we all need PARKS
for healthy, thriving and engaged communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MAY 3, 2016

Los Angeles County
Department of Parks & Recreation

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and organizations contributed to the successful completion of the Los Angeles Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. The efforts of those noted below are especially appreciated; please refer to the main report for more detailed acknowledgments.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Hilda L. Solis, 1st District
- Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District
- Sheila Kuehl, 3rd District
- Don Knabe, 4th District
- Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT STAFF

- Javier Hernandez, 1st District
- Teresa Villegas, 1st District
- Lacey Johnson, 2nd District
- Karly Katona, 2nd District
- Maria Chong-Castillo, 3rd District
- Erin Stibal, 4th District
- Sussy Nemer, 5th District
- David Perry, 5th District

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

- Ed P. Reyes, 1st District
- Mayisha Akbar, 2nd District
- Bettina Duval, 3rd District
- John Hsu, 4th District
- William J. Korek, 5th District

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF

- John Wicker, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Norma E. Garcia, Deputy Director, Planning and Development Agency
- Rita Robinson, Project Director
- Clement Lau, Departmental Facilities Planner II
- Sheela Kleinknecht, Park Planner
- Over 100 staff members

LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

- Jane Beesley, District Administrator
- Warren Ontiveros, Administration Section Manager

STEERING COMMITTEE

In memoriam: Steering Committee member Mary Kaufman, avid trail supporter and enthusiast.

- Greg Alaniz
- Jane I. Beesley
- Alina Bokde
- Brad Bolger
- William Warren Brien
- John Bwarie
- Scott Chan
- Maria Chong-Castillo
- Kimel Conway
- Cheryl Davis
- Reyna Diaz
- Bettina Duval
- Belinda V. Faustinos
- Norma E. Garcia
- Phil Hester
- Michael Hughes
- Lacey Johnson
- John Jones
- Amy Lethbridge
- James Lott
- Linda Lowry
- Michael McCaa
- Sandra McNeill
- Martha Molina-Aviles
- Veronica Padilla
- Ronda Perez
- David Perry
- Adriana Pinedo
- Jennifer Pippard
- Ed P. Reyes
- Barbara Romero
- Jeff Rubin
- Bruce Saito
- Harry Saltzgaver
- Dr. Paul Simon, MD
- Keri Smith
- Christopher Solek
- Erin Stibal
- Teresa Villegas

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Javier Aguilar
- Lee Butterfield
- Nick Franchino
- Mark Greninger
- Su Jin Lee
- Weimin Li
- Douglas Morales
- Viktor Patiño
- Patricia Pendleton

INCORPORATED CITIES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- Over 175 staff members in 86 cities

RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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

CONSULTANT TEAM

- PLACEWORKS
- GreenInfo Network
- DakeLuna Consultants
- David Taussig & Associates
- MIG
- Prevention Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to initiate the Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. This represents an unprecedented effort to document existing parks and recreation facilities in cities and unincorporated communities and to use these data to determine the scope, scale, and location of park need in Los Angeles County.

The Parks Needs Assessment will help local officials, park agencies, and residents understand the future steps that need to be taken to ensure all communities have adequate access to thriving parks.

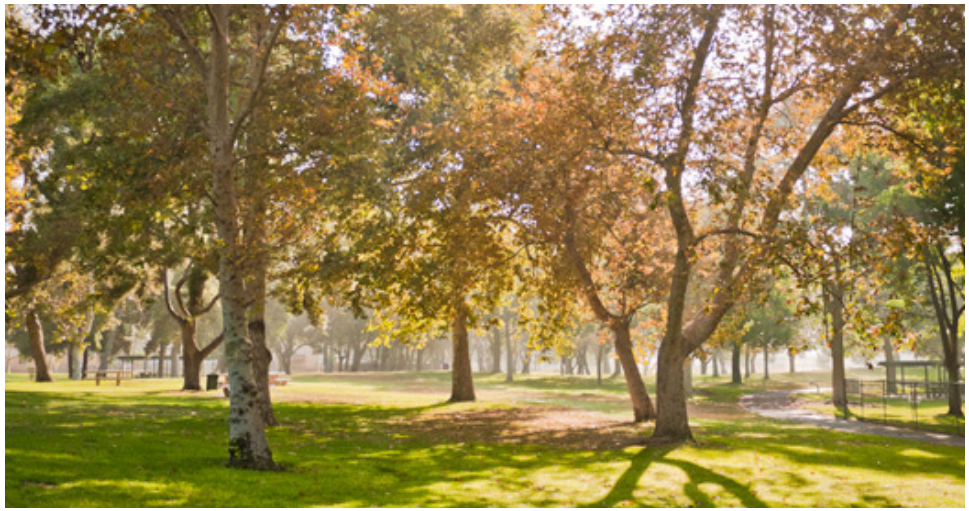
Park projects in Los Angeles County are currently funded in part by Proposition A, the Safe Neighborhoods Park Tax that is set to expire in 2019. Once this tax sunsets, funding for park projects will be greatly reduced. The results of the Parks Needs Assessment will help inform planning and decision-making regarding future funding.

In initiating the Parks Needs Assessment, the Board of Supervisors has affirmed the importance of parks as essential infrastructure in the County. Healthy, safe communities have thriving parks that contribute to public health and well-being, create a sense of place, increase community cohesion, improve the environment, and boost the economy.

