

# 2019 Annual Report



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
REGIONAL PARK AND  
OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

## Letter from the Director

Dear Board and Community Members,

I have the pleasure of presenting the first annual report for the Regional Park and Open Space District's (District) Measure A for the year ending June 30, 2019.

In this year, the work of the District included the completion of the work by the Measure A Implementation Steering Committee, the development and adoption of the Grants Administration Manual, the Board's release of the Annual Allocations of Measure A funds, the conclusion of the litigation against Measure A, and the first grants awarded of Measure A funds. This is a large volume of work put forward by the District, its 25 staff members, and the community who offered their ideas, advice and suggestions. I commend them on their work moving these important efforts forward in a comprehensive, and collaborative manner.

Measure A calls for lowering the barriers to grant application by facilitating equitable access to grant funding supporting open spaces. In making steps to do so, the District has developed an online grants management system that enables both the potential grantee and its staff to efficiently move projects forward. To help grantees and potential grantees handle the complexity of Measure A funds and understand the grant application process, the District also completed a series of handbooks on grant writing, park planning, Measure A programs, and navigating the grants management system. These resources are distributed at various workshops organized by the District and will always be available on the website.

This report reflects the requirements of Measure A to annually report on the fiscal activities, geography of the investments and the specifics of the projects funded with its revenue.

I am happy to see the District move the implementation of Measure A forward and this first annual report captures all the significant work accomplished during Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "John Wicker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Wicker" clearly distinguishable.

John Wicker

Director  
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District





## Grants Management System

**(GMS)** is the online platform Webgrants created for the District. It will enable grantees to apply, manage, and close Measure A grants. The GMS streamlines grant application, administration, and closing through the use of digital records and communications.



## Proposition A Funds of 1992 and 1996

each had a 22-year assessment period. Assessments are no longer collected as the time frame for both Propositions has expired. Remaining funds will continue to be awarded until all the funds are allocated.

## Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

will provide information, tools, resources, and strategies to help applicants through all stages of project conceptualization, grant initiation, grantmaking, and project completion.





## **The Origin of the District**

Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (the District) was created in 1992 when Los Angeles County voters approved Proposition A, a local parks funding measure. Over the last 26 years, Proposition A of 1992 and Proposition A of 1996 (Prop A) have provided over \$1.5 billion in funds for park projects as well as maintenance and servicing throughout the County of Los Angeles. Both Prop A assessments have recently expired.

## **The Launch of Measure A**

As Prop A came to an end, Los Angeles County launched a Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) to determine park needs countywide. The PNA included a countywide inventory of parks, analysis of park need, and a community engagement process. The PNA established the boundaries and determined the level of park need of 188 Study Areas in the county. There are over 3,000 parks in the Cities and the unincorporated areas of the County.

The Los Angeles County Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks and Beaches Measure of 2016 (Measure A) was drafted to meet current and future park need, and its content reflects the findings of the PNA. Measure A includes a needs-based hybrid approach to funding through formula-based allocations and competitive grants.

## **The Passing of Measure A**

Los Angeles County residents recognize the importance of the region's parks, beaches, open spaces, and natural areas by consistently voting for local park funding. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Los Angeles County voters approved Measure A in November of 2016, which authorizes dedicated local funding for park, recreation, and open space projects and their maintenance. Measure A is a special tax on real property in the County. With the passing of Measure A, voters created a long-term, stable source of funding for local park and open space projects throughout the County.



## Initial Challenges

In early 2017, litigation was filed against Measure A, causing delay in its implementation. The District prevailed in the trial court, but the plaintiff filed an appeal, causing further delay.

