EXECUTIVE OFFICE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 383
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1411 • www.bos.lacounty.gov

July 28, 2023

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Celia Zavala
Executive Officer

BOARD REPORT ON ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND SAVING WATER WITH NATIVE PLANTS AT COUNTY FACILITIES (ITEM NO. 17, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2022)

BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO), in coordination with relevant departments, to report back on a pathway, timeline, best practices, and additional considerations for converting County-managed landscaped areas to 75 percent native California plants.

APPROACH

To develop the response, the CSO convened Departments including the Internal Services Department (ISD), Parks and Recreation (DPR), Public Works (DPW), Beaches and Harbors (DBH), LA County Library (Library), Regional Planning (DRP), and the Los Angeles City County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), to discuss recommendations on the topics included in the motion. This included two broad convenings of all named Departments as well as a series of one-on-one meetings between the CSO and the individual Departments.

RESPONSE

The findings of the Departments are broken down into three categories (Attachment I). First, Departments identified a relevant set of existing resources for best practices that can be used to help guide the County's work towards converting County landscapes to native plants. Second, Departments laid out outstanding needs and gaps that would need to be further explored in order to formulate and achieve a long-term goal of 75 percent native plants at County-managed facilities. Third, Departments identified key considerations for implementation. Finally, Departments proposed a potential pilot program approach based on the implementation considerations. Based on these findings, the primary land-managing Departments performed a preliminary analysis of the facilities they manage to identify priority opportunity sites for a potential pilot program (Attachment II).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The CSO is providing the following recommendations for next steps:

- Native Plants Pilot Project approach - Based on the findings detailed in this report, the CSO recommends pursuing a multi-department Native Plants Pilot Project approach as a next step towards envisioning and implementing a Countywide native plants policy. Additional details on a pilot approach are found in Attachment I, and potential opportunity sites are identified in Attachment II. Findings from the pilot approach can be leveraged into a broader future Countywide policy related to native plants.
- Alignment with Indigenous People's Day (IPD) Report - The findings in this report suggest several opportunities for alignment with the IPD report, submitted to the Board on October 5, 2021. The IPD report notes that "with the increase in the public's knowledge of native plants, plant stands have been severely impacted by overharvesting." This speaks to the need for close collaboration with local tribal nations as well as thoughtful education to go along with any policy that increases the use and visibility of native plants. The report also identifies recommendations related to plant palette development, training, maintenance, and other relevant topics. When designing and implementing a pilot project or any other approach that includes these elements, Departments should proactively collaborate with LANAIC and local tribal nations to incorporate IPD report recommendations and other tribal priorities.

- Regional approach: Biodiversity, including habitat availability and connectivity, is a regional issue. The impact of any action the County takes to enhance biodiversity can be magnified through collaboration with relevant regional partners, including cities, regional agencies, nonprofits and community organizations, and private property landowners and managers. The CSO recommends that the County actively pursue partnership and collaboration opportunities with the City of LA (City), additional neighboring jurisdictions, and others to explore identified needs and gaps related to plant palettes, nursery pipeline, and training and maintenance needs. Additionally, the County should explore the potential for joint implementation of policies, programs, or practices related to converting County and City-managed landscapes to native plants. Finally, the County should partner with the City and others to create consistent messaging and communications strategies for education and outreach to external partners. This includes continued collaboration with the City on the LA Biodiversity Guidelines project. The CSO and the DPW are leading a Sustainability Subcommittee under InfrastructureLA, which can serve as a forum to expand regional biodiversity, coordinate projects, and pursue funding opportunities with external stakeholders and the private industry.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Rita Kampalath, Acting Chief Sustainability Officer, at (323) 459-3939 or rkampalath@cso.lacounty.gov.