A NEW PARADIGM

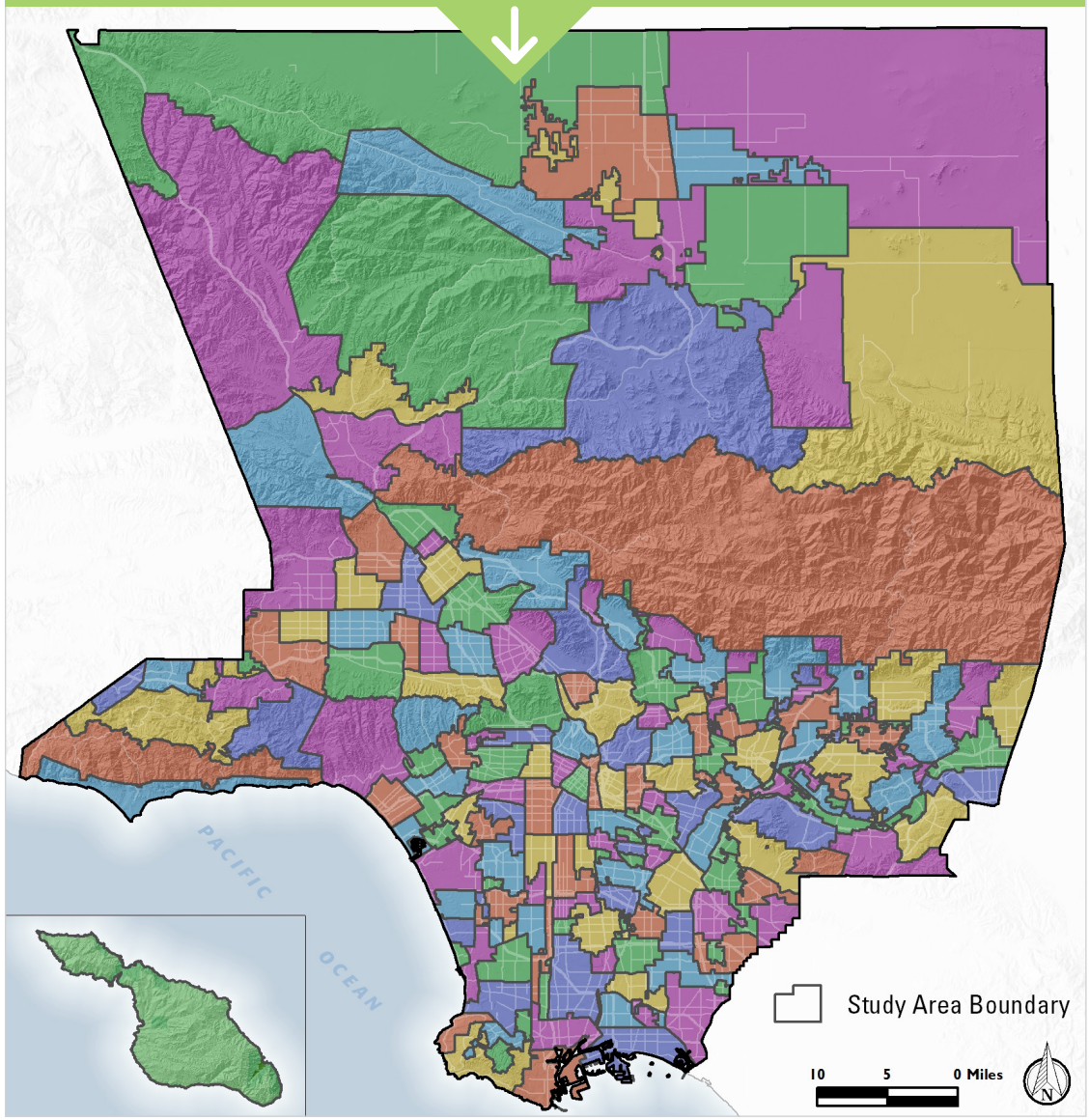
The Parks Needs Assessment proposes a new way to understand and think about parks, recreation, and open space by:

- Considering **parks as key infrastructure** needed to maintain and improve the quality of life for all County residents
- Using a **new series of metrics** to determine park need
- Supporting a **need-based allocation of funding** for parks and recreation
- Emphasizing both **community priorities** and **deferred maintenance projects**



INITIATION

The Board of Supervisors launched the Parks Needs Assessment in March 2015, giving the County Department of Parks and Recreation 16 months to complete the task. The work was guided by both a Steering Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Steering Committee's 40 members were appointed by the Board offices and included representatives from cities, advocacy groups, and community-based organizations; subject matter experts; and community members at large. The Steering Committee provided insight on key issues, including dividing the County into Study Areas, and the 188 approved Study Areas were used for many of the analyses. The TAC provided review of GIS and mapping methodology at key points of the project.



INVENTORY

Accurate data about the size and location of all existing parks in the county were critical to completing the Parks Needs Assessment. These data were not available in a single database; therefore, the Department of Parks and Recreation collaborated with 86 cities to complete the first ever Countywide inventory of existing parks.