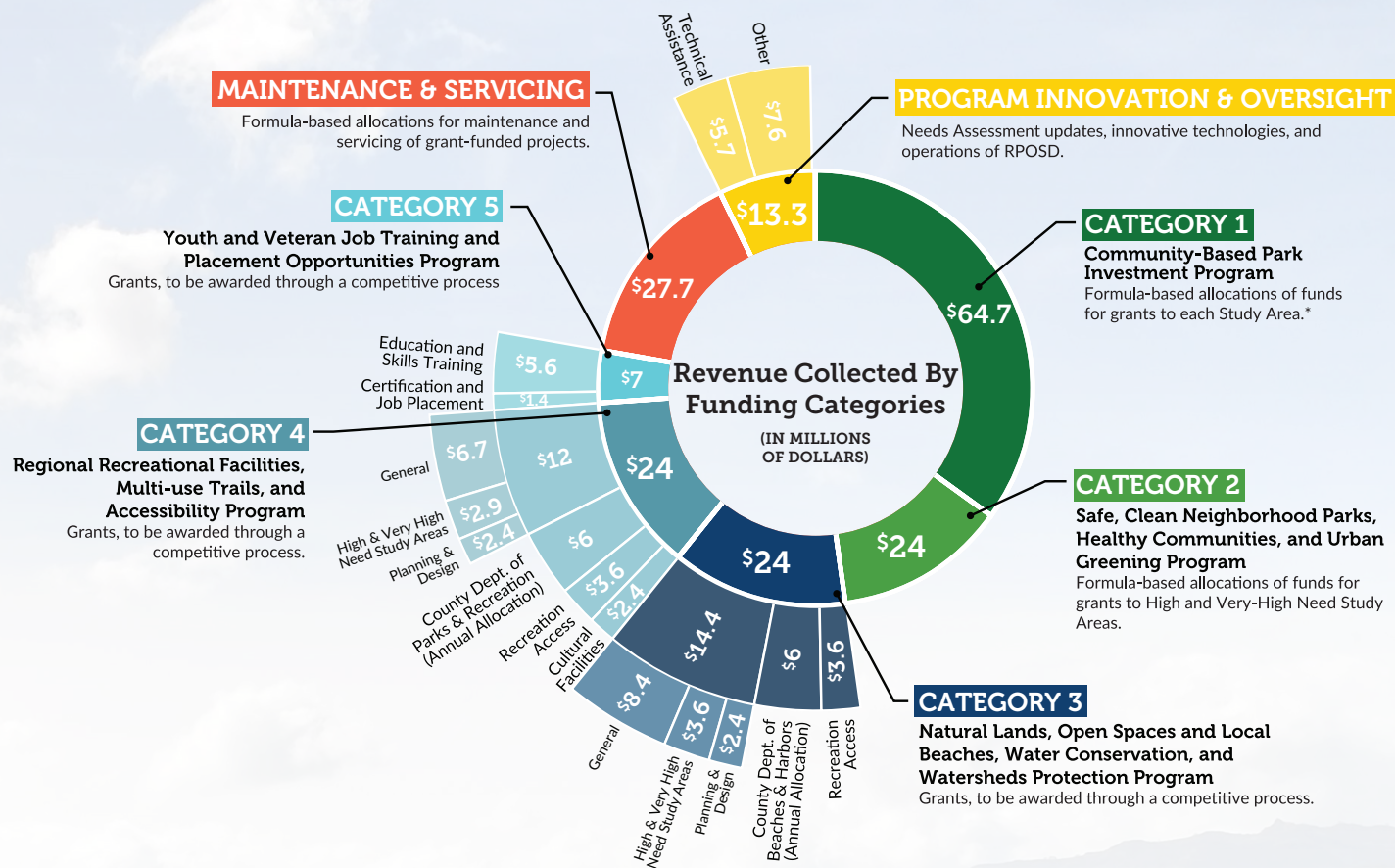
In Fiscal Year 2018-19, the District was informed that real properties entitled to institutional exemptions from ad valorem property taxes were inadvertently assessed Measure A parcel taxes for Fiscal Year 2017-18. Hence, owners of taxed properties that had a current welfare exemption received a refund. This welfare exemption is the only exemption to Measure A. The District has since corrected the assessment to prevent reoccurrence and made refunds of \$3.1 million to affected taxpayers for Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

In June of 2018, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, acting as the Board of Directors for the District, authorized the release of Measure A annual allocation funds, including those for the Community-based Park Investment Program, the Neighborhood Parks, Healthy Communities, & Urban Greening Program, and Maintenance & Servicing Funds, pending resolution of the appeal against Measure A. The release of funding for competitive grants was placed on hold, while annual allocations were to be released with a clause for repayment if required by the final court ruling.

In May 2019, litigation against Measure A was resolved in the District's favor.

In June 2019, the Board authorized the release of the Competitive Grant Funds. The District will move forward with the Competitive Grants Program processes described in the Measure A Grants Administration Manual (GAM) as well as the Proceedings of the Measure A Implementation Steering Committee (Proceedings).



