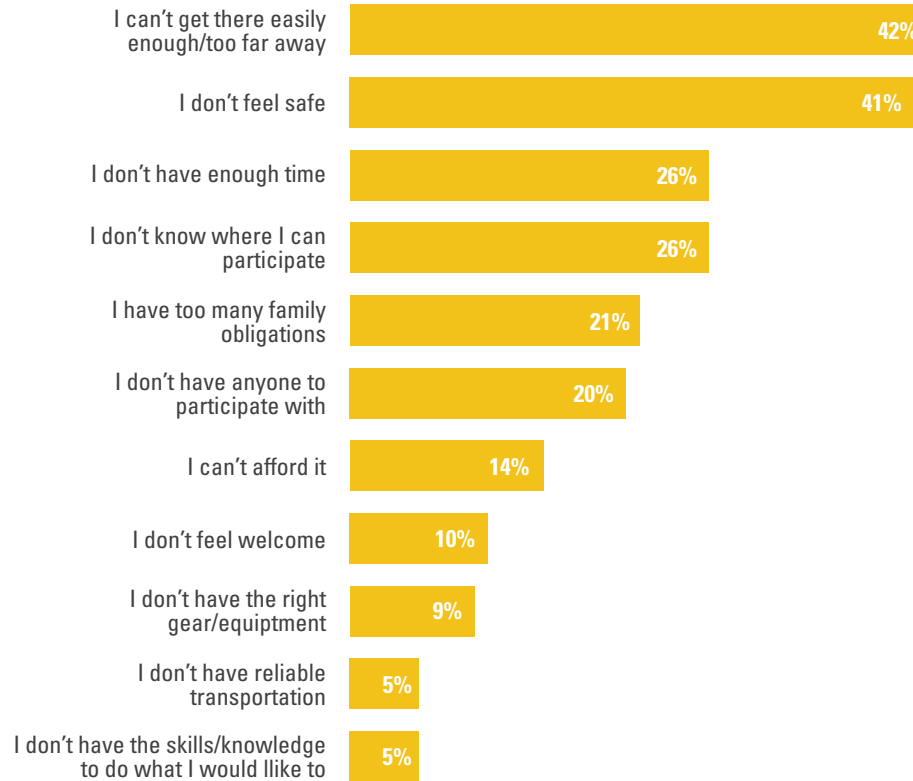
► *Travel to Parks*

When I go to parks, I...



► *Barriers to Park Use*

What keeps you from doing more activities?



