



RPOSDDevelopments

A Quarterly Newsletter by
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District
2023 Vol. 5 No. 1

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CHEERS! TO 30 YEARS

On November 3, 2022, the [Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District \(RPOSD\)](#) celebrated the incredible milestone of thirty years of grantmaking. In three decades, RPOSD has awarded over \$1.5 billion in funding towards developing parks, creating equitable access to parks, preserving and protecting open spaces, and supporting essential recreational programming. Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the support, passion, dedication, and effort of our past and present park partners and RPOSD team. In celebration of RPOSD and our shared achievements, let's look at what we realized together in 2022, and what we have to look forward to this year.

2022 was a remarkable year for RPOSD, beginning with the [awarding of the first Measure A competitive grant cycle in February 2022](#). More than \$26 million was awarded for 30 capital park projects that range from renovating existing parks, to land acquisitions for urban park expansion, to critical wildlife corridor preservation and protection. On the heels of the historic first Measure A competitive grant cycle, [RPOSD launched the second cycle](#) in early summer with \$10.9 million in grant funds available for parks and recreation career training

programs for youths and veterans and \$11.1 million available funding for programs that create equitable access to parks, green spaces, and recreational programs. RPOSD collaborated with the [Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority \(Metro\)](#) to provide an additional \$1 million in Metro funding towards programs that will expand park access. Continuing on the momentum to implement Measure A funds, RPOSD allocated over [\\$9 million in technical assistance funding in July 2022](#) to 30 high and very-high park-need cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (County) to assist with park acquisition and expansion.

In November 2022, RPOSD welcomed Susan Castro-Valenzuela as the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Coordinator. With expertise in community outreach and program development, Susan has been actively reaching out and working with each park agency, specifically those identified as high and very-high park-need areas, providing information regarding TAP and the development of eligible projects that will result in new parklands in these park deficient communities. Moreover, RPOSD allocated over \$62 million total for non-

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competitive grant programs. Measure A annual allocation grant programs use a formula to allocate funds to public park agencies on an annual basis for projects such as refurbishment or expansion of current parks and park amenities, safety improvements, or greenspace development.

The year closed with the completion and publication of the [Los Angeles Countywide Parks Needs Assessment Plus \(PNA+\)](#). Funded by RPOSD and study efforts led by the [Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation](#), the PNA+ complements and builds on the [2016 Los Angeles Countywide Parks Needs Assessment \(PNA\)](#). The PNA+ concentrated on the regional and rural areas of the County, and the results provide us with a valuable and holistic picture and understanding of the County's park and recreational needs to advance towards park equity.

Forthcoming this year are the award announcement for the second cycle of Measure A competitive grant programs and updates to the Measure A Grants Administration Manual. RPOSD is in the final stages of awarding the Youth and Veteran Job

Training and Placement and Recreation Access Competitive Grant Programs, so please keep an eye out for our public announcement.

RPOSD was established upon the conviction that everyone deserves safe, well-maintained, and accessible parks, and we are tremendously proud of what we have succeeded so far. We look forward to another amazing new year of working together to continue to deliver upon that belief.



Staff celebrating RPOSD 30th anniversary.

From top left to right:
Linda, Maria, Misha, Trina,
Rocio, Susan, Arcy, Amy,
Melody, Tracy, Emily, Suzie,
Eunice, Steven, Karla, and Anita.

From bottom left to right:
Marybeth, Martha, Agie,
Theresa, Norvik, and Stephanie.

NEW HOURS OF OPERATION



New Year, New Hours!

**RPOSD is now open
Monday through Friday
from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**



See upcoming
events on our
calendar



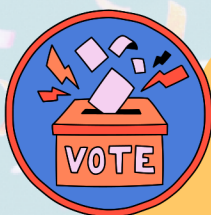
Follow RPOSD on
social media!

Let's work together
to engage our
communities with
exciting park
developments and
open space
initiatives across
Los Angeles County.

NOVEMBER 8, 2022 GENERAL ELECTION

Thank you to the volunteers who served as Election Workers in the November 8, 2022, General Election! Their service was essential to ensure successful in-person voting for Angelenos throughout the County.

RPOSD would also like to thank and acknowledge the following staff who served as Poll Workers: Amy, Trina, Martha, Peter, and Norvik.



Grants Section Assistant Manager Trina
serving as an Election Worker in the
November 8, 2022 General Election.



#RPOSD
#WeAllNeedParks
#LosAngelesCounty
#ParksMakeLifeBetter

CITIZENS OVERSIGHT ADVISORY BOARD

The Measure A Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (Advisory Board) provides outside accountability for the use of Measure A funds, ensuring that expenditures are allocated and expended only for the purposes described in the Measure.

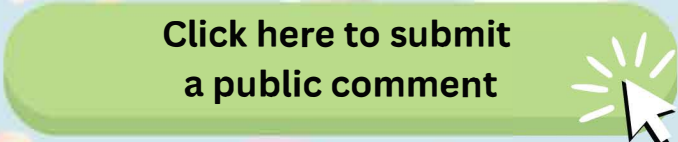
The Advisory Board meetings are open to the public and held quarterly throughout the year. RPOSD encourages all to attend. The meetings are opportunities for members of the public to address the Advisory Board regarding any items of interest that are within the Advisory Board's jurisdiction.



COMMENT?

Public comments can also be submitted prior to the meeting via email to info@rposd.lacounty.gov or online using the form on the [Advisory Board webpage](#). Written public comment must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the scheduled meeting.

Click here to submit
a public comment



NEXT MEETING
APRIL 2023

Date, time, and location TBA!