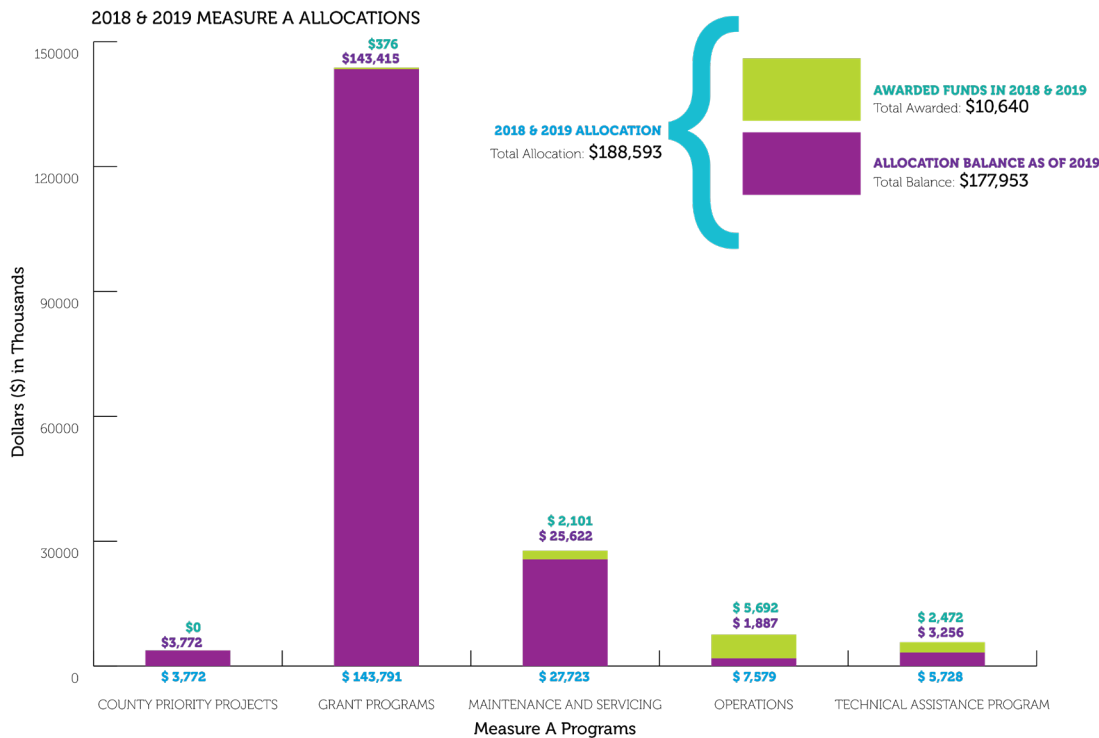


# MEASURE A REVENUE COLLECTED \$188.6M for 2018 + 2019

Note: The District's Board of Supervisors may allocate up to 2% of total funds for eligible projects each year (up to \$3.8M total for 2018 and 2019\*).

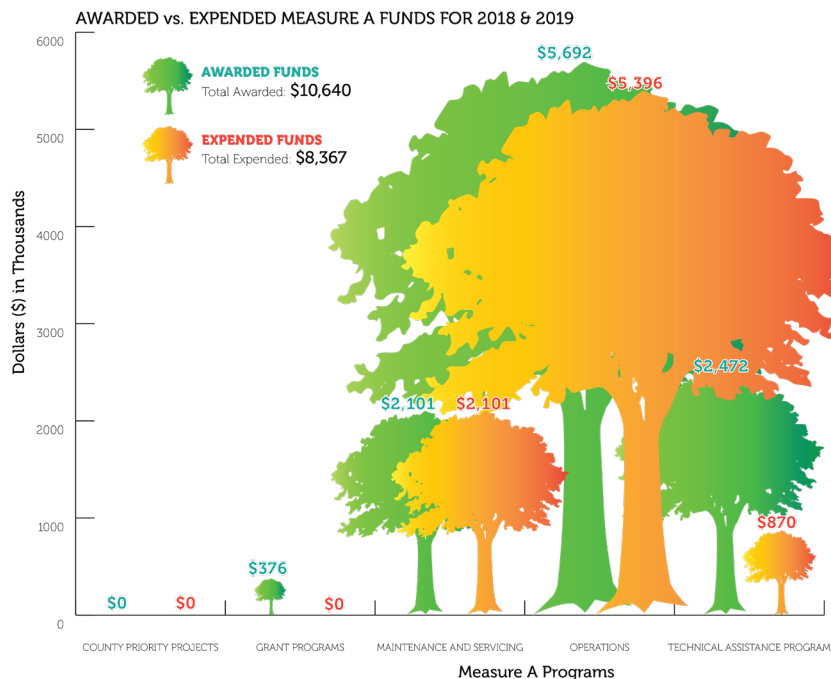
\*Refer to Appendix I for further details on revenue collection, allocation, and expenditure.





The chart above shows special tax collections for Measure A and how they are allocated into different programs. Total collection from two fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19 reached nearly \$188.6M. This amount is allocated into the different programs as outlined in the adopted measure. In the chart, each bar represents an allocation; the portions awarded to grants are presented in yellow while the remaining balances are presented in purple. For this reporting period, the \$3.7M allocated for County Priority Projects remained intact with no grants awarded. Almost \$143.8M was allocated to Grant Programs with only \$376K awarded to grants. Of the \$27.7M allocation for Maintenance and Servicing, \$2.1M has been awarded. \$7.5M allocated for the District operations. \$5.7M was allocated for the Technical Assistance Program and nearly \$2.5M has been awarded as grants.

The second chart shows a comparison of awarded and expended funds. The green trees represent awarded funds while expended funds are represented by the orange trees. Of the \$10.6M in awarded funds, nearly \$8.4M have been spent: \$2.1M in project maintenance and servicing, \$5.4M in District operations, and \$870K in Technical Assistance Program.