5.0 Rural Recreation

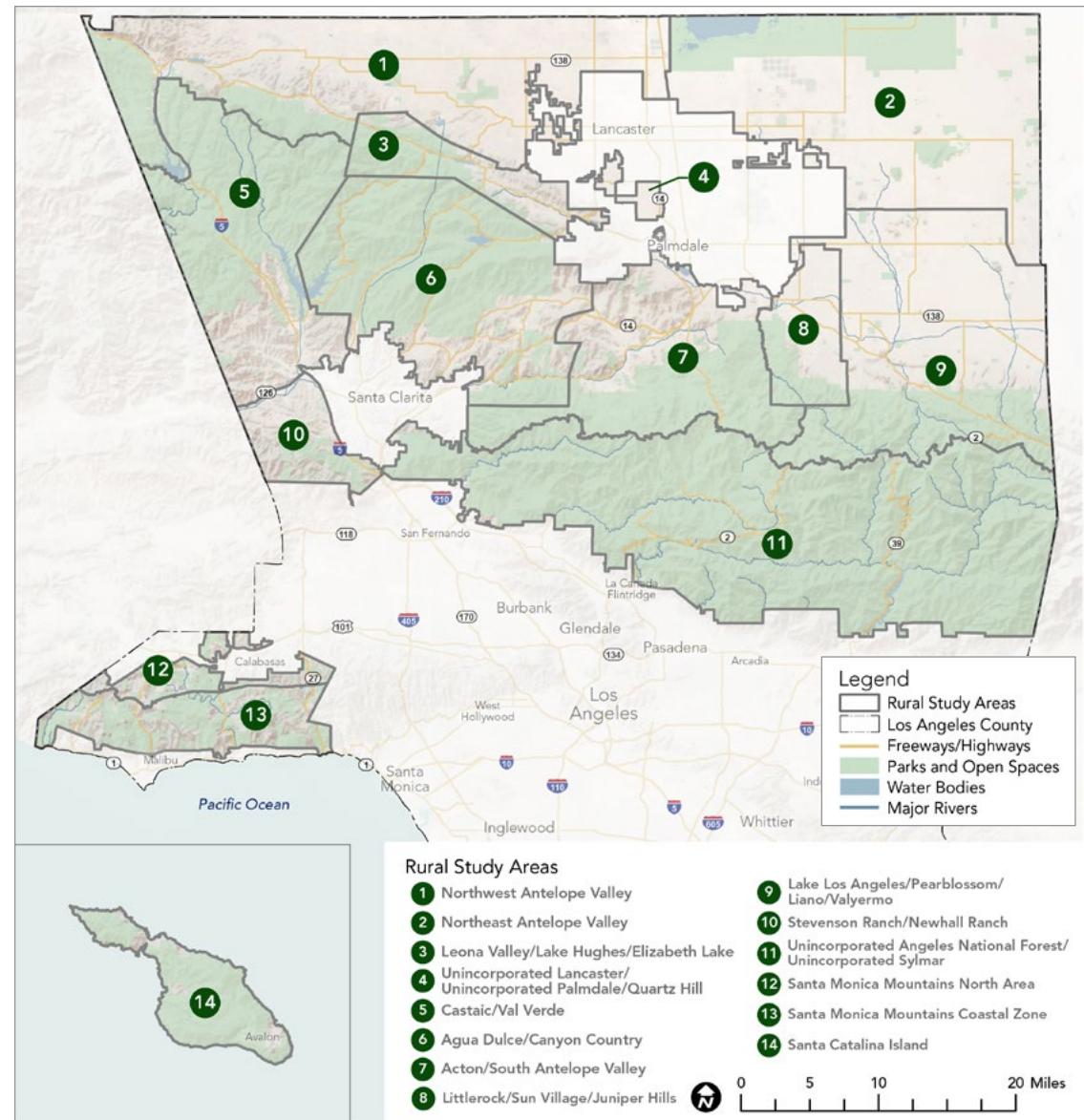
5.6 RURAL STUDY AREAS

RURAL STUDY AREA PROFILES

For the purposes of this report, rural Los Angeles County has been divided into 14 Rural Study Areas. Rural Study Area Profiles have been prepared to provide a more detailed description of the recreation needs identified for each of the rural areas of the County shown on the map. The following information is included in each Rural Study Area Profile and can be found in Appendix B.

- » Study Area Description
- » Study Area Demographics
- » Population Vulnerability
- » Rural Recreation and Conservation Sites
- » Rural Recreation Site Access
- » Recreation Opportunity Types
- » Community Engagement Themes
- » Rural Recreation Priority Analysis
- » Rural Recreation Priority Areas
- » Priority Project Types

Figure 5-43: Rural Study Areas



Map source: PNA, 2016; US Census, 2019; Esri, 2021; MIG, 2021; LAC GIS, 2021; USGS NHD, 2021
 Note: All Los Angeles County maps in this chapter include and refer to the sources listed here as basemap layers.

A group of people is walking along a dirt path that winds through a field of tall, dry grass. The scene is captured from a slightly elevated perspective. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

6.0

KEY FINDINGS,
METRICS,
RECOMMENDATIONS
AND NEXT STEPS

6.0 Key Findings, Metrics, Recommendations and Next Steps

This chapter presents the key findings of the PNA+, summarizes the metrics that will be tracked to measure progress, and offers recommendations and next steps to address the needs identified in this study.

KEY FINDINGS

The PNA+ builds upon the PNA and offers new data, analyses, and mapping regarding three focus areas: Environmental Conservation and Restoration, Regional Recreation, and Rural Recreation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

The PNA+ identifies conservation and restoration priorities which form the basis for a 30x30 strategy for Los Angeles County. In this report, restoration specifically refers to the restoration of areas with high environmental burdens as identified in PNA+; this does not preclude the need for restoration of areas identified as having high environmental benefit or priority areas for environmental conservation.