3,023
PARKS INVENTORIED

9,472
AMENITIES INVENTORIED

PARKS & OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

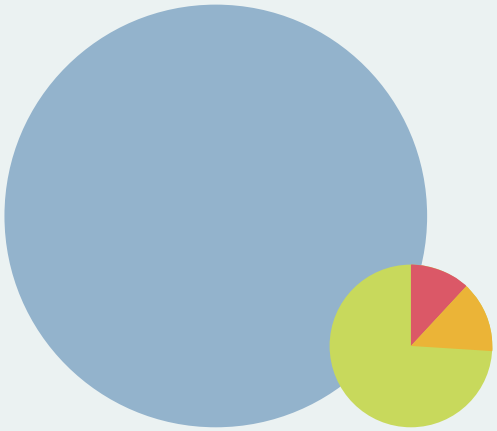
Four types of parks and open spaces were identified as means to categorize the facilities inventoried during the Parks Needs Assessment. This uniform categorization system ensured an "apples to apples" comparison among facilities and Study Areas. The four categories are specific to the Parks Needs Assessment, and differ from the categories used in cities and by other agencies in the County. For the inventory, specialized facilities serving the entire County or specific sub-regions, such as arboreta, amphitheaters, and wilderness parks were included in the category that covered their specific characteristics, and only if they were part of a park or open space area.

LOCAL PARKS are under 100 acres and contain active amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools. Local parks identified in the inventory are sometimes called community parks or regional parks by the agencies that operate them. These parks are included in the analysis of all park metrics. 1,602 INVENTORIED

REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS are over 100 acres and contain active amenities such as athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools. Locally administered "regional parks" under 100 acres in size are not included in this category, and are included as local parks in the inventory instead. Regional Recreation Parks are 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 INVENTORIED

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 are not included in the analysis of any individual park metric, but are included in the analysis of park need. 329 INVENTORIED

NATURAL AREAS are generally larger than 100 acres and contain no reported amenities. These facilities are not included in any of the needs analyses of the Parks Needs Assessment. 1,075 INVENTORIED



- LOCAL PARKS
  15,723 acres
- REGIONAL RECREATION PARKS
  18,248 acres
- REGIONAL OPEN SPACE
  98,979 acres
- NATURAL AREAS
  768,699 acres

1,068 Baseball Fields

1,022 Tennis Courts

940 Basketball Courts

510 Multipurpose Fields

424 Soccer Fields

1,452 Playgrounds

373 Fitness Zones

96 Skate Parks

51 Dog Parks

1,251 Picnic Shelters

1,190 Restrooms

518 Senior Centers

187 Gymnasiums

90 Community Rec Centers

218 Swimming Pools

82 Splash Pads

367 Unique Amenities*

** Unique amenities include equestrian arenas, volleyball courts, amphitheaters, community gardens, concession stands, gazebos, etc.*

PARK METRICS

Park need is traditionally measured with a single metric, such as the number of acres of park land available to residents, or the percentage of residents living within walking distance of a park. Measuring only a single aspect of need provides a one-dimensional understanding of park need. The Steering Committee recognized that park need is affected by many variables and approved a suite of five metrics that produce a robust understanding of physical park needs in each Study Area and in the County:

Park Condition | Park Access | Park Amenities | Park Land | Park Pressure

How much park land is in the County?

3.3 ACRES

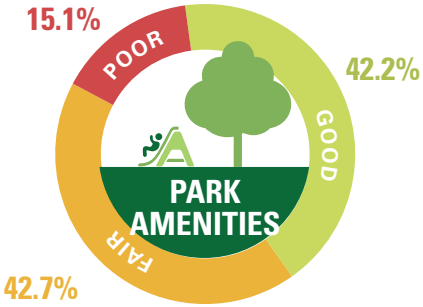
Local & Regional Recreation Park per 1,000 persons

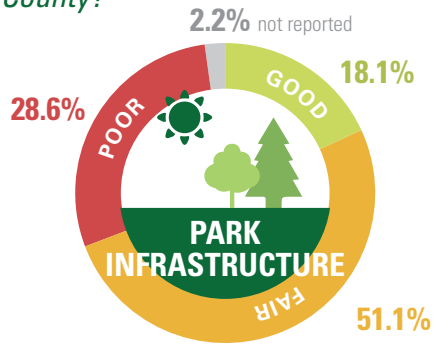
How much land is available to residents in the area around each park?

Low park pressure at **20%** of parks in the County

High park pressure at **80%** of parks in the County

What is the condition of the parks in the County?