## The Implementation of Measure A

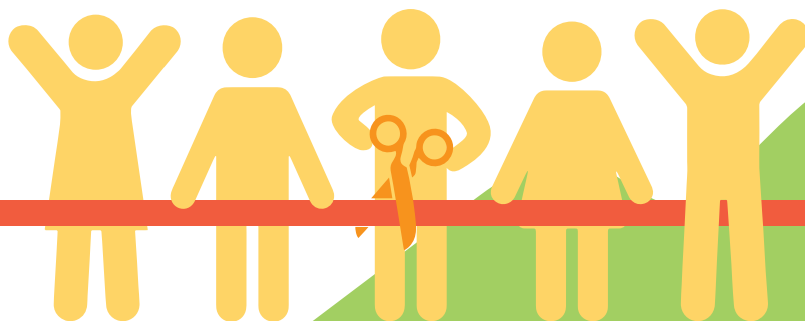
The Board appointed 46 members of the community, County Departments and community organizations to the Measure A Implementation Steering Committee. The District held fourteen Steering Committee meetings between April 2017 and June 2018. Members provided personal and professional insights as well as recommendations based on their experience as members of the community and practitioners in their respective fields.

The District also held a variety of small group and one-on-one meetings, telephone interviews, online surveys with the general public, public agencies, organizations, and individuals to gain insight into special circumstances and barriers that may arise during the grantmaking process. The work of the Steering Committee is contained in the Proceedings of the Measure A Implementation Steering Committee (Proceedings).

The District used the insights gained during these processes and the Proceedings to develop the Grants Administration Manual for Measure A (GAM), which provides guidance in applying for and administering Measure A funds so that grantees can complete park projects successfully throughout Los Angeles County.

## Onward and Upward

To achieve efficiencies in costs and time, the District will utilize innovative technology to provide efficient oversight and to facilitate online grant applications and administrative processes. This effort starts with utilizing an online grants management system. As a steward of Measure A funds, the District remains committed to the prudent administration of Measure A activities.