- » Conservation: PNA+ identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and management based on indicators of species diversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity and type and proximity to water bodies. Examples of these areas include portions of the Antelope Valley, Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Clarita Valley which are not currently owned and managed by public agencies and conservancies.

- » Restoration: The report also calls out priority areas for environmental restoration and enhancement. These are areas which have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air and water quality and pollution burden. Examples include oil fields (such as Inglewood Oil Field in Baldwin Hills), brownfields, landfills (such as Puente Hills), and other degraded lands which may be converted to park and open space.
- » Underserved and Overrepresented: Los Angeles County's Black, Brown, Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander populations are underserved by parks and overrepresented in areas where environmental burdens are concentrated. Specifically, people of color account for 84% of the population living in priority areas for restoration, i.e. those areas with highest environmental burdens; people of color account for 74% of L.A. County's population. Approximately 60% of residents living in priority areas for restoration are Hispanic/Latino; 44% of L.A. County residents are Hispanic/Latino.

REGIONAL RECREATION

The PNA+ inventories, maps, and analyzes the availability of and access to regional recreation facilities.

- » Availability of Regional Recreation Facilities: The regional sites inventory shows that Los Angeles County has about 1 million acres of regional recreation and conservation areas. These lands account for 38% of the County's total land area, but there are challenges associated with access to these areas given their location, distribution, and other factors such as the lack of public transit service. In particular, regional recreation and conservation areas account for less than 5% of lands in the Metro and Gateway Regional Study Areas.
- » Regional Recreation Priority Areas: PNA+ identifies regional recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with:
 - » High levels of social and transportation barriers;
 - » High levels of health and environmental vulnerability;
 - » Low proximity to regional recreation sites; and
 - » Low visitorship rates to regional recreation sites.

Given the specific barriers identified, these areas should be prioritized for interventions such as expanded public transit service to beaches, parks, and trails, and improved information-sharing about regional recreation facilities.

- » Regional Recreation Needs: Through the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, L.A. County residents identified the following needs to enhance access to and experiences at regional recreation facilities: more shade, expanded transportation options, improved signage, greater access to information about parks and programs, improved ADA accessibility, better maintenance, additional staffing, increased parking, more water-related amenities like hydration stations, and safety improvements.
- » Regional Trails: PNA+ identifies over 3,300 miles of regional trails across L.A. County, which translates to about 0.33 miles of regional trail per 1,000 residents. This total trail mileage is more than previously estimated and reveals how significant trails are as a recreational resource. Trails are distributed unevenly across the County and trail mileage varies widely by Regional Study Areas, ranging from just 0.03 per 1,000 residents in the Metro Study Area to 39.83 per 1,000 residents in Santa Catalina Island. There are opportunities to create new trails and fill gaps in trails in both “trail-rich” and “trail-poor” areas.
- » Beaches: The ocean beaches that stretch along the 75-mile mainland coast of Los Angeles County are some of the most recognizable and popular destinations in the world. While these beaches provide unique recreational opportunities and serve a critical ecological role, they also face threats related to climate change and development, including sand erosion, sea level rise, and degraded water quality. Only about 100,000 Los Angeles County residents (1% of the population) live within walking distance of an ocean beach access point. The majority of ocean beach access points (71%) are not served by public transit.
- » Native and Tribal Access: As part of PNA+, DPR conducted focused outreach to engage Native Americans. Key needs identified by these stakeholders include having access to and privacy for Native peoples to use, enjoy, and practice traditional ceremonies on ancestral lands, and raising awareness and educating the public about tribal stewardship and the indigenous histories of the region.

RURAL RECREATION

The PNA+ inventories, maps, and analyzes the availability of and access to rural recreation sites, including local parks, regional recreation parks, and nature-based recreation areas.