CZ:JL:RK:RF:jg

Attachments

c: County Counsel
Beaches and Harbors
Internal Services
Library
Parks and Recreation
Public Works
Regional Planning

Findings

Existing resources for best practices

There are many resources available for Departments seeking to incorporate native California plants into landscaping projects and enhance the biodiversity of managed landscapes. Key resources and organizations include:

- The California Native Plant Society, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to conserving California native plants and their natural habitats, administers a tool called Calscape. Calscape is a searchable, sortable database of native plants that includes information about plant type, geographic range, and care. Calscape also includes species-specific information about nursery availability.
- The Theodore Payne Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to educating people about the role of California native plants in sustainable, healthy communities. In addition to a native plant nursery, the Theodore Payne Foundation offers a variety of classes and programs related to native plants, including a California native plant landscaper training and certification program.
- In addition to free virtual classes in landscape design and irrigation practices, Metropolitan Water District offers a free concierge technical support service to public agencies to support the conversion of turf landscapes to drought tolerant and native landscaping. This includes services from landscape design and palette selection to funding opportunity analysis.
- The City of Los Angeles, in partnership with the Los Angeles County (County) Chief Sustainability Office, is in the process of producing the Los Angeles Biodiversity Guidelines, a consolidated set of best management practices for protecting and enhancing biodiversity. While this work is in early stages, it is intended to be tailorable into sets of deliverables that are appropriate for different audiences.
- The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to protect California's environment and economy from invasive plants. It maintains the California Invasive Plant Inventory, as well as a list of "watch" plants that may become invasive in the future. Cal-IPC works with nurseries, gardeners, land managers, and volunteers to coordinate landscape-level strategic mapping, planning, and implementation related to preventing the spread of invasive pests, and advocates for related funding and policy initiatives.
- The California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL), a 501(c)3 non-profit, is a membership-based educational organization that offers conferences, field tours, workshops, and other resources dedicated to facilitating the recovery of damaged California ecosystems. The County falls under the South Coast and Eastern Desert region of the organization. While SERCAL is focused primarily on ecosystem restoration, not traditionally managed landscapes, its resources are

relevant for land managers interested in understanding how to be successful with native plants.

- The County Drought Tolerant Garden Handbook (Handbook) provides guidance for planting a drought tolerant garden. Although primarily intended for residential use, it can also be applied to the design of County facilities. The Handbook provides plant species appropriate to each of seven LA climate zones, with each species characterized by various categories such as, water need, habitat, appearance, sun preference, soil type, and water need. While the list also includes non-native plants, they are denoted by a specific symbol.
- The Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP) provides for the optimization and enhancement of aesthetic, recreational, flood control and environmental values by creating a community resource, enriching the quality of life for residents, and recognizing the river's primary purpose for flood control. The LARMP Appendix Volume I: Design Guidelines present a unified, cohesive identity while promoting best practices and resiliency for the river corridor, including a Plant Species Index, with plants that are native and appropriate for the LA River system. Projects constructed along the LA River must abide by the LARMP Design Guidelines to comply with permit requirements. Similarly, landscape guidelines for the San Gabriel River Greenway Network Implementation Plan are expected to be available later this summer.
- The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) prioritizes projects that include nature-based solutions to achieve water quality, water supply, and community investment benefits. The Scoring Criteria for project applicants seeking SCWP Infrastructure Program (IP) funds, encourages the development of projects that will implement nature-based solutions, such as native vegetation. Complete project applications can be awarded points for projects utilizing natural materials such as soils and vegetation, with a preference for native vegetation. Project applications that meet a minimum threshold score, that is confirmed by the SCWP Scoring Committee, are eligible for consideration of IP funding. The 2022 Interim Guidance provides support to project proponents and decision-making bodies on a few important SCWP tenants and project selection process, which includes clarifying guidance on how to prioritize projects that utilize nature-based solutions.
- The County Fire Department's Fuel Modification Plant Selection Guidelines provides appropriate plant species to plant for effective fire protection in Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Needs and Gaps

While many helpful resources are available for converting landscapes to native plants, there are additional needs and gaps that should be further explored to inform the creation and implementation of a County native plants policy.

Planting palettes

While several existing resources offer ways to build plant lists or plant palettes, a certain degree of expertise in native plants is still needed to use the resources to build a successful list that is appropriate for a particular climate, site, and use type. This is particularly important in the County, which spans across many different climate and ecosystem zones. Apart from a very few core species, no single plant list would be able to be applied across the entire County. Further, without appropriate expertise, there is a potential for unintended consequences when selecting native plants. For example, certain native cultivars planted adjacent to wildland locations could hybridize with wild plants and put pressure on local plant populations.

The recent County Indigenous People's Day (IPD) report recommended that the County should work with Tribal practitioners to develop plant palettes "that incorporate culturally significant plants for use in County projects. This would help ensure long-term preservation of Native plants and sacred sites, and address damage that has resulted from current land management practices, including proliferation of invasive species." Further, LANAIC shared that local tribes should be consulted not only on which native plants should be incorporated into County palettes and which plants should be avoided, but also on how those plants should be treated, managed, and maintained.