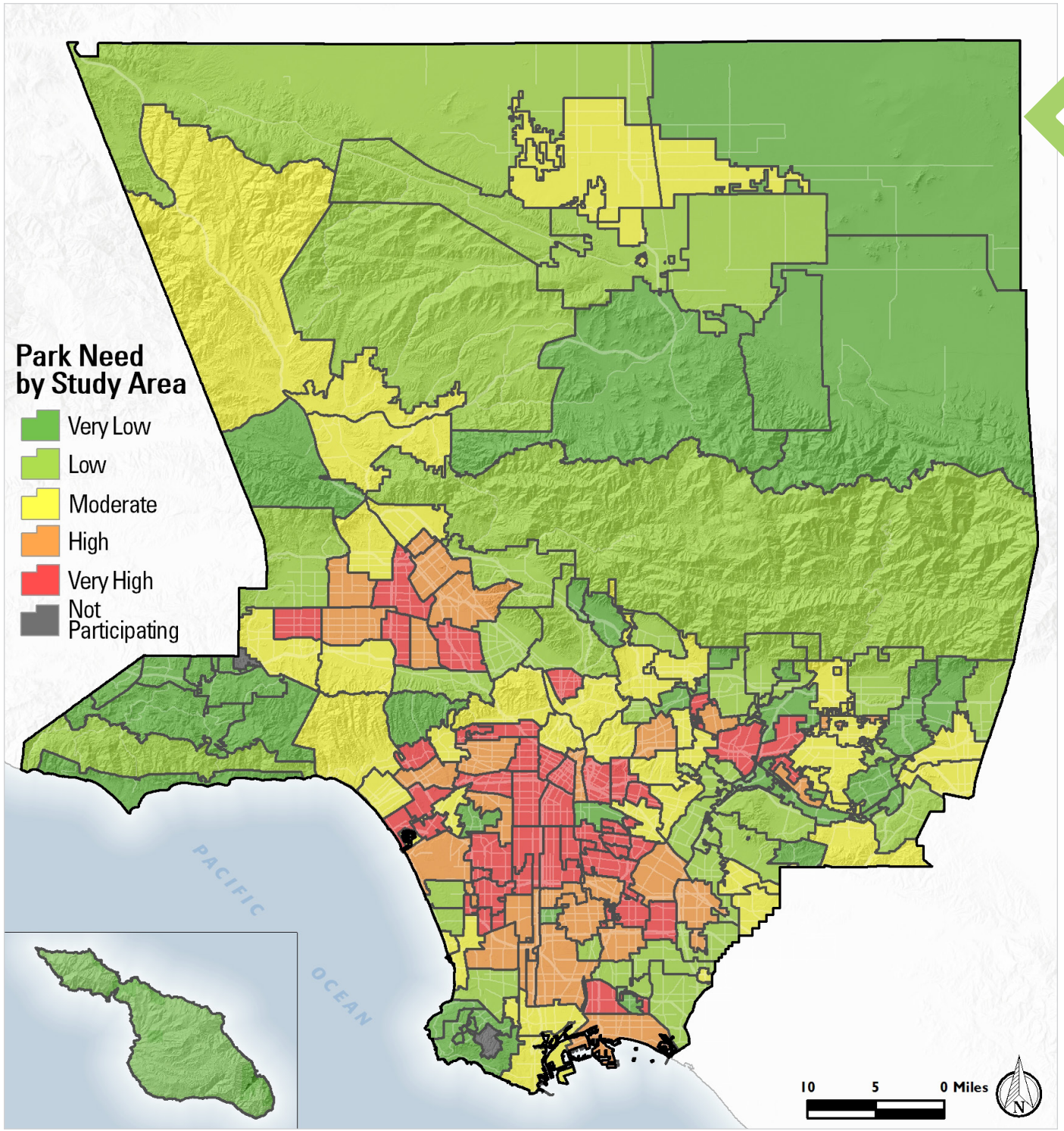
How much of the population has access to parks?

49% of population Countywide lives within 1/2 mile of a park

51% of population Countywide lives beyond 1/2 mile of a park

What park amenities are available in the County?

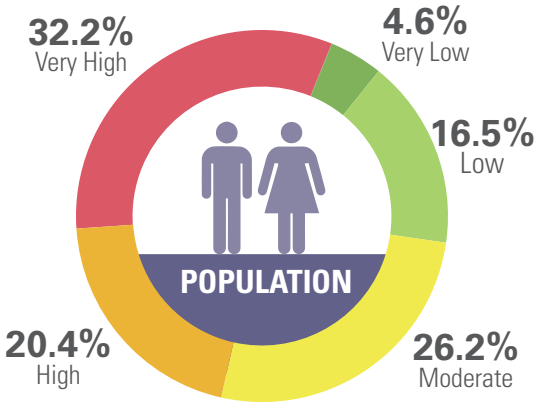
- Tennis Courts — **11 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 46 per 100,000*
- Basketball Courts — **10 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 63.1 per 100,000*
- Baseball Fields — **11 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 14.6 per 100,000*
- Soccer Fields — **4 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 16.7 per 100,000*
- Multipurpose Fields — **5 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 50 per 100,000*
- Restrooms — **13 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 64.5 per 100,000*
- Picnic Shelters — **15 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 100 per 100,000*
- Gymnasiums — **2 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: no data*
- Senior Centers — **15 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 10.3 per 100,000*
- Community Rec Centers — **5 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 10.3 per 100,000*
- Fitness Zones — **4 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: no data*
- Skate Parks — **1 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 1.9 per 100,000*
- Playgrounds — **15 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 45 per 100,000*
- Dog Parks — **1 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 3.6 per 100,000*
- Splash Pads — **1 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: no data*
- Swimming Pools — **2 per 100,000 residents** — *National Average: 5.6 per 100,000*