- » Rural Recreation: The rural sites inventory shows the rural areas of L.A. County are home to a significant amount of parkland, including about 1,100 acres of local parks, 12,700 acres of regional recreation parks, and 636,000 acres of nature-based recreation areas. While rural areas are relatively rich in parkland, they are lacking in certain amenities, especially water-based recreation facilities such as swimming pools and splash pads, as well as shaded seating, play areas, and walking trails. Also, no new local parks have been created in rural unincorporated areas since the completion of the 2016 PNA.
- » Rural Recreation Priority Areas: PNA+ identifies rural recreation priority areas which are defined as areas with:
 - » High levels of social and transportation barriers;
 - » High levels of health and environmental vulnerability;
 - » Low proximity to rural recreation sites; and
 - » Proximity to fewest recreational opportunity types

6.0 Key Findings, Metrics, Recommendations and Next Steps

Given the community-specific barriers identified, these areas should be prioritized for interventions such as developing new local parks, improving, expanding or adding amenities to existing parks, increasing transportation options to parks, and collaborating across agencies and communities to serve shared needs.

- » Rural Recreation Needs: Through the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, rural residents identified the following needs to enhance access to and experiences at rural recreation sites: more water-based recreation facilities like swimming pools and splash pads, more shade, more amenities in existing parks, expanded transportation options, improved signage, greater access to information about parks and programs, improved ADA accessibility, better maintenance, additional staffing, increased parking, more water-related amenities like hydration stations, and safety improvements.
- » Vulnerable Rural Communities: PNA+ analyzes and maps areas with high population vulnerability as measured by indicators in four dimensions:
 - » Social Barriers such as concentrations of poverty, minority populations, elderly
 - » Health Vulnerability such as lower life expectancy, high level of pollution
 - » Transportation Barriers such as limited access to automobile, limited access to public transit, higher number of pedestrian injuries

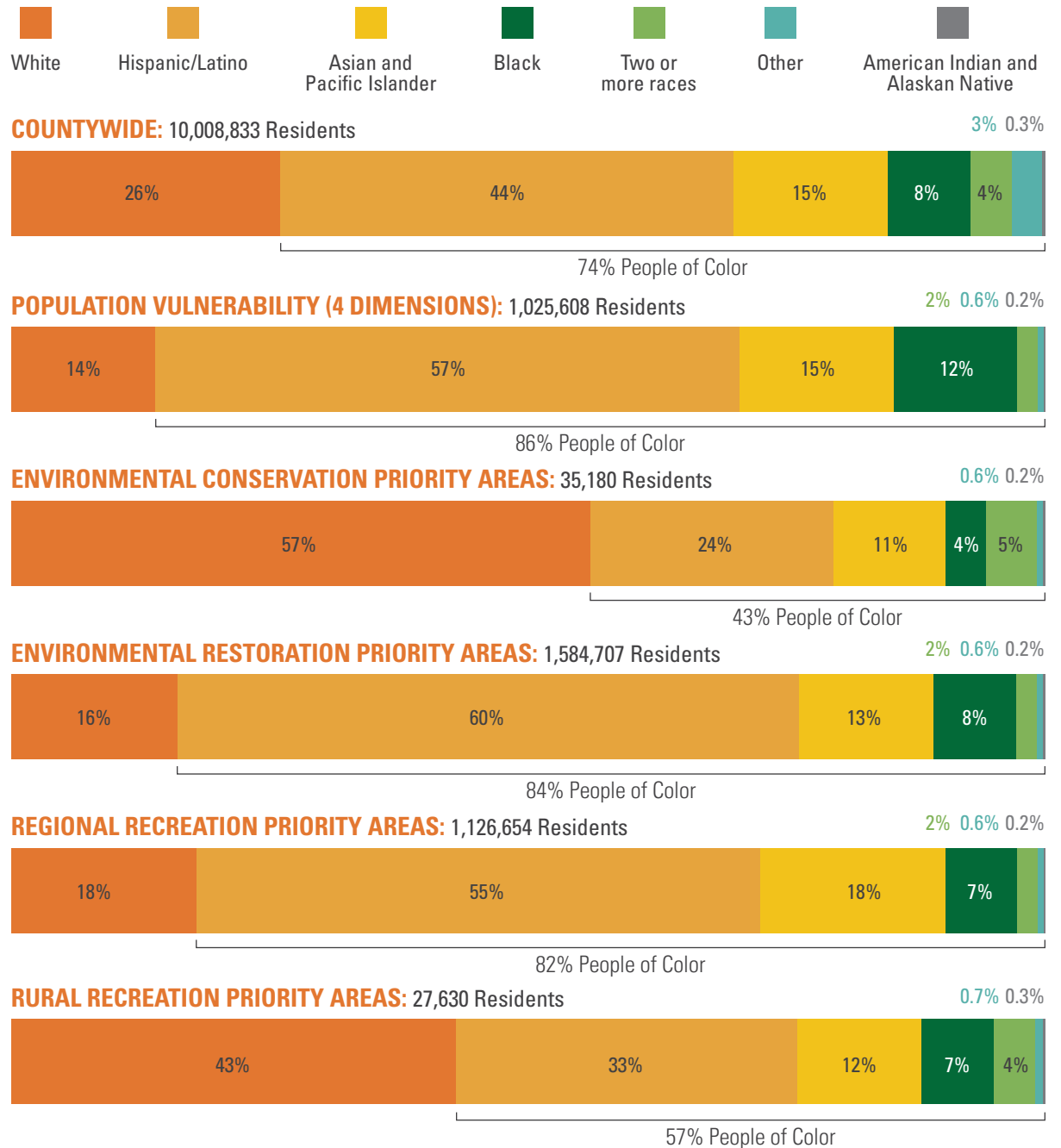
- » Environmental Vulnerability such as limited access to parks, lower tree canopy coverage, more excessive heat days