Native plant nursery pipeline

Several local and regional nurseries specialize in native plant offerings, including the Theodore Payne Foundation Nursery, the Hahamonga Native Plant Nursery, and the Tree of Life Nursery. Garden supply stores such as Home Depot also sometimes offer native plants, though this can be extremely limited. While the capacity of the existing pipeline of native plants to support a large or sudden increase in demand might be constrained, coordination with suppliers and a steady demand signal could help grow the pipeline capacity. Additionally, the County Fire Department maintains nurseries that, with sufficient notice and coordination, could grow and supply native trees for County projects.

Maintenance and training

Maintaining a California native landscape requires different skills and expertise than maintaining a traditional ornamental landscape. For example, native landscapes require infrequent, deep watering, and can be damaged or killed by traditional frequent spray irrigation. They require a heavier reliance on hand-weeding and hand-watering, especially during the early establishment phase, compared to traditional landscapes. Further, maintaining a landscape to prioritize biodiversity favors a different set of operational practices compared to managing a landscape that prioritizes aesthetics alone. For example, "leaving the leaves" where they fall on the ground, rather than

raking or blowing and disposing of them, fosters habitat for native wildlife. Allowing plants to serve as food sources for insects, rather than spraying them with pesticides, supports the local ecosystem. Further, there are locally specific considerations; using the same example, “leaving the leaves” may not always be appropriate, such as due to fuel modification requirements in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Making these kinds of changes to standard maintenance practices at County managed facilities could be supported through several different strategies.

For example, The IPD report recommends that “the County should hire or contract practitioners from local Tribes to steward the land or provide trainings to County staff, when appropriate, regarding how to care for the land…This might involve development of a new job classification for grounds maintenance or other related roles that explicitly includes expertise in traditional practices as a requirement.”

County staff who manage landscapes could also be encouraged or required to pursue training in maintaining native landscaping. For example, DPR has met with the Theodore Payne Foundation and is planning for all grounds maintenance staff (approximately 380) to participate in the California Native Plant Landscaper Certification program. This program provides training for landscapers focused on successful management of native plant and California-friendly gardens through a practicum-based ten-part course. Over the course, participants will learn about plant identification, soils, in-depth irrigation efficiency, garden evaluation, weeding, pruning, pest-management and more. In addition to instructor-led curriculum on best practices for native and drought tolerant landscapes, the program creates a forum for knowledge sharing, professional growth, and team development within the landscaping profession.

Many County facilities are managed by contractors. Departments could require that all contractors pursue training and certification, such as through the Theodore Payne program or through a program with Metropolitan Water District. ISD has expressed that, while its current contractual requirements for landscaping do not include specific requirements for the utilization of water efficient equipment or methodology, ISD can build in these requirements for future contracts to be a part of the new solicitations that are upcoming in 2024 and going forward. Additionally, DPR recommends that all contractors that provide landscape architectural design plans for park projects should also be required to provide the maintenance guidelines for each project. This will ensure a greater success of project plantings and aid staff or contractors to optimally maintain the site.

Staffing and education

As more County facilities and projects incorporate native landscaping, additional internal staffing with appropriate expertise will be critically important to support planning and design of these projects. Not all Departments have internal expertise, such as landscape architects and biologists, to properly design and approve native landscaping plans. Resources such as plant palettes and best practices, while critical, cannot serve

as a substitute for site-specific analysis and landscape design. Ensuring Departments have these internal positions will be important to ensure unintended consequences, such as hybridizing with wild plants, are avoided and plant designs support healthy ecosystems, especially at the urban-wildland interface. Some types of County facilities are not conducive to all types of native plants and education is necessary to ensure appropriate plants are used for survivability, healthy ecosystems, and safety. For example, only certain types of native plants have had consistent success planted in street medians, but some may be too tall for safety and visibility concerns.

Additionally, public outreach will be an important tool to educate communities on the importance of native plants and biodiversity. Some native plants may attract pollinators or may not be aesthetically pleasing, which could lead to constituent complaints; therefore, education can help explain the importance role each species plays. Posting signage within the landscaped area may also help the public understand the intent and need of native plants and biodiversity. As the County expands the use of native landscapes and educates the public on its importance, constituents may feel empowered to implement similar practices at their homes.