PARK NEED

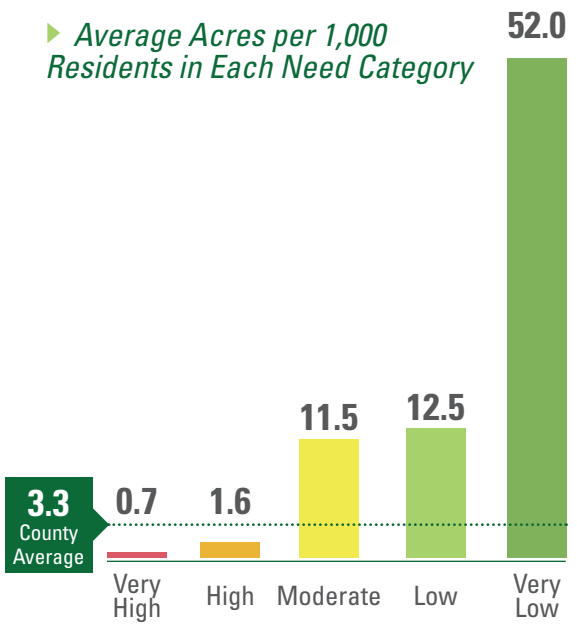
The results of the analysis of the park metrics were combined to determine an overall park need level for each Study Area. This approach creates a framework for assessing park need from a Countywide perspective.

*Population in Each Need Category**



*0.1% Not Participating

Average Acres per 1,000 Residents in Each Need Category

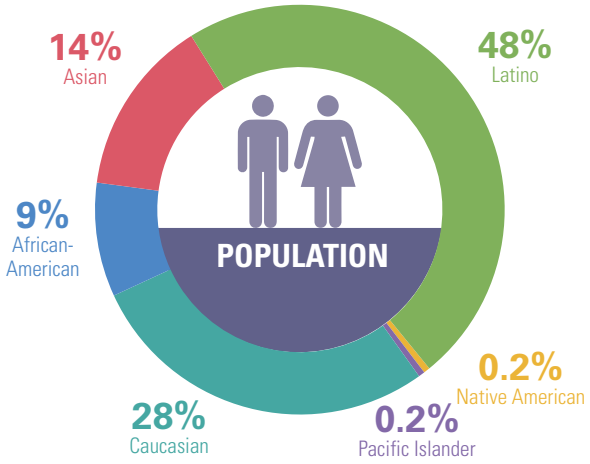


COMMUNITY PROFILE

A community profile summarizing demographic, health, and environmental information was completed in each Study Area to supplement park metrics.

*Data sources for demographic information: 2014 Los Angles County Age/Race/Gender Population Estimates; US EPA Smart Location Database; Los Angeles County Poverty Estimates, 2013; and the US Census American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2013

*Population by Race/Ethnicity**

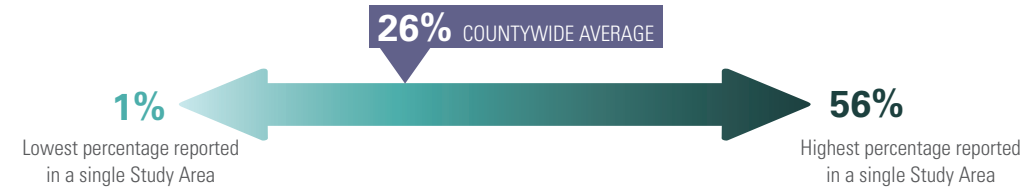


*Total is less than 100% due to rounding

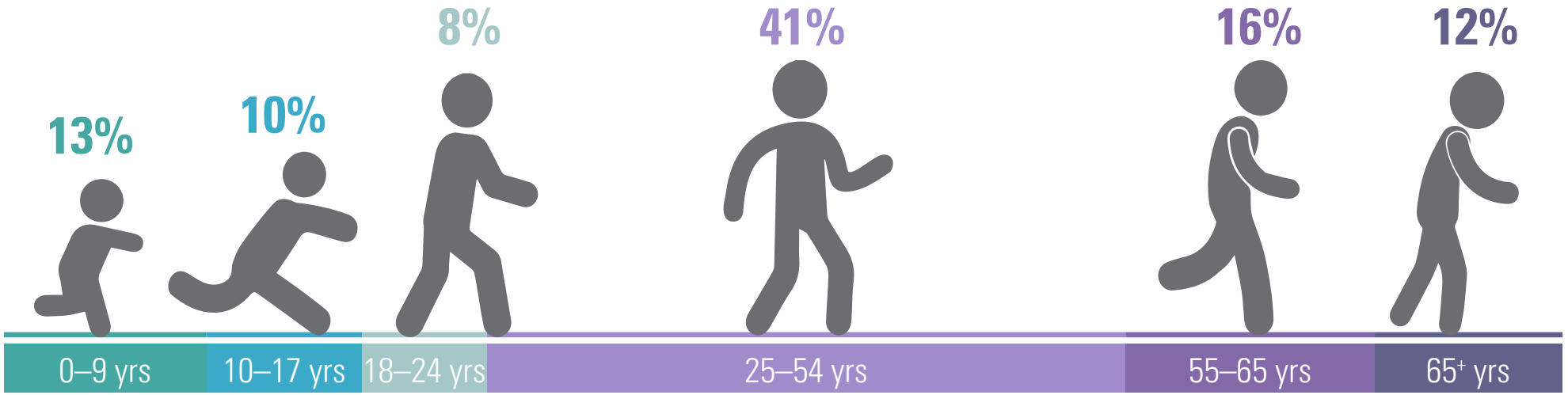
Population at or below 200% Poverty Level