Many of the most vulnerable areas are also the very high and high park need areas identified in the 2016 PNA. PNA+ additionally identifies numerous rural communities in the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley as areas with high population vulnerability.



RACE/ETHNICITY

In Los Angeles County and across the United States, significant park and health disparities exist between whites and people of color who more commonly face obstacles to health such as poverty, lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, housing, health care, and limited access to recreational facilities and programming. It has also been found that people of color are more likely to have chronic diseases, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, to have poorer mental health, and to be physically inactive compared with whites. Parks have the power to address these disparities by ensuring that all community members have access to the benefits of parks and recreation. Summarized on this page is race/ethnicity information for residents living in the most vulnerable areas and various priority areas identified in the PNA+. Race/ethnicity breakdown for all Los Angeles County residents is provided for comparison/reference purposes.



6.0 Key Findings, Metrics, Recommendations and Next Steps

METRICS

The PNA+ uses various metrics to identify and analyze needs in three focus areas: Environmental Conservation and Restoration, Regional Recreation, and Rural Recreation. This section summarizes the metrics for each focus area, including definitions, baseline conditions, and measures of progress. DPR

will work with RPOSD and other partners to monitor changing demographics, including population vulnerability indicators, and track the metrics listed below to ensure that progress is being made to address the identified needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Metric Name	Metric Definition	Baseline Conditions	Measures of Progress
Conservation and Management of Natural Lands	Priority Areas for Environmental Conservation are defined as areas of highest environmental benefits as measured by species diversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity, proximity to waterbody, and habitat type (See Chapter 3 for details)	Map of Priority Areas for Environmental Conservation (Figure 3-8); 245,597 acres - total amount of land designated Priority Areas for Environmental Conservation	Increase in acreage of land conserved within Priority Areas for Environmental Conservation, especially in the following Regional Study Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Antelope Valley » East San Gabriel Valley » Santa Clarita Valley » Santa Monica Mountains » West San Gabriel Valley
Restoration and Enhancement of Degraded Lands	Priority Areas for Environmental Restoration are defined as areas of highest environmental burdens as measured by groundwater threat, hazardous waste, drinking water contaminants, PM 2.5, and pollution burden (See Chapter 3 for details)	Map of Priority Areas for Environmental Restoration (Figure 3-9); 162,640 acres - total amount of land designated Priority Areas for Environmental Restoration	Increase in acreage of land restored within Priority Areas for Environmental Restoration, especially in the following Regional Study Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East San Gabriel Valley » Gateway » Metro » San Fernando Valley » South Bay » West San Gabriel Valley » Westside

