



# Citizen Oversight Advisory Board Guide

MEASURE  
**A**

Los Angeles County  
Regional Park and Open Space District  
October 2019



# ***Introduction***

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## **THE REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) was created in 1992 with the passage of the Safe Neighborhood Parks Act, or Proposition A, a local parks funding measure. Until its sunset in 2015, \$540 million in Proposition A grant funds were provided for the acquisition, restoration and rehabilitation of property for parks, recreation and natural lands. In 1996, Los Angeles County voters approved another local park funding measure, also called Proposition A. An additional \$319 million in funding was obtained through this second measure, which sunset on June 30, 2019.

The objectives of RPOSD are to improve the quality of life in the County of Los Angeles through the preservation of beaches, parks, and wild lands; the construction, renovation and improvement of new and existing recreational facilities; and the restoration of rivers, streams, and trails.

## **MEASURE A**

Measure A was drafted to meet current and future park need, and its content reflects the findings of the Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. Measure A was approved by 74.9% of voters in November 2016. Generating more than \$90 million per year for the county's local parks, beaches, and open space areas, Measure A is an annual parcel tax of 1.5 cents per square foot of improved property, and includes both formula-based allocations to Study Areas and competitive grants that are open to public agencies, non-profit organizations, and schools. Unlike Proposition A, Measure A does not have an expiration date.

The goals of Measure A include providing funds to improve the quality of life throughout the Regional Park and Open Space District by preserving and protecting parks, safe places to play, community recreation facilities, beach, rivers, open spaces, water conservation, youth and veteran career development, and the urban tree canopy.

# **Measure A: Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Guide**

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## **1.1. PURPOSE AND ROLE**

The formation and operation of a Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (Advisory Board) is a mandate of Measure A under Section 7: Community Oversight and Accountability.

- The overall role of the Advisory Board is to provide outside accountability of the use of Measure A funds to ensure expenditures are being allocated and expended only for purposes described in the Measure.
- The overall Measure A program will also be periodically evaluated by the Advisory Board to ensure that Measure A is fulfilling the will of the voters and improving the quality of life of County residents as it is intended.

## **1.2. COMPOSITION**

The Advisory Board shall be composed of five members appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles (BOS), acting as the Board of the RPOSD. Each appointing office shall appoint one member who meets both of the following criteria:

- An accountant, economist, or other professional with knowledge and expertise in parks, park development, evaluating financial transactions and program cost-effectiveness, or an appointed member of the Park Needs Assessment Steering Committee;
- An appointed member from one of the five Supervisorial Districts.

## **1.3. APPOINTMENT**

Members of the Advisory Board shall be appointed by the BOS, with each Supervisor providing one candidate for the Advisory Board.

- Each Supervisor's Office will provide the name and contact information of the appointee to RPOSD. RPOSD will follow the County Commission appointment process.
- The appointments will go to the Board of RPOSD at a meeting for final adoption of the appointments.
- The final composition of the Advisory Board is authorized by Board action. At the first meeting the Advisory Board will elect a Chairperson (Chair) and a Vice Chairperson (Vice Chair).
- If an Advisory Board member is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities after appointment the Supervisor will provide a new candidate.

## 1.4. ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of Advisory Board members include specific duties, attendance, and commitment to service without compensation.

### 1.4.1. DUTIES

- Ensure that the Measure A program is integrated in the annual independent audit of RPOSD by reviewing the audit from an independent audit agency.
- Publish a complete accounting of all allocations each year, posting the information on RPOSD's publicly accessible internet website in a downloadable spreadsheet format, including information about the location and footprint of each funded project, its objectives, status, and outcomes, any matching funds used, and the applicable program from the expenditure plan schedule in Section 5(b).
- Submit to the County periodic evaluations of the program, which may at the Board's direction be undertaken by independent researchers, identifying any changes needed to meet the objectives of the Measure A resolution.
- The role of the Chair will be to call meetings to order, guide the discussions of the Advisory Board, help build consensus among Advisory Board members, and formally adjourn the meeting. The Chair has discretion in guiding discussion of items among Advisory Board members while allowing for appropriate public input. The Chair will also speak for the Advisory Board at any applicable non-Advisory Board meeting as authorized by the Advisory Board.
- The role of the Vice Chair will be to assume the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- Provide an update to the BOS about its activities through an Annual Report. The Annual Report is to be completed by the Advisory Board and approved at a regular Advisory Board meeting. The Chair, or RPOSD staff will transmit the Annual Report to the BOS. It is the Advisory Board's responsibility to provide an Annual Report. The RPOSD staff will provide a draft document for discussion and edits by the Advisory Board, then a follow-up final document for a recommendation for the final document to be sent to the Board of RPOSD.

### 1.4.2. ATTENDANCE

- Advisory Board members are responsible for attending meetings regularly to ensure a quorum, and to facilitate the business and meet the duties of the Advisory Board.
- It is the responsibility of Advisory Board members to provide advance notice to RPOSD staff, the Chair, and/or the Vice Chair if they cannot attend a meeting.
- If any member is absent from two of any four consecutive regular Advisory Board meetings, unless such absence is with the permission of the Chair, or Vice Chair in absence of the Chair, the member's seat shall be deemed vacated.
- RPOSD staff shall notify the BOS to take action to fill the seat within a reasonable period of time.

### 1.4.3. LENGTH OF TERM

- The term of service on the Advisory Board is four years at the pleasure of the BOS, and no member may serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The BOS may, by order, extend this length of service or waive this limit for individuals or the Advisory Board as a whole.