Population without Vehicle Access

Population in Linguistic Isolation



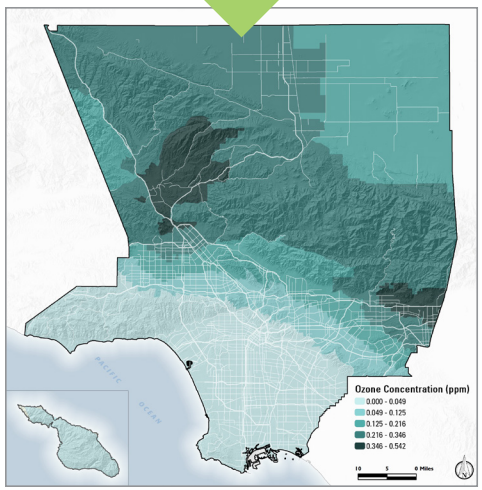
Population Distribution by Age



OZONE

Varying levels of ozone concentration throughout the County.

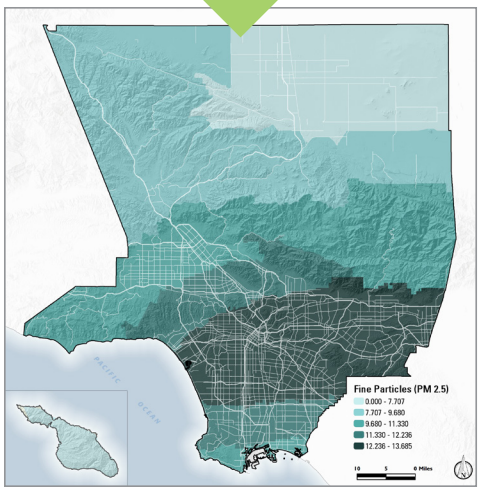
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



PM 2.5

Concentration of particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter (PM 2.5) throughout the County.

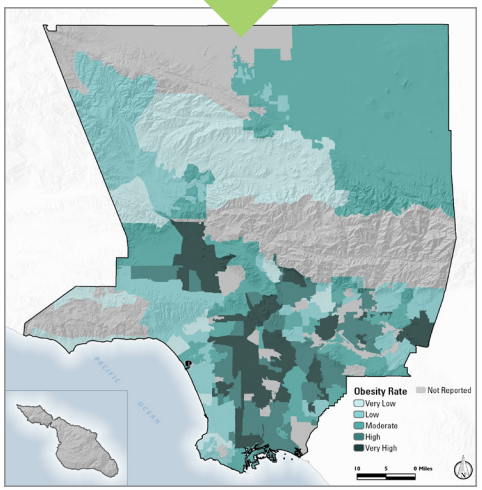
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



OBESITY

Percentage of obese fifth graders throughout the County.

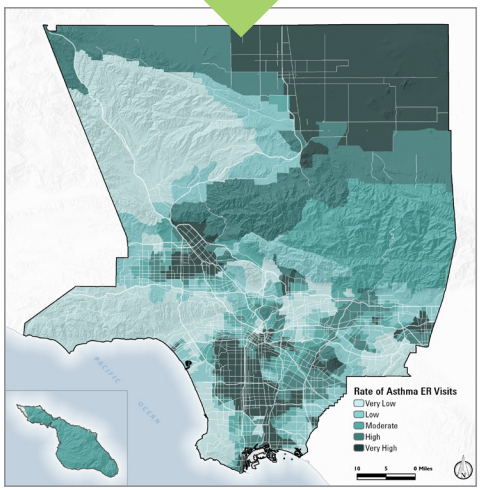
*Data source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2015.



ASTHMA

Number of emergency room visits for asthma treatments per 10,000 people per year.

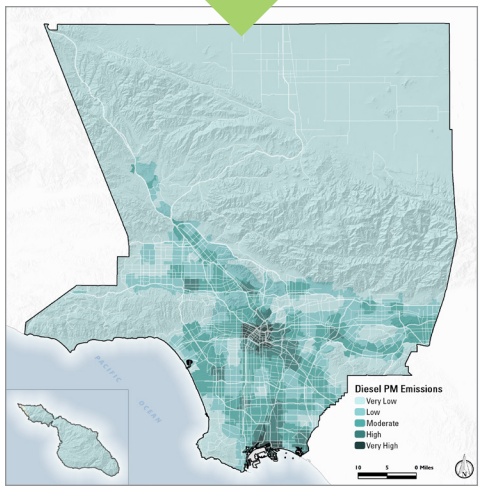
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



DIESEL EMISSIONS

Rates of diesel particulate matter emissions in Los Angeles County.

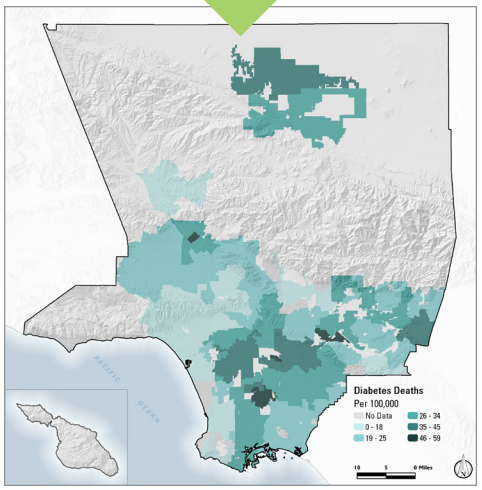
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



DIABETES

Diabetes death rate per 100,000 residents in the County.