Metric Name	Metric Definition	Baseline Conditions	Measures of Progress
Regional Recreation and Conservation Areas	Total acres of regional recreation and conservation areas as percent of total land area (See Chapter 4 for details)	38 percent of total land area countywide	<p>Increase in percentage of land for regional recreation and conservation areas, especially in the following Regional Study Areas which have less than 30 percent of total land area designated for regional recreation and conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East San Gabriel Valley » Gateway » Metro » San Fernando Valley » South Bay » West San Gabriel Valley » Westside



REGIONAL RECREATION

Metric Name	Metric Definition	Baseline Conditions	Measures of Progress
Regional Recreation Priority Areas	Areas of High Regional Recreation Priority are defined as areas with residents experiencing: 1) are experiencing high levels of barriers and vulnerability, 2) live in low proximity to regional recreation facilities and, 3) visit regional recreation facilities infrequently. (See Chapter 5 for details)	Map of Areas of High Regional Recreation Priority (Figure 4-62); All 11 Regional Study Areas experience at least one of the three indicators of regional recreation need	<p>Decrease in barriers to accessing regional recreation facilities, such as lack of transportation, information, and parking, and the costs associated with entry and parking.</p> <p>Increase in public transit service to regional recreation facilities.</p> <p>Increase in the number of public transit stops within half-mile walk of a regional recreation facility.</p> <p>Increase in number of regional recreation facilities.</p> <p>Increase in access and visitorship to regional recreation facilities by residents in Areas of High Regional Recreation Priority.</p>
Regional Recreation Parks	Regional recreation park acreage per 1,000 residents (See Chapter 4 for details)	2.6 acres per 1,000 residents countywide; 26,255 total acres of regional recreation parks countywide	<p>Increase in regional recreation park acreage, especially in Regional Study Areas with less than 2.6 acres per 1,000 residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Antelope Valley » San Fernando Valley » Metro » South Bay » Gateway
Nature-Based Recreation Areas	Acres of nature-based recreation areas per 1,000 residents (See Chapter 4 for details)	70.81 acres per 1,000 residents countywide	<p>Increase in acreage of nature-based recreation areas, especially in Regional Study Areas with less than 70.81 acres per 1,000 residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East San Gabriel Valley » Gateway » Metro » San Fernando Valley » South Bay » West San Gabriel Valley » Westside

Metric Name	Metric Definition	Baseline Conditions	Measures of Progress
Regional Trails	Regional trail mileage per 1,000 residents (See Chapter 4 for details)	0.33 mile per 1,000 residents countywide; 3,306 total miles of regional trails countywide	<p>Increase in regional trail mileage, especially in Regional Study Areas with less than 0.33 mile per 1,000 residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East San Gabriel Valley » Gateway » Metro » San Fernando Valley » South Bay » West San Gabriel Valley » Westside <p>Increase in regional trail connectivity.</p> <p>Decrease in number of gaps in regional trails in all Regional Study Areas.</p>
Beach Access	Percentage of beach access points with a half-mile walk of a public transit stop	29% of beach access points within a half-mile walk of a public transit stop	<p>Increase in percentage of beach access points within a half-mile walk of a public transit stop.</p> <p>Increase in public transit service to beaches.</p> <p>Increase in number of beach access points.</p> <p>Increase in the number of public transit stops within half-mile walk of a beach access point.</p>

RURAL RECREATION

Metric Name	Metric Definition	Baseline Conditions	Measures of Progress
Rural Recreation	High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation are defined as rural areas with residents experiencing: 1) high levels of barriers and vulnerability, 2) low proximity to Rural Recreation Sites and, 3) access to limited types of recreation opportunities (See Chapter 5 for details)	Map of High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation (Figure 5-41); All 14 Rural Study Areas experience at least one of the three indicators of rural recreation need	<p>Decrease in barriers to accessing rural recreation sites and opportunities, such as lack of transportation and information, and the costs associated with entry and parking.</p> <p>Increase in public transit service to rural recreation sites.</p> <p>Increase in the number of public transit stops within half-mile walk of a rural recreation site.</p> <p>Increase in number of rural recreation sites.</p> <p>Increase in access to and number and type of recreation opportunities and amenities available to residents in High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation.</p>
Rural Local Parklands	Acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents in a Rural Study Area (See Chapter 5 for details)	Average of 6 acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents in Rural Study Areas	<p>Increase in acreage of local parkland in the following Rural Study Areas which have no or limited amount of local parkland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Agua Dulce/Canyon Country » Northwest Antelope Valley » Northeast Antelope Valley » Leona Valley/Lake Hughes/Elizabeth Lake » Unincorporated Lancaster/ » Unincorporated Palmdale/Quartz Hill » Acton/South Antelope Valley