Funding

Departments identified several funding needs to support conversion of managed landscapes to California native plants. These funding needs include:

- Site surveys to identify areas that are appropriate for conversion to native plants or, alternatively, areas that may already be planted with California natives.
- Training for staff, as described above, to effectively landscape with California native plants.
- Costs associated with landscape conversions, including turf removal where needed, costs of purchasing native plants themselves, and costs to install or renovate and upgrade irrigation systems.
- Ongoing design, operations, and maintenance of native landscapes.

Additionally, Departments identified the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) as a potential source of funding, particularly for projects that include removal of non-functional turf area. Through its turf removal rebate program, projects can be eligible for $3 to $7 dollars per square foot of turf that is removed. The MWD public agency concierge service, as mentioned in the existing resources section, is also a free source of technical support resources, including support in areas such as remote site analysis and landscape design services.

Finally, Departments should consider performing cost-benefit analyses for potential protects; while there are many costs associated with converting landscapes to native plants, there are also potential sources of cost savings, including water utility costs and ongoing maintenance costs.

Implementation Considerations

During group convenings and individual conversations, Departments identified a set of implementation considerations for converting County facilities to native plants, including prioritization of facilities, exclusions, and goal setting.

Hierarchy for Consideration by Facility Type

Departments recommended that implementation be prioritized according to facility type as following:

1) **New facilities**: Departments indicated that new facilities will be the ideal starting place for achieving landscapes composed of greater than or equal to 75 percent native plants. This is especially true for new facilities that have yet to undergo landscape design, but even landscapes that have already been designed can often be adjusted to accommodate a majority native plant palette with relative ease. A major benefit of working with new facilities is the opportunity to design and install irrigation systems that are compatible with native plants.
2) **Non-functional turf**: In response to the recent Board motion "Urban Water Conservation Measures & Assistance in Unincorporated Los Angeles County," land-managing Departments have already undertaken an analysis of their facilities to identify and cease watering areas of non-functional turf.
   As non-functional turf may no longer be maintained under the new Board policy, these areas offer an efficient opportunity to convert to native plants. This would allow Departments to meet the intent of the "Urban Water Conservation Measures & Assistance in Unincorporated Los Angeles County" motion, reducing water usage, while also supporting the goals set out in the motion related to this report back, which include not only water conservation but also enhancing biodiversity. While these areas present opportunities for full landscape conversion of contiguous areas, they are more challenging than new facilities because they do not always have funding associated with them, though they may be eligible for turf removal rebates. Further, their existing irrigation systems may not be optimized for native plants, or they may not have existing irrigation systems at all. Removing, redesigning, and installing or reinstalling irrigation systems to meet the needs of native plant landscapes may be necessary for these spaces. Additionally, sites may have existing maintenance contracts that need to be modified from providing mowing to providing native plant care.
3) **All other existing facilities:** Conversion of all other existing landscape facilities to native plants are lower priority and could be considered by land-managing Departments as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. For example, if an existing landscape is planned to be removed and renovated in its entirety, that landscape renovation should be designed to maximize the use of native plants. If a landscape is planned to be renovated in part, or if individual existing plants die

and must be replaced as part of regular ongoing maintenance, landscape managers can carefully consider whether replacement with native plants is appropriate. In some cases, this type of phased approach could, over time, allow a landscape to be converted to native plants. In other cases, however, such phasing might not be successful and could have unintended consequences. For example, if the existing landscape is managed with certain irrigation and maintenance practices that are not compatible with native plants, then phasing in native plants without changes to the overall irrigation design and maintenance practices could lead to failure of the native plants. This could potentially contribute to a misperception that native plants are difficult to maintain in a garden setting.

When considering conversions of existing facilities, landscape managers should also consider the trade-offs between costs and benefits on a case-by-case basis. For example, the water saving and biodiversity benefits of converting an existing landscape with an established drought tolerant but non-native Mediterranean plant palette may be lower than the benefits of converting an existing water-thirsty landscape to native plants, though both projects could have similar costs.

In general, the removal of mature landscaping, including trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, should not be required solely for the purposes of replacing those species with native counterparts. An exception is non-functional turf areas, which are already covered as a higher priority landscape type for conversion.