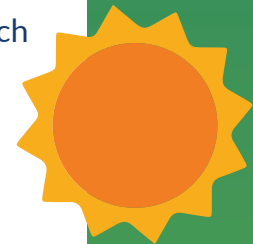




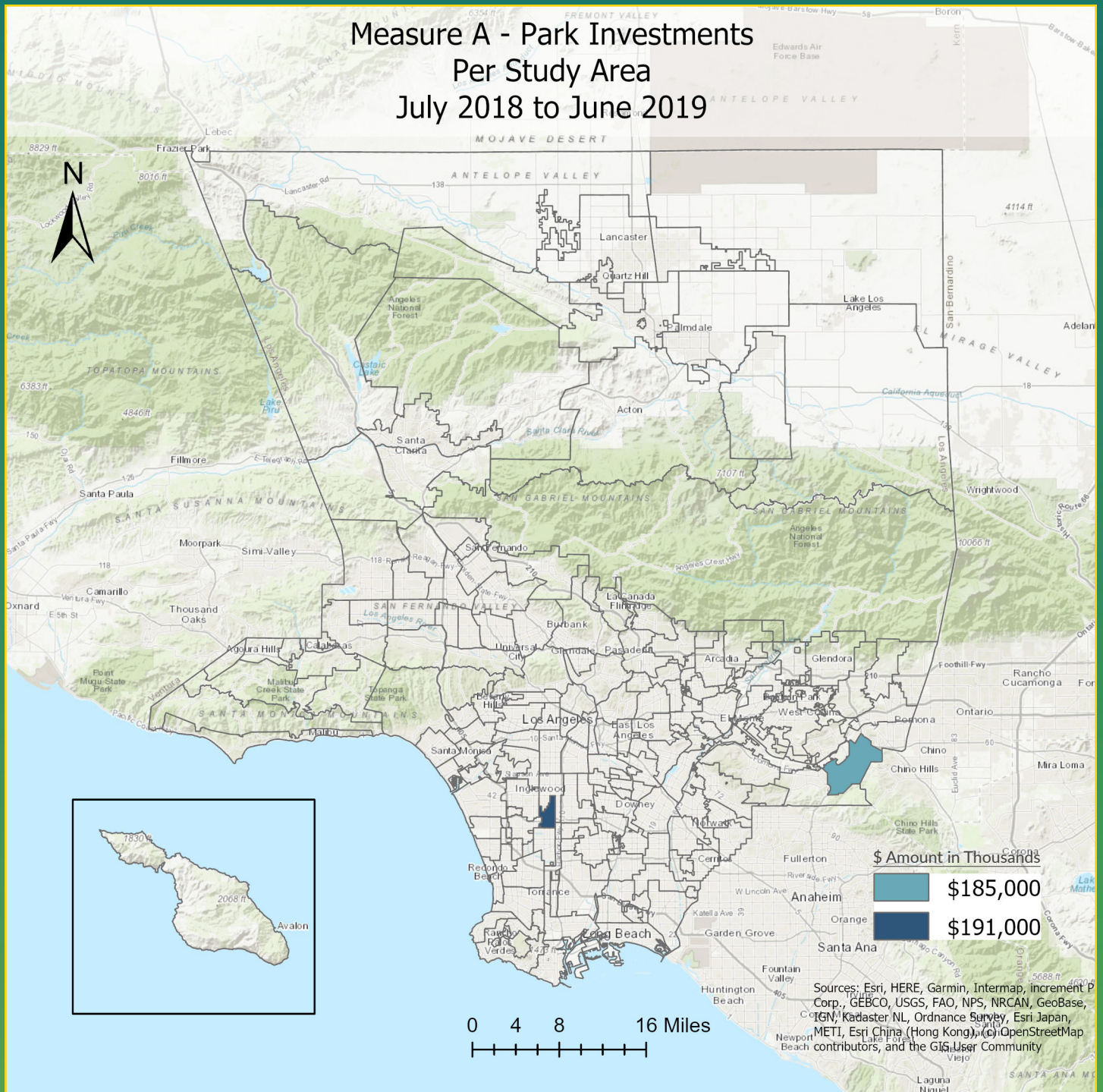
## Measure A: Funds and Projects

During this reporting period, the District made significant accomplishments highlighted by the following:

- ◇ **The Grants Administration Manual**, which describes and specifies the policies and practices around allocating and expending the park funds generated by Measure A, was completed and adopted by the Board in March 2019. This included an additional overlay for expenditure of Competitive Grants, ensuring that at least 30% of these funds go into projects in areas with High and Very High Park Need.
- ◇ Utilization of the cloud-based online **Grant Management System (GMS)** tailored to Measure A and our requirements.



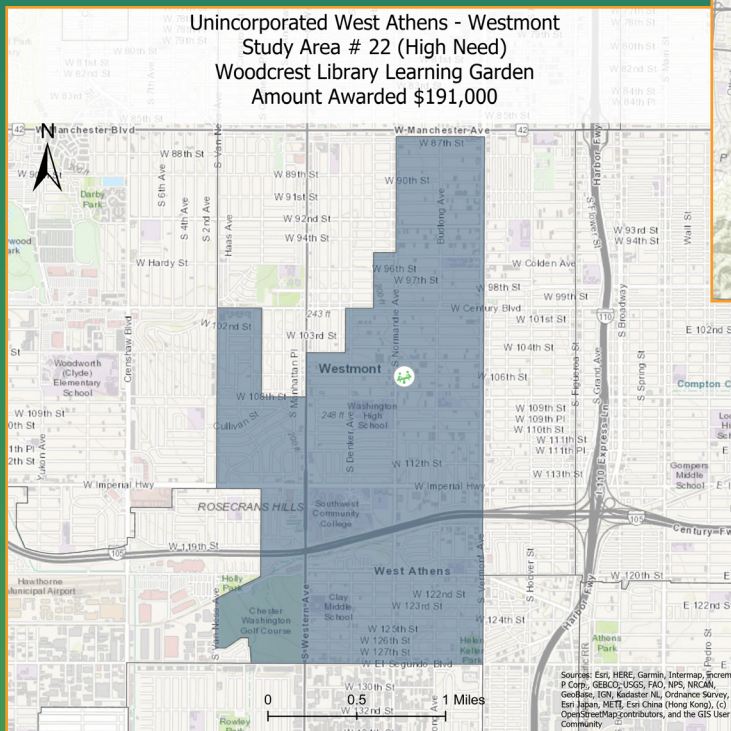
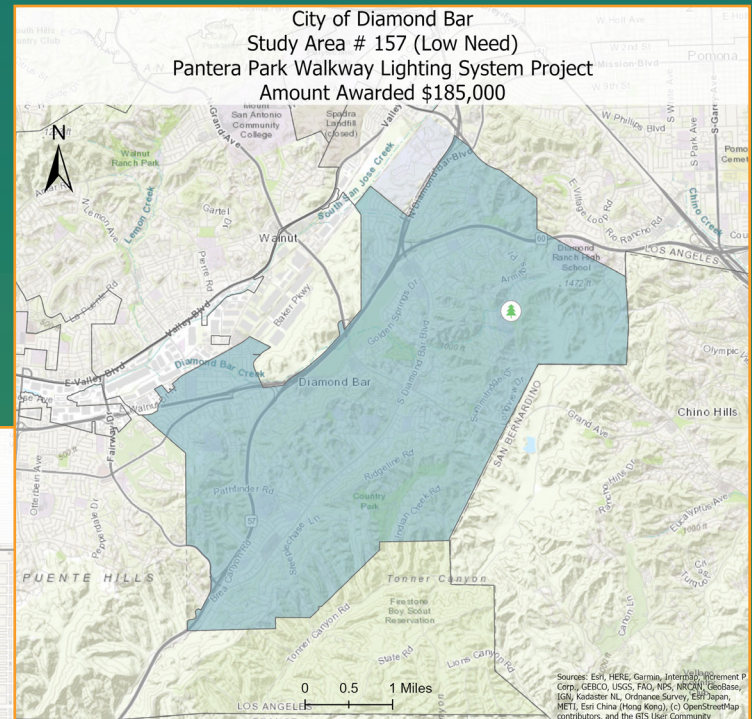
# Measure A - Park Investments Per Study Area July 2018 to June 2019





◇ Entered into the **first two Measure A agreements** for the following grants:

- » The first Measure A grant went to the City of Diamond Bar. The City utilized full annual allocation of approximately \$185,000 to replace the walkway lighting system in Pantera Park. This city-owned park includes ballfields and picnic areas partially funded with Prop A funds. Refurbishment of this park will be completed by December 2019.