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

DPR is committed to addressing the significant park and recreation needs identified in the 2016 PNA and the 2022 PNA+ in ways that produce measureable results, provide multiple benefits, and improve the quality of life for the residents it serves. But this is not easy to do and DPR cannot do it alone. To address the identified needs, DPR and its partners, including other park agencies, community-based organizations, funders, and volunteers, must take the following next steps which are organized into six broad categories:

FUNDING PRIORITIES

- » Work at the Federal, State, and local levels to incorporate LA County's PNA+ (30x30 framework) into programs, legislation, policies, and funding opportunities.
- » Work with the State of California and other grantors to update scoring tools and methodologies for parks-related grant programs to address the conservation and restoration, regional, and rural needs identified in the PNA+, specifically looking at racial equity and population vulnerability metrics.

- » Initiate new funding mechanisms to expand restoration of degraded lands for park use. PNA+ calls out environmental restoration priority areas which have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air and water quality and pollution burden. Examples include oil fields, brownfields, landfills, and other degraded lands which may be converted to park and open space. These areas are most often located in lower income communities of color.
- » Evaluate existing funding mechanisms such as Quimby and create new funding tools such as park impact fees to fund the development, improvement, operation, and maintenance of parks, especially in very high and high need areas identified in the PNA and priority areas identified in the PNA+.
- » Coordinate with the Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) to integrate findings from the PNA+ Final Report into the Measure A grant-making process and update the Grant Administration Manual to inform prioritization and selection of projects for competitive grants, including expanding the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to include High Priority Areas for Rural Recreation.



PARK, TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE PROVISION

- » Update DPR's parkland acquisition strategy based on findings of the PNA+ Final Report. Specifically, the PNA+ identifies and maps areas that should be prioritized for both conservation as well as restoration opportunities. The updated countywide strategy needs to prioritize land acquisition in very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA as well as priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration identified in the PNA+.
- » Implement additional multi-benefit park projects that concurrently address the climate crisis, enable more residents to get outdoors to experience and enjoy nature, as well as protect and enhance biodiversity in the county. Development of additional multi-benefit park projects will help to implement plans like the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, the General Plan, Community Parks and Recreation Plans, and advance initiatives such as WHAM, which supports projects that simultaneously address stormwater management (Measure W), affordable housing (Measure H), park (Measure A), and transportation (Measure M) needs.
- » Implement priority trail projects as identified in

6.0 Key Findings, Metrics, Recommendations and Next Steps

adopted trail plans. The County has adopted various trail plans which identify priority trail projects to be implemented. Given the growing popularity of trails and the many benefits they offer, there is a need as well as opportunities to create new trails and fill gaps in trails in both “trail-rich” and “trail-poor” areas.

- » Develop and implement solutions, such as partnerships with other organizations and sharing/pool of Measure A funds for multiple study areas, to address the unique park and recreation needs of rural unincorporated communities, especially those identified as high priority rural recreation areas in the PNA+ Final Report.

 **COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION**

- » Establish a regular convening with partner agencies to coordinate and collaborate on regional parkland initiatives, including the acquisition of land for park purposes, and implement the recommendations of the PNA+ Final Report.
- » Expand the quarterly meetings of countywide trail managers taskforce to coordinate interagency trail connectivity, practices and policies, signage, network, and trail related needs identified in the PNA+ Final Report.
- » Update the Los Angeles County General Plan and other County plans to incorporate findings and recommendations of the 2016 PNA and 2022 PNA+ Final Reports. DPR will coordinate with the Department of Regional Planning to update the General Plan, including the Parks and Recreation Element and the Conservation and Natural Resources Element, Area Plans, and other plans to incorporate analyses, mapping, and recommendations from the PNA, PNA+, and other recent park and trail planning efforts.