Exclusions:

When considering their portfolios of managed landscapes for potential conversion to native landscaping, Departments recommended excluding certain land use types. These include functional turf and other recreational open spaces such as sandy beaches, edible food gardens, historically or culturally significant landscapes, educational landscapes, arboretums, and botanical gardens. Additionally, leased areas that the County does not directly manage, properties that County manages but does not own, such as Landscape Maintenance District zones, and non-actively managed facilities such as flood control areas should be excluded from consideration.

Additional prioritization criteria:

Collectively, County Departments have limited resources to implement conversions to native plants. When determining where to spend limited resources, Departments must consider multiple factors. Factors such as financial and technical feasibility and potential for water savings influence the hierarchy for consideration, but additional considerations include:

- Biodiversity significance: Some native conversion projects could have higher potential biodiversity significance than others. For example, a set of projects grouped together to form a habitat “patch” or habitat “corridor” could have a greater impact on biodiversity than projects of equivalent size spread out over a much larger area. A native plant project may have greater significance in a dense, urban area that lacks similar habitat opportunities compared to an area where many such areas already exist. Conversely, a native plants project near a wildland urban interface can help extend the range of habitat from wild areas into more developed areas. Native plant projects can also be designed to provide important plant host species at strategic locations for target birds, pollinators, or other wildlife known to travel or migrate through a particular route.
- Access and equity: Opportunities to interact with native landscapes are not distributed equally across the County. County resources such as the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Park Needs Assessment (PNA) highlight how disadvantaged communities also suffer from a lack of access to green and open spaces, which includes native landscapes. Departments should consider improving equity in access to landscapes with native plants when planning priority areas for conversion opportunities.

One key resource that can help guide prioritization for both of these criteria is DPR’s Park Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+), adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 6, 2022, as the County’s plan to fight climate change and protect biodiversity. The PNA+ identifies priority areas for conservation and restoration, which form the basis for the 30×30 strategy (the State goal to conserve 30% of our lands and coastal waters by 2030) for County. This strategy reimagines conservation through an equity lens to include both traditional efforts that involve the protection of natural lands and the restoration of degraded lands, especially in lower-income communities of color where vulnerable populations and environmental burdens are concentrated. Priority areas for environmental conservation are those that offer the most environmental benefits as measured by species diversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity, proximity to a waterbody, and habitat type. 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. Priority areas for environmental restoration are those that 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 parks and open space in the future.

Goal Setting

For any of the opportunity types detailed above, converting from traditional landscaping to a significant amount of native landscaping would help meet the intent of the motion, which is to save water and enhance the ecosystem services of plants native to

California. In some cases, and for some facilities, 100 percent native plant landscapes may be an achievable and appropriate goal. For other facilities, 75 percent native plant landscapes, as specified in the motion, may be more appropriate. However, Department experts indicated that 75 percent native plant landscaping may be challenging or inappropriate in some cases, even for new facilities. For example, areas with high foot traffic or other types of routine disturbances are challenging to maintain with native plants, and may be more appropriate for traditional horticultural species bred for garden hardiness. In those cases, native plants should still be maximized, but the optimal proportion of native plants may be less than 75 percent.

Further, a goal to achieve a certain percentage of native plants can be interpreted differently for different facilities. For example, the percentage could refer to the number of plants purchased, regardless of their current or mature size. It could also refer to the total area anticipated to be covered by plants at maturity based on landscape design. The percentage could also refer to the proportion of seeds in a seed mix that is distributed or sprayed over a sloped area. Further, it could refer to a mixture of these interpretations, such as in the case of a facility that already has mature landscaping in some areas where individual plants cannot be counted but will have new landscaping in other areas where total number of plants or proportion of seed mix is a more appropriate metric.

Because the total proportion of native plants that is appropriate for a given site, and the method of quantifying that proportion for a given site, is context-specific, Departments should maintain flexibility in setting goals for prioritizing native plants. For sites pursuing a goal of conversion to native plants, Departments should be able to demonstrate efforts to achieve 75 percent native plants using one or some combination of appropriate methodologies, and they should articulate any context-specific justification for why 75 percent may not be able to be achieved in a particular case. Rather than focusing on a pathway to convert every managed facility to 75 percent native plants, Departments should consider their portfolios of managed landscapes from a holistic perspective to determine where a conversion to native plants will have the greatest impact in terms of water savings, biodiversity benefits, and equity. This will allow Departments to maximize the return on their investment in native plant conversions. As described further below, a pilot approach could be useful to test out this flexible goal-setting process and identify potential pitfalls as well as strategies for success.