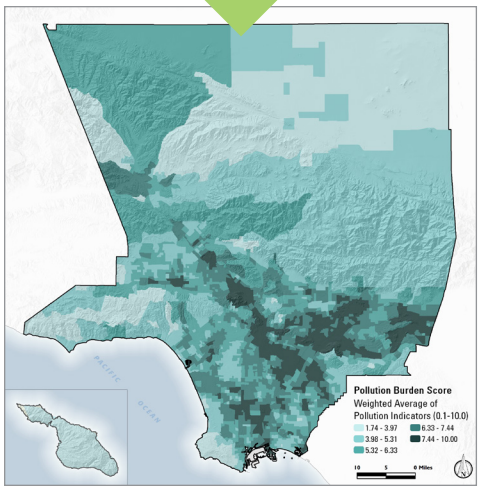
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



POLLUTION BURDEN

Pollution scores, based on 12 pollution burden indicators.

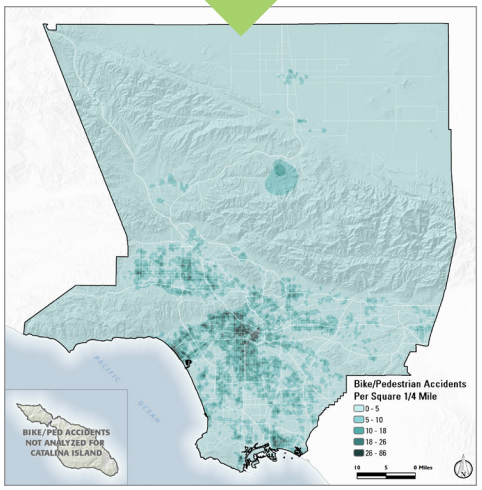
*Data source: CalEnviroScreen 2.0, 2013.



BICYCLE/PED. COLLISIONS

All collisions between automobiles/bicycles and automobiles/pedestrians.

*Data source: Transportation Injury Mapping System SWITRS Collision Raw Data, 2003–2012



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A Countywide education and awareness effort informed residents about the Parks Needs Assessment and encouraged them to attend a community workshop in their Study Area. The effort included a robust media component, informational meetings, and a dedicated online presence.

The lead agency in each Study Area was responsible for advertising its local workshop and was eligible for a $2,500 stipend to cover workshop costs. Each lead agency submitted a community engagement plan describing the efforts they would make to attract participants to its workshop and was given resources such as flyers, logos, and social media hashtags to assist.

Translations of workshop and outreach materials were available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Armenian and were strongly recommended for use in all Study Areas where 15% or more of the population is linguistically isolated. These four languages were selected because they are the dominant languages spoken by the linguistically isolated populations within the Study Areas meeting that criteria.

Population reached via media

2.5 million+ Traditional Media

1.1 million+ Social Media

30K+ views Project Website

Number of Study Areas meeting criteria for translation recommendation

78 Study Areas in Spanish

12 Study Areas in Chinese

2 Study Areas in Armenian

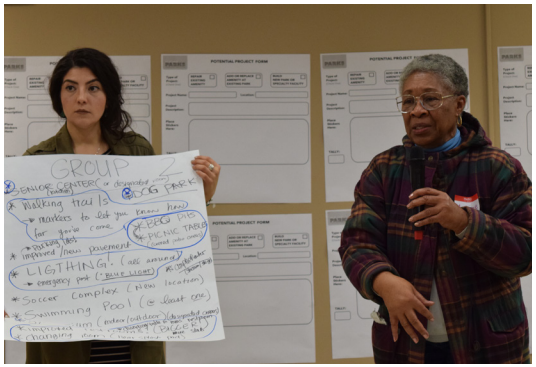
1 Study Area in Korean

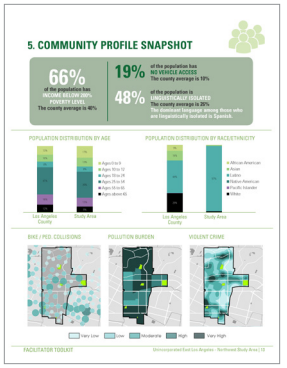
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

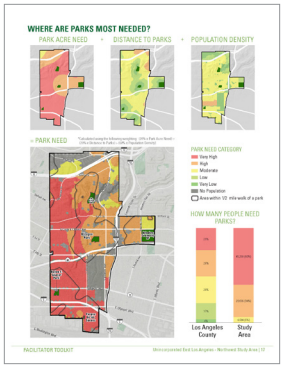
Workshop facilitators attended an intensive training session and received a 50-page Facilitator Toolkit with Study Area-specific results of the analysis of the five park metrics, community profile information, templates, and other resources needed to host a successful workshop.