- » A project of collaboration funded with Measure A is the Woodcrest Library Learning Garden & Pocket Park. This project is located on the grounds of the County Woodcrest Library that will be operated and maintained by the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). DPR assigned \$191,000 of the annual allocation funds for this study area to the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, who constructed the project. It includes a playground, a fitness zone, new landscaping, outdoor seating and phone charging stations. The estimated completion date for the project is December 2019.

TOTAL AWARDED TO PROJECTS BY STUDY AREA NEED LEVEL AS OF 2019: \$378 THOUSAND						
STUDY AREA	STUDY AREA ID	NEED LEVEL	FUNDING CATEGORY	GRANTEE	PROJECT	AWARDED IN THOUSAND
City of Diamond Bar	157	Low	1	City of Diamond Bar	Pantera Park Lighting System Project	\$185
UI West Athens-Westmont (DPR)	22	Very High	1	LA Conservation Corps	Woodcrest Library Learning Garden	\$110
UI West Athens-Westmont (DPR)	22	Very High	2	LA Conservation Corps	Woodcrest Library Learning Garden	\$81

- ◇ Completed the development and implementation of the **Maintenance and Servicing (M&S)** program. This allowed funding support for the operation and maintenance of the following park projects:

ALL MEASURE A MAINTENANCE & SERVICING (M&S) FUNDS AWARDED AS OF 2019	
AGENCY	AMOUNT AWARDED
THE LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR)	\$1,829,8140
PUEENTE HILLS HABITAT PERSERVATION AUTHORITY	\$271,083

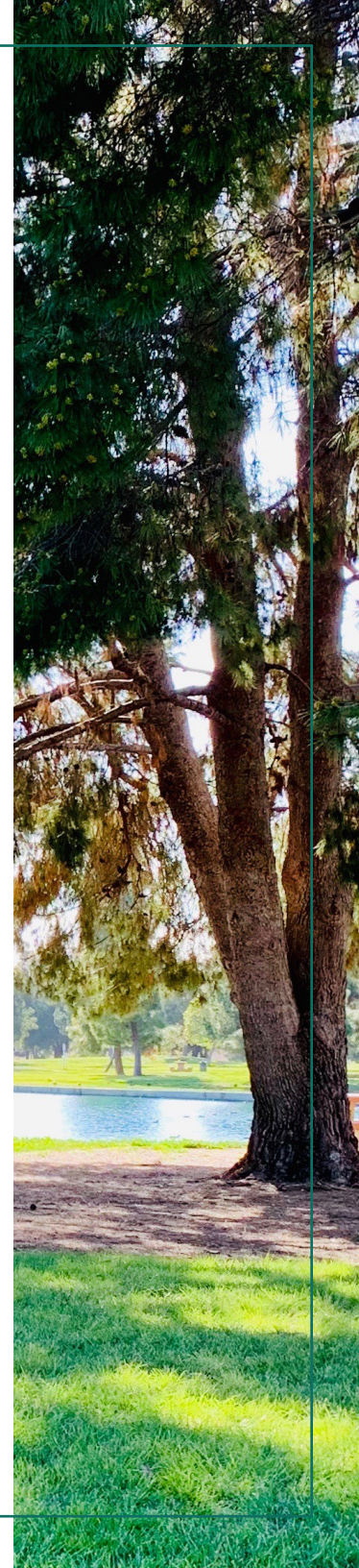
- ◇ Developed **Technical Assistance Program** resources available for all grantees, potential grantees, and community members.

- » *Grants Administration Manual*
- » *Quick Start Guide for the Grants Management System*
- » *Measure A Basics Handbook*
- » *Measure A Grant Writing Handbook*
- » *Park Planning Handbook*
- » *Information Sheets for the Annual Allocations for the Community-based Park Investment Program and the Neighborhood Parks, Healthy Communities, & Urban Greening Program by Study Area*
- » *Information Sheets for the Maintenance and Servicing Funds by recipient*
- » *An online GIS map tool that helps applicants find the study area as well as the various state and local districts that their project is located within (information needed for an application)*
- » *A listing of helpful links and reports on our website of outside resources for planning park and open space projects grouped by the following interests: Development and Design; Metrics and Assessments; Outreach and Engagement; Outside Funding Opportunities; Serving Your Community; CEQA Requirements*
- » *Application Workshops held across the County, whose materials and webinar are posted on the website for ongoing use*