Proposed Pilot Project Approach

Based on the implementation considerations, the CSO proposes a Native Plants Pilot Project approach. A set of pilot projects would allow Departments to test out the implementation considerations, identify specific strategies to address outstanding needs and gaps, and eventually leverage efforts to reach a broader swath of County managed facilities. A pilot project approach could include the following elements:

- Pilot Site Selection: Select five or more pilot sites to install 75 percent or greater native plants. ISD, DPR, and PW should each have one or more pilot sites. The sites will likely be new facilities or non-functional turf areas, according to the implementation considerations, and they should be chosen based on the additional prioritization criteria as well as on geographic and climatic representation.
- Needs and gaps: Explore relevant needs and gaps that will determine Departments' ability to produce successful pilot projects. This will include exploring resources for building site specific plant palettes, exploring and executing training and/or certification opportunities for County maintenance staff, and exploring and executing contracting requirements related to native plant training and/or certification for contract maintenance staff. This will also include appropriate coordination with LANAIC and local tribes, guided by the recommendations from the IPD report.
- Funding opportunities: The Departments will identify and pursue supplemental funding opportunities to support the pilot projects. For planned new projects that are already funded, this should include funding for supplemental needs such as native-plant related resources, education and signage, or outreach. For turf removal projects, this should include turf removal rebates and other sources of funding to cover project construction, installation, irrigation, and maintenance costs. Funding for training opportunities should also be explored.
- Implementation: As funding is secured and as feasible, execute the pilot projects.
- Evaluation and recommendations: Evaluate the pilot project implementation, including identifying successes and failures, lessons learned, best practices, and outstanding needs. Based on these findings, make recommendations for how to scale up the pilot process into a Countywide plan or policy for converting managed landscapes to native plants.

The timeline for a pilot project will depend on the timeline for the pilot project sites themselves. Some projects, such as nonfunctional turf removals, could be implemented relatively quickly if funding is secured. Others, such as new park projects or planned park renovations, have timelines of three to five years or longer. The timeline for a pilot project could run in parallel with the timeline for the activities recommended for taking a regional approach, including the exploration of needs and gaps related to plant palettes, nursery pipeline, training and maintenance, and funding. For example, both a regional exploration of needs and gaps and the identification and planning stage of a pilot approach could begin at the same time. Identification and planning of pilot projects could occur over a period of one to two years, with implementation occurring over a period of the next two to three years. Throughout that pilot project period, the County can pursue a regional approach to exploring the needs and gaps identified in this report. The two efforts could inform and shape each other, and both efforts would feed into a framework for a Countywide native plants policy.

Department Opportunity Site Analysis

Department opportunities:

During the report-back process, Departments proposed a set of potential priority sites for native landscaping, based on the implementation considerations described in the report. It is important to note that these Department summaries represent examples of how Departments could proceed with conversions to native plants at facilities under a potential pilot approach, rather than specific plans or commitments to do so. Pursuing these opportunities would be contingent on funding and further direction from the Board.

Internal Services Department (ISD)

ISD has a significant opportunity to save water and enhance biodiversity through shifting the composition of its managed landscapes away from non-functional turf and towards California native plants. As of this report, ISD provides ongoing landscape maintenance to 144 sites, though this number can change at any time due to cancellation or addition of service requests. The combined landscaped area of these 144 sites is 6.3 million square feet. This includes 2.4 million square feet of non-functional turf, the equivalent of more than 40 football fields.

In addition to new facilities, which should be the first priority for native landscaping, ISD identified top priority existing sites by analyzing its managed landscapes by largest amount of non-functional turf. The top 10 sites based on that analysis are shown below.