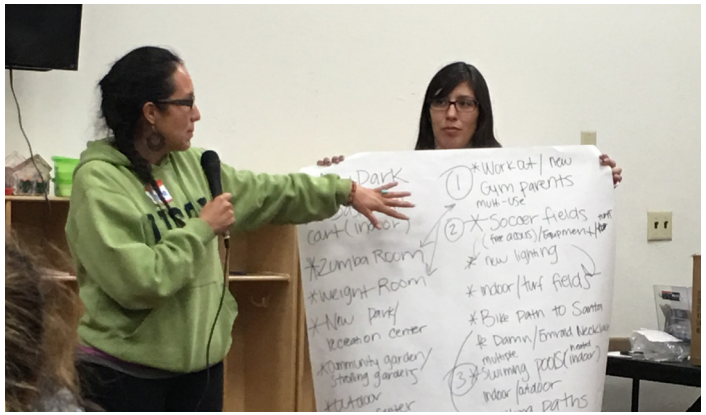
Community Engagement Workshops were held for 178 Study Areas between December 2015 and February 2016.* At each workshop, participants reviewed their Study Area's specific park metrics, generated a list of potential park projects, and prioritized those projects.

**Ten cities, comprising ten Study Areas, elected not to hold a workshop.*









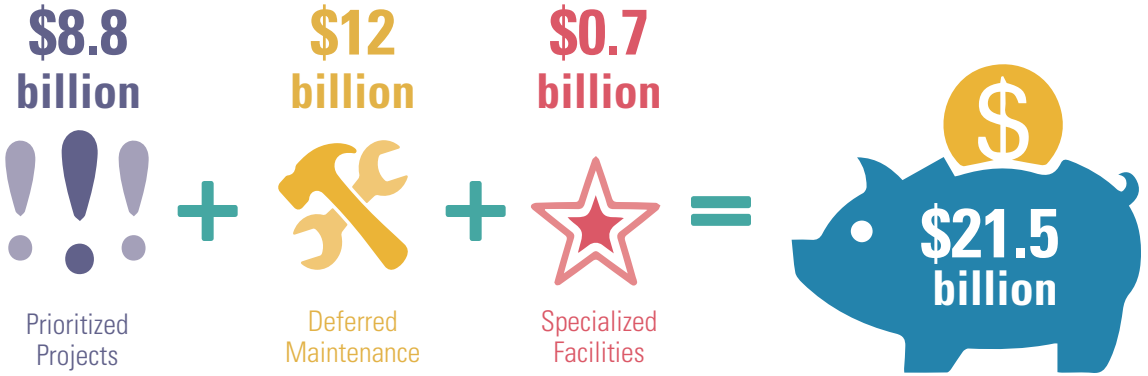
PRIORITIZED PROJECTS

Community members at all workshops identified the top ten local park projects in their Study Area. Prioritized projects included repairing or replacing amenities in existing parks, adding new amenities to existing parks, and constructing new parks. Additional projects were prioritized by the managing agencies of regional recreation parks, and specialized facilities such as regional specialty facilities, and open space/nature centers.

Community Workshops Flow Chart

COST ESTIMATE

Cost estimates were developed for the prioritized projects from each community workshop and for all deferred maintenance projects using a standardized set of costs developed with input from several agencies and cost estimators with extensive experience throughout Los Angeles County. Costs for deferred maintenance projects prioritized by local communities are included in the cost of prioritized projects, and not in the costs for deferred maintenance. Cost estimates for prioritized projects in regional recreation parks (included in the prioritized projects cost) and specialized facilities were furnished by each managing agency. All cost estimates were summed to provide a rough order-of-magnitude estimate of the cost needed to implement prioritized projects and catch up on deferred maintenance.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Parks Needs Assessment lays the groundwork for making important planning and funding decisions in Los Angeles County. Most importantly, it provides the County, its jurisdictions, and all residents of Los Angeles County with a wealth of parks-related information and opportunities.

VALUABLE DATA

The data in the Parks Needs Assessment provide a clear picture of the current scope, scale, and location of park need in Los Angeles County. For the first time, a single source provides information regarding parks and park infrastructure across the entire County. This information helps us to understand the challenges facing our communities and may be used to seek funding and support for parks, inform staffing and programming decisions, and focus outreach efforts.

ONGOING UPDATES

The County will seek to keep data in the Parks Needs Assessment up to date, in order to continue identifying new needs and to track progress toward addressing already-identified needs.

FUNDING DECISIONS

With comprehensive information regarding existing parks and the need for new parks, amenities, and repairs, the County is well prepared to develop a funding measure for park and open space projects that will provide funding streams for improvements in the short, medium, and long term. Local, state, and federal funds can also be leveraged to enhance park and open space funding.

EQUITABLE ALLOCATION

The comprehensive data in the Parks Needs Assessment can be used to allocate funds to meet identified needs in ways that emphasize areas with high to very high park need while also addressing the specific needs of every jurisdiction and community in the County.

A NATIONAL MODEL

The Parks Needs Assessment serves as a model for a clear, replicable process that other jurisdictions across the country can use when they assess their regionwide park facilities and needs..

NEW SOLUTIONS TO PROVIDE NEEDED PARKS

The Parks Needs Assessment shows that there are many areas in the County with high park need and a lack of vacant land for new traditional parks. Local agencies will need to find innovative solutions to provide essential park infrastructure by using underutilized land, utility corridors, alleys, and other public lands. Additionally, creative partnerships, such as joint use and reuse with schools, hospitals, libraries, and other facilities, should be considered in order to expand park opportunities and meet recreational needs.