 **ACCESS AND INFORMATION**

- » Expand public transit to parks, open space, trails, and beaches. DPR and other park agencies should partner with Metro and other transit providers to implement the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan and related projects to enable more residents to more easily and conveniently access the full range of parks and recreational options in Los Angeles County. Expanded transit to parks services should be prioritized for very high and high park need areas identified in the 2016 PNA as well as priority areas for regional recreation and rural recreation identified in the 2022 PNA+ Final Report.
- » Formalize partnerships with Native American tribes and groups to pursue opportunities for acknowledgement and stewardship of land. As part of various County planning processes, including those for the OurCounty Sustainability Plan and the PNA+, Native American residents and stakeholders identified numerous barriers to accessing County-owned land for cultural, religious, and traditional practices such as harvesting and gathering on ancestral lands. DPR and partner agencies should continue to collaborate with the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (NAIC) and Native American tribes, indigenous-led organizations, and other indigenous stakeholders to remove barriers to the observance of cultural, religious, and traditional practices and explore partnerships for the co-management of lands.

- » Update and expand the Trails LA County website and app to additionally serve as a hub and an empowerment tool from which to advance equity and expand access to the regional trail system. DPR will coordinate and collaborate with partner agencies to continually update and expand the Trails LA County website and app to include information on additional trails. In addition, the website and app should serve as a resource hub and an empowerment tool from which to address a whole host of initiatives related to equity and access to our trail systems including enhanced language and accessibility and culturally relevant educational themes.
- » Provide historically inclusive, eco-literate, and multilingual interpretive signage at parks, including natural areas and nature centers. As part of the community engagement and outreach process for PNA+, some residents reported that the lack of signage, maps, and other information displays and materials in languages besides English discouraged them from visiting certain parks and trails. Some also shared the desire for more historical and environmental information at parks. To address these needs, DPR and partner agencies should provide historically inclusive, eco-literate, and multilingual interpretive signage at parks, including natural areas and nature centers.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- » Prioritize community engagement for programs, services, and park development. DPR will continue to prioritize community engagement for programs, services, and park development to ensure that the communities it serves are engaged and involved. Community-based organizations are trusted by residents and have played a vital role in community engagement and outreach in the development of the PNA, PNA+, OurCounty Sustainability Plan, and numerous other County plans, especially in under-resourced communities. DPR will continue to collaborate and coordinate with community-based organizations for community engagement and outreach for park planning and development efforts, including involving them early and often in processes, and providing them with financial, technical, and other support.
- » Expand opportunities for community engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community meetings have primarily been online for the past two plus years. While not ideal, virtual engagement does offer certain benefits, including making it easier for some members of the public to participate in meetings from the comfort of their homes without traveling, arranging for childcare, etc. However, not all community members have access to the internet or know how to use smart phones. DPR and partner agencies should expand their approach to community engagement to include in-person, analog and virtual options for the public to be informed and get involved in processes for parks and recreation plans, policies, projects, and programs.



CAPACITY BUILDING

- » Create career pathways, including training and workforce development opportunities, for jobs in nature education, resource protection, conservation, and outdoor access related fields. Parks contribute to the creation of a variety of employment opportunities. To grow and strengthen the parks and recreation workforce, there is a need to increase access to parks career pathways for young people, especially young people of color/Black and Brown young people. This can be accomplished by providing job training skills, mentorship, and/or career exposure, especially for Black and Brown youth from very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA, and Black and Brown and other vulnerable communities identified in PNA+.
- » Prioritize recruiting volunteers for core programming, such as out-of-school and sports programming, in very high and high park need areas identified in the PNA and priority areas for restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation identified in the PNA+. Volunteers play a critical role in parks and recreation, with many already serving at parks and still more members of the public expressing a desire to serve. DPR and partner agencies should expand the recruitment and participation of volunteers to help address a variety of needs at parks, natural areas, trails, beaches, and other recreational facilities, including education, programming, and maintenance.



we all need

PARKS

PNA+