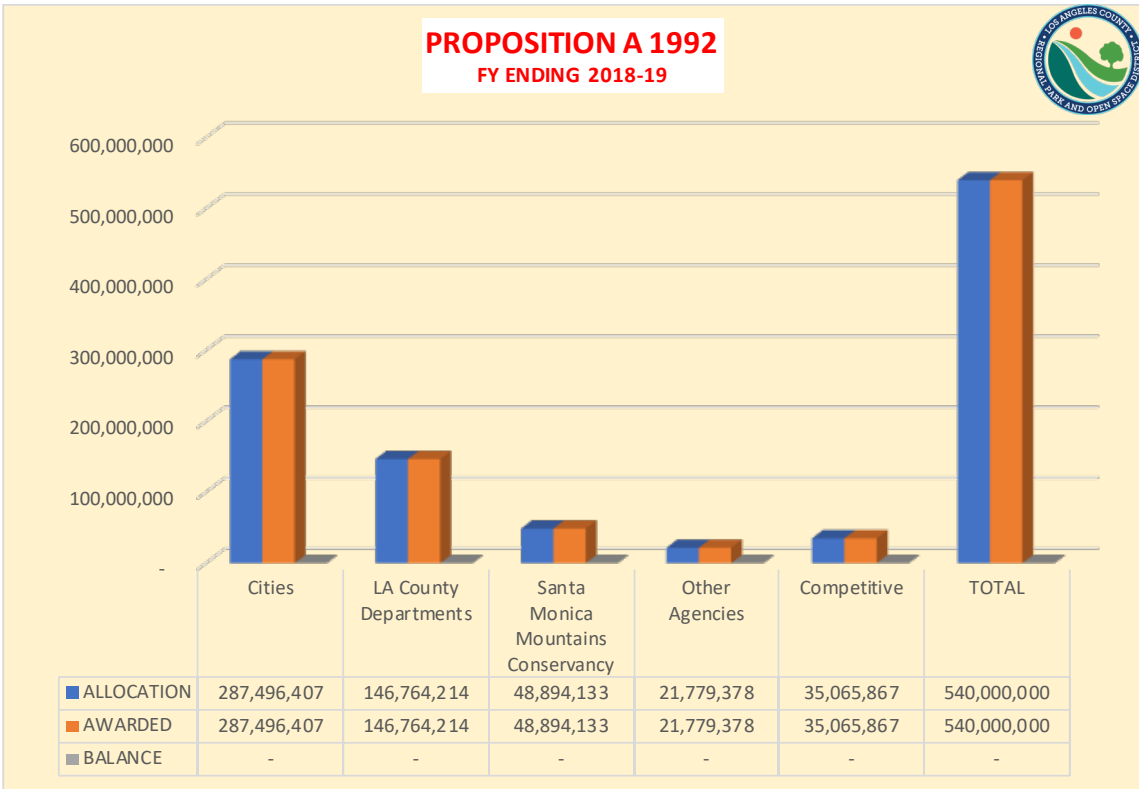
- ◇ The District began the work on developing the methodology and resources for the **Urban Parks Technical Assistance Program (Urban Parks TAP)** for the study areas whose park need is identified as High and Very High. The Steering Committee and the Board have laid out a series of resources to be researched and developed. There is also a methodology developed for applying those resources to potential and already envisioned park projects. The Steering Committee Proceedings outline the funding that could be expended on this development and the pilot of the program. A portion of funds from the Regional Recreation Facilities and Trails Program, the Natural Lands and Local Beaches Program along with the Implementation & Innovation funds were recommended for Urban Parks TAP's first and second year, which calculates to a total of \$6.4 million recommended funding for the initial two years. The District is working with several specialized and experienced non-profits with the capacity to collaboratively facilitate the delivery of Urban Parks TAP. The work of Urban Parks TAP will be reflected in the next Annual Report once the teams as well as the scope of work are established.



## Proposition A 1992 & 1996: Funds and Projects

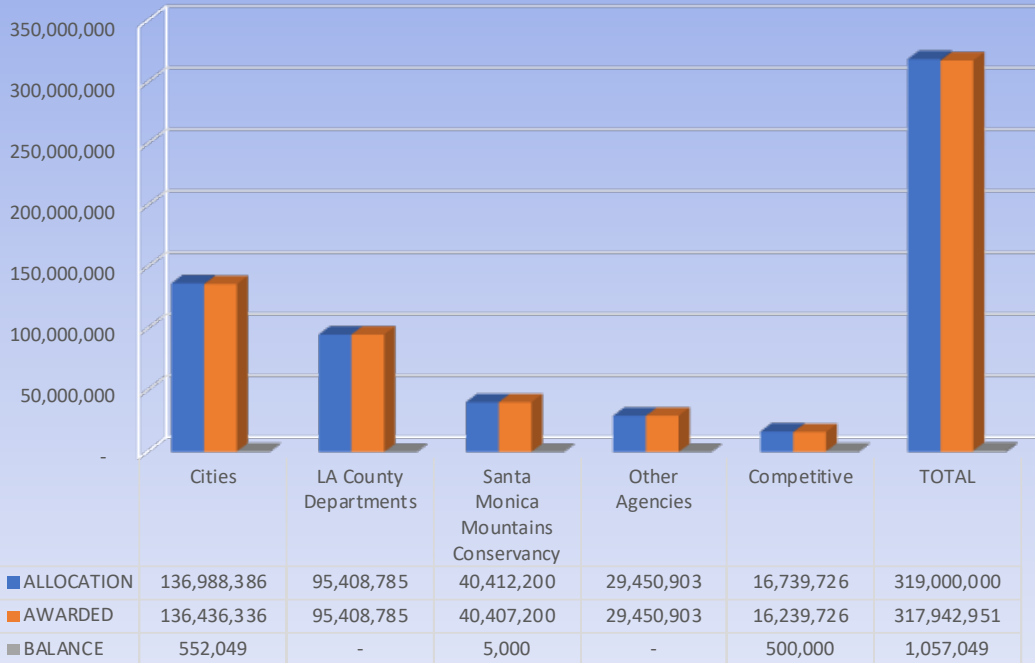
While implementing Measure A, the District simultaneously continues to manage and handle the remaining work under both Prop A's. Though both Prop A assessments have expired, the District has been actively closing grants previously allocated as well as providing support for the unallocated Specified and Excess Funds. The Administrative costs for the District are funded from both Measure A and Prop A administrative funds. Prop A administrative funds will be utilized less and less as the years go on, keeping a small portion to assign over the next decade or more to the oversight of all projects in perpetuity as both Prop A's require.