Building Name	**Primary City**	**Non-Functional Turf Area SF**
Sylmar Juvenile Courthouse/B.J. Nidorf Administration Building	Sylmar	425,000
Juvenile Hall-Administration Building-4	Los Angeles	350,000
Maclaren Child Center-Storage Shed 2	El Monte	289,500
Juvenile Camp Scudder Admin	Santa Clarita	195,630
Juvenile Camp Munz	Lake Hughes	165,300
Juvenile Camp Mendenhall	Lake Hughes	162,300
Camp Scott – Assessment Unit	Santa Clarita	115,320
Sheriff-Laser Village 1	Los Angeles	85,000
DCSS-Antelope Valley Senior Center	Lancaster	71,200
Harry Hufford Registrar-Recorder/CO Clerk Bld	Norwalk	57,150

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

DPR manages over 70,000 acres of parkland, spread out over 182 parks. In 2017, DPR created and adopted County of Los Angeles Park Design Guidelines & Standards to develop a common approach to the design of the Countywide park system. These guidelines provide that California native species should be used in parks having the following natural settings: special use sites and corridors, graded slopes in environmentally sensitive areas, riparian areas, wetland and watershed rehabilitation areas, wildlife habitat restoration areas, post fire rehabilitation areas, and demonstration gardens. The preferred plant list in the guidelines has many native species as options for planting. DPR's parks also include many natural areas; records of natural area management and knowledge of managers of these areas can be a valuable resource for native plant best practices. Under DPR's Strategic Plan strategy to sustainably manage natural resources to support climate resiliency and biodiversity, DPR will take the action to update and expand DPR's design guidelines to include urban biodiversity, climate resiliency, tree-canopy, stormwater management, and a climate-appropriate plant palette.

DPR manages an enormous portfolio of landscapes, and its parks provide a variety of services and benefits. These include enhancing biodiversity, but also recreational and social opportunities, shade and cooling, gathering and social cohesion opportunities, and many other amenities. Due to the importance of these benefits, opportunities to convert areas that are being used to provide these services, including functional turf areas, are limited. However, in response to the motion "Urban Water Conservation Measures & Assistance in Unincorporated Los Angeles County," DPR is reviewing a suite of parks as prioritized locations for possible nonfunctional turfgrass removal or elected turfgrass removal. As each park is unique in design and function, the exact quantity of potential turf removal will vary and requires field verification prior to any action. Therefore, opportunities for non-functional turfgrass removal or elected turfgrass removal ranges per park.

Park Name	**Supervisorial District**	**Amount of Possible Turf for Removal (SF)**
Rowland Heights Park	1	8,712
William Steinmetz Park	1	13,068
City Terrace Park	1	21,780
Manzanita Park	1	30,492
Col. Leon H. Washington Park	2	21,780
Athens Park	2	34,848
Amelia Mayberry Park	4	3,049
Sorensen Park	4	13,068
Adventure Park	4	17,424
Jackie Robinson Park	5	2,614
Acton Park	5	3,485
George Lane Park	5	8,712

Charter Oak Park	5	26,136
Dr. Richard H. Rioux Memorial Park	5	43,560
Pathfinder Community Regional Park	1	3,485
Belvedere Community Regional Park	1	56,628
Ted Watkins Memorial Park	2	26,136
Victoria Community Regional Park	2	43,560
Jesse Owens Community Regional Park	2	65,340
Franklin D. Roosevelt Park	2	69,696
Alondra Community Regional Park	2	74,052
Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area	2	174,240
El Cariso Community Regional Park	3	209,088
La Mirada Community Regional Park	4	104,544
Don Knabe Community Regional Park	4	331,056
Loma Alta Park	5	21,780
Castaic Regional Sports Complex	5	30,492
Veterans Memorial Community Regional Park	5	87,120
Arcadia Community Regional Park	5	95,832
Eugene A. Obregon Park	1	8,712
Rimgrove Park	1	8,712
Everett Martin Park	5	4,356
Pearblossom County Park	5	17,424
Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area	1	13,068
Peter F. Schabarum Regional Park	1	43,560
Whittier Narrows Recreation Area	1	522,720
Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area/YBB	2	161,172
Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park	5	82,764
Castaic Lake State Recreation Area	5	378,972

As is the case for other Departments, the most feasible pathway for DPR to achieve 75 percent native plants at its facilities is to first consider new facilities. DPR has an immediate, feasible pathway to achieve 75 percent native plantings in landscaped areas for projects that are being newly constructed, such as for new capital projects, or for complete renovations that may be planned, or stormwater capture projects that may include landscaping. For existing facilities, it is important to note that DPR will not be actively removing living landscapes. However, as portions of parks are renovated and if landscaping areas are contained in the renovation project footprint, then replanting and any necessary irrigation retrofits can be considered for implementation to achieve 75 percent native plantings.