- A member's position shall become vacant upon his or her death, resignation, or removal by the Advisory Board. In the case of such a vacancy, the BOS shall give public notice of vacancies and actively recruit qualified candidates, and appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.
- If an Advisory Board member chooses to resign, letters or email of resignation can be submitted to the BOS. Copies of the resignation should also be provided to RPOSD staff and the Chair and Vice Chair.

#### **1.4.4. COMPENSATION**

- This position does not receive compensation for service, but may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

### **1.5. MEETING FREQUENCY**

Regular meetings of the Advisory Board are held quarterly (four times a year) to review all expenditures from the special tax.

- Meeting to be held after the end of each fiscal year quarter in April, July, October and January to review the expenditures for the previous quarter.
- Regular meetings should be scheduled for the same week, day of the week, and time for each meeting month (e.g., first Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.). Meetings will generally last for two to three hours.
- The Chair or a majority of the appointed Advisory Board members may call a special meeting if deemed necessary and will coordinate with RPOSD staff regarding availability of staff and a meeting room. The agenda of a special meeting must be posted 24 hours in advance of the meeting in accordance with the Brown Act and distributed to interested parties that have requested notification.

### **1.6. MEETING PROCEDURE**

RPOSD staff will provide logistical support for each meeting of the Advisory Board. Each meeting shall follow the procedures described below.

#### **1.6.1. AGENDA**

- RPOSD staff will prepare each agenda according to Brown Act requirements and in consultation with the Chair. An Advisory Board member may request that an item be placed on the agenda by submitting a request to the Chair.
- Substantive issues will have higher priority than matters of procedural detail. The Chair has discretion in guiding discussion among Advisory Board members while allowing for appropriate staff and public input.

## 1.6.2. BROWN ACT

- Advisory Board meetings are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act, which guarantees the public's right to attend and participate in Advisory Board meetings.
- The agenda for a regular meeting must be posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting in accordance with the Brown Act.
- Agendas must be physically posted at the meeting site and accessible to the public. RPOSD will post current agendas and minutes on the RPOSD website for public view. The agenda must include all items which will be discussed or acted upon by the Advisory Board. Generally, the Advisory Board cannot discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item not included on the agenda.
- Members of the public must be allowed to address the Advisory Board on any agenda item before or during consideration of that item. Members of the public must also be given the opportunity to address the Advisory Board on any matter not on the agenda which is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Advisory Board.
- Advisory Board members may not engage in email, phone or in-person communication that could possibly violate the Brown Act, including serial or group communications.

## 1.6.3. QUORUM

- Business can only be conducted if a quorum of at least three members is present.

## 1.6.4. MEETING GOALS

- The Advisory Board will review, discuss, and accept the quarterly expenditure reports prepared by RPOSD staff.
- The Advisory Board will review, discuss, and accept the annual financial audit of Measure A prepared by an independent party.
- The Advisory Board will work together to develop an evaluation procedure, including frequency and evaluation metrics, at a meeting(s) during its first year of operation, with the goal of establishing a periodic evaluation process to evaluate whether the Measure A program is meeting its objectives. Evaluation of the Measure A program will be conducted by an independent party.
- The Advisory Board will review and discuss the evaluation reports of the Measure A program and make any recommendations to RPOSD based on its discussion.

## 1.6.5. DISCUSSION AND PREPARATION OF MATERIALS

- An independent party will prepare the annual financial audit of Measure A. The Advisory Board must receive and review this audit for discussion at its Spring meeting.
- RPOSD staff will prepare quarterly reports of Measure A expenditures for review by the Advisory Board at each of its quarterly meetings. The quarterly report will include a detailed accounting of all expenditures as well as a summary for presentation to the Advisory Board. At its quarterly meeting, the Advisory Board will review and discuss the expenditure report for the previous quarter.
- Advisory Board Members are responsible for reviewing meeting materials in advance of a meeting.

### **1.6.6. INFORMATION SHARING**

- Action minutes and/or summaries of meetings, along with associated meeting materials will be kept on the RPOSD website as well as on file and available for any interested person to examine.
- Advisory Board members who wish to share written information with the Advisory Board shall provide such to RPOSD staff at least 72 hours prior to any scheduled meeting to allow for distribution prior to the meeting.

### **1.6.7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- Advisory Board members shall remove themselves from all discussions, deliberations, recommendations and votes on matters in which they have a personal or financial interest pursuant to the Regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission, or where their bias cannot be set aside to allow fair consideration of an issue. In addition, they may not accept gifts from lobbyists or anyone doing business with the County or who may come before the Advisory Board. This is against County policy and may be illegal.
- If reasonable concerns are raised as to a member's potential conflict or bias, the member is encouraged to refrain from participating in any discussion and action on that item. Pervasive or recurring conflicts of interest should lead a member to resign from the Advisory Board and may be grounds for dismissal.

### **1.6.8. PUBLIC INPUT**

- Community members may attend Advisory Board meetings and provide public input (see "Brown Act" section of this memo). Each Advisory Board meeting will include an opportunity for public comment during the designated public comment period(s) at each meeting. A time limit, established by the Chair, will be imposed on the public comment period and on each speaker. Generally, speakers fill out Request to Speak Forms, which will be provided to the Chair to call on speakers.
- Members of the public with inquiries about the Advisory Board and its business should contact RPOSD staff by phone or email.





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