For Fiscal Year 2018/2019 the Board declared \$30 million of Excess Funds available for Capital Projects, Administrative Costs as well as funds for Maintenance and Servicing (M&S) projects/annual costs for projects funded with Excess Funds. The District started the year with 303 open Prop A grants and ended the year closing out 102 grants; there were 13 new Prop A grants and 5





## PROPOSITION A 1996 FY ENDING 2018-19



grants amended with additional Prop A funds in this year.

At the beginning of FY 2018/2019 there were \$40 million of unallocated Excess Funds. At the end of FY 2018/2019 there were \$32 million of unallocated Excess Funds.\* Excess Funds are allocated at the direction of the Board for priority projects within each of the five Supervisorial Districts. Some of these funds are being held to accumulate enough funds for a large project, like an Aquatics Center or new park. The District keeps close communication with each Board Office on their plans for funding priority projects and District staff expect that all these funds will be allocated by the end of 2027.

The District approved funding for M&S Excess projects in the amount of \$5 million; these funds went to 17 agencies with completed and closed Excess Funded projects. The requests for these funds exceeded the amount available, so the agencies were awarded a portion of the funds (92%) that they requested.

\*Additional details are in Appendix III: Proposition A 2019 Plan of Revenue Expenditure.

# Proposition A Project Highlights

The following are descriptions of two of the most recent projects\* funded by Prop A Excess Funds.

## Arroyo Seco Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail



GRANT NUMBER	#2518
PROJECT	Arroyo Seco Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail
GRANTEE	City of South Pasadena
AMOUNT	\$249,995
STATUS	Completed on June 6, 2019

The project involved the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian trail along the Arroyo Seco in the City of South Pasadena. The project's scope of work included, but was not limited to, the removal of boulder, installation of wall planters, irrigation, and water fountain, bench signage, relocation of light fixture and utilities, and the planting of drought-tolerant plants.

\*Refer to Appendix II for more details on Park Investments for 2018-2019.





## Bassett Park General Improvements



GRANT NUMBER	#2688
PROJECT	Bassett Park General Improvements
GRANTEE	LA County Parks and Recreation
AMOUNT	\$3 Million
STATUS	Estimated Completion September 2020

The project involves renovation of the interior and exterior park buildings, including the senior center, community building, gymnasium, restroom, courtyard, and related spaces; upgrade of general lighting, mechanical and plumbing and repair of two synthetic soccer fields and related improvements.

As projects are completed and eligible expenses are fully reimbursed, unused grant funds or residual balances are made available to other eligible projects. As presented in the charts above, funding from the '92 Prop A is fully allocated, while a little over \$1 million of '96 Prop A funds remains available. The District projects that these funds will be fully allocated and expended by 2030.



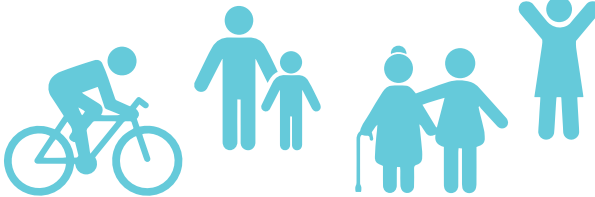
# TIMELINE OF MEASURE A

**Fall 2016:**  
Measure A  
approved by 75%  
of voters.



**Winter 2017:** Measure A was  
litigated against as an unfair tax.

**Fall 2017:** First revenue from  
Measure A was collected.



**Summer 2018:**  
First funds  
available - annual  
allocations and  
Maintenance &  
Servicing



**Early Spring 2019:**  
Two applications for  
projects received and  
entered into grant  
agreements. Many  
held off applying until  
the litigation was  
resolved.



**Late Spring 2019:**  
Litigation was  
resolved by the  
Court of Appeals  
in favor of the  
District.