Another pathway opportunity is for landscaped portions of parks that are developed per the requirements of the Quimby Act (California Government Code §66477). The purpose of the Quimby Act is to ensure adequate open space acreage and require developers to help mitigate the park and recreation impacts of residential subdivisions.

It allows the jurisdiction to acquire and/or develop adequate public park space to meet the additional demand generated by the new subdivision. DPR determines if developers will provide a fee or a new park as a part of their subdivision project. All proposed new parks are reviewed by the Department's internal Design Review Committee (DRC). The DRC reviews the proposed park to ensure that it is designed and built to the standards and satisfaction of the Department. The DRC also reviews the plans for 75 percent native plant inclusion for landscaped, non-recreational areas.

DPR also manages an extensive inventory of park trees. Park trees are chosen using a "right tree, right place" approach that considers biodiversity but also a variety of other factors, including shade provision and potential infrastructure conflicts. The County's street tree species list will be included in the upcoming Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP); it will incorporate both native and non-native species as appropriate, and should be excluded from consideration here.

Public Works (PW)

PW manages a diverse portfolio of infrastructure that can support increased biodiversity throughout the region. Some of these facilities include buildings and field yards, bikeways and multi-use trails, street medians, airports, greenways adjacent County Flood Control owned floodways, spreading grounds, and sediment placement sites. Some of these sites are suitable for conversion to California native landscaping and should be considered for potential pilot projects under this effort.

Project Name	**City/Community**	**Area (SF)**
The Old Road over Santa Clara River, et al.	Stevenson Ranch	89,000
Eaton Wash Bike Path – Phase I	East San Gabriel	54,000
Dominguez Channel Greenway Parklet	Carson	30,000
LA River Headwaters Pavilion Project	Canoga Park	4,600
Mount Lowe Median Stormwater Capture Project	Altadena	TBD
Westmont - Vermont Ave Green Improvement Project	Westmont	TBD

In addition to new projects, PW will prioritize facilities with large non-functional turf identified in the "Urban Water Conservation Measures & Assistance in Unincorporated Los Angeles County" motion, as shown in the table below. Although funding isn't currently available, PW is engaging MWD's concierge service on the eligibility for turf replacement funding.

Facility Name	City	NFT Area (SF)
General William J. Fox Airfield	Lancaster	69,045
Compton/Woodley Airport	Compton	34,497
Whiteman Airport	Pacoima	18,000
Imperial Yard	South Gate	9,044

PW is also actively evaluating the feasibility of prioritizing facilities with large, non-paved areas, such as large medians and field yards, where conversion to native landscaping would have the greatest impact. Some of these facilities include the Vermont Avenue, Saybrook, Woodward Boulevard, Michigan Boulevard, and Gerhart Avenue medians. Additionally, several large medians are being evaluated as potential for stormwater capture projects that would include native landscaping.

PW also oversees several types of facilities that are not well suited for conversion to native landscaping. For example, PW manages the County's large portfolio of street trees – similar to park trees, street trees are chosen using a "right tree, right place" approach that considers biodiversity but also a variety of other factors, including shade provision and potential infrastructure conflicts. The County's street tree species list will be included in the upcoming Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP); it will incorporate both native and non-native species as appropriate, and should be excluded from consideration here. PW also oversees flood control facilities, such as dams, debris basins, channels, and debris retaining inlets, which are not actively landscaped, are maintained for safety, and should also be excluded from consideration. PW also maintains Landscape Maintenance District zones that are mostly located on private property outside of the road right-of-way. Although future plantings in these areas may consider native landscaping, these areas should be excluded from consideration.

Opportunities at other departments

While their scopes are more limited, both the Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) and the County Library shared how they could support the County's efforts to promote biodiversity using native plants:

- DBH: While DBH manages few locations with irrigation, they do support ecosystem restoration efforts for coastal habitat areas, including a restored wetland area in Marina del Rey. Ecosystem restoration is separate from converting managed landscapes to a native plant palette, but these efforts support similar goals related to biodiversity and can provide important resources, knowledge, and best practices for other departments looking to incorporate more native plants into their practices.
- Library: Landscaping opportunities at County libraries are typically small, but they can have a proportionally large impact due to their central locations within neighborhoods and their role as educational resources for communities.