<https://rposd.lacounty.gov/advisory-board/>



If you require disability-related modification or other reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, language interpretation, or materials in alternate formats, please contact us at (626) 588-5025.

To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

ANNUAL STAFF RETREAT

Where were you in 1992? George H. W. Bush was President. "End of the Road" by Boyz II Men was the #1 song on the charts. Disney's Aladdin was the highest-grossing domestic film of the year. This question was posed to RPOSD staff at the annual staff retreat in October 2022, inviting them to reminisce back 30 years to when Proposition A passed through a Special Election on November 3, 1992, establishing the District. Serendipitously, the site of the annual staff retreat was renamed from Willowbrook State Recreation Area to Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area to honor the former Los Angeles Lakers basketball player in November 1992.

At the commencement of the retreat, Director Norma Edith García-González shared the interesting history behind the 104-acre park. Located at the heart of the unincorporated Willowbrook community, the site was initially used for petroleum storage and distribution by ExxonMobil Oil Corporation from 1923 to 1963. The oil tank farm and its facilities were removed and vacated by 1965. A portion of the land was subsequently developed into a park by the [California State Parks](#) and [Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation \(DPR\)](#).

In 1987, following soil remediation, the State transferred the land to the County. The expansive open area was landscaped with grasses and trees, and it has walking trails, playgrounds, open fields for activities and sports, and two artificial lakes.



Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area

As one of the largest parklands in South Los Angeles and surrounded by various cities and unincorporated communities with high and very high park needs, the park is well-used by local and regional residents. In the early 90s, over \$364,000 in Proposition A funds were granted for general improvements to the South Lake, including the replacement of the shoreline collar with a concrete



Photo of RPOSD staff at the annual staff retreat.





Grants Section Manager Agie Jordan summarizing RPOSD accomplishments.

pumps the water back into the South Lake, and it is also used to irrigate the rest of the park, making the park self-sustaining! Witnessing how our investments and support revitalized the park and enhanced the outdoor experience for the community reemphasized the importance of our work and partnerships.

curb wall and a new lake liner, sidewalks, and aeration system. However, due to heavy usage and no significant improvements since then, the park's infrastructure and amenities were found to be in poor condition during the [2016 Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment](#). In 2016, the [Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors](#) adopted a Master Plan for the site to enhance the existing facilities, add new facilities and amenities, and incorporate adjacent properties to the park. The implementation of the Master Plan would occur in six phases and take about 18 years to complete. The project's first two phases were completed in 2021. The \$83 million renovation, which included \$33 million in Proposition A and Measure A funding, resulted in the construction of the new community event center, children's play area with a splash pad, naturalization and improved filtration of the recreation lake, installation of drought tolerant landscaping, pedestrian walkways, lighting, a dog park, exercise equipment and area, and parking.

The new and improved components of the park were shown to RPOSD during a tour of the park led by Bryan Spragg, the Recreation Services Manager. One fascinating element that RPOSD staff learned about the park was the stormwater treatment and recycling system. Previously, all the water used for landscape irrigation and the lakes was potable water. The new system detains stormwater, treats, and cleans it, then



Tour of the park by Recreation Services Manager Bryan Spragg.



Measure W Safe, Clean Water Program presentation by Tara Dales.

Sources from [Wikipedia](#), [The Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation](#), [Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area Revised Master Plan](#), [2016 Los Angeles Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment](#), [Safe Clean Water Program Executive Summary on Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park Operation and Maintenance Project](#).

TRANSIT TO PARKS SUMMIT



District Administrator Angeles as a panelist at the Transit to Parks Summit.

Our goal of ensuring everyone has access to quality parks, beaches, natural areas, trails, and recreational facilities is a challenging feat that can only be achieved through multisector collaboration. Recognizing the need for partnerships to progress towards park equity, the [Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation \(DPR\)](#) and the [Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority \(Metro\)](#) co-hosted a two-day summit in November 2022 at the Earvin “Magic” Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook.

The conference connected elected city officials, park and transit agencies, and community-based organizations and initiated conversations and discussions on possible solutions to improve park access. Speakers included Director García-González and District Administrator Christina Angeles. Grants Section Assistant Manager Misha Hughes was a participant. The summit featured presentations from panels of experts on park and transit planning, project cost estimation, funding strategies, and grant writing. Christina was a panelist for the information session on funding, imparting knowledge on how to identify potential funding sources and successfully receive grant awards from funding programs like Measure A’s annual allocations and competitive grants.

Following the presentations, attendees were placed into breakout groups to deliberate feasible project ideas to connect communities to parks by public transit based on their experience, community knowledge, and application of the information they learned from the presentations. Misha was part of the group that focused on Baldwin Hills, a neighborhood in the south region of Los Angeles surrounded by moderate, high, and very-high park-need areas. Working with representatives from DPR, Metro, [City of Santa Monica](#), [California Department of Transportation](#), [Los Angeles Department of Transportation](#), and [Climate Resolve](#), they utilized Metro’s GIS Transit to Parks mapping tool to evaluate existing streets, transit networks, and parks and workshopped potential solutions to improve the existing shuttle connections for communities in the east and south of Baldwin Hills. Those communities were selected because they were found to rely heavily on public transit and lack access to parks due to historic disinvestment.



Photo of the Transit to Parks Summit by Metro.

The collaboration with different agencies was particularly insightful for Misha because it highlighted the challenges of navigating and implementing projects in multi-jurisdictional areas. For example, the 480 acres of parklands in Baldwin Hills is managed by a multitude of agencies: California State Parks, DPR, [City of](#)

Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, Culver City Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. The multi-jurisdictions made it difficult to figure out the next steps to advance their project, which further emphasized that achieving park equity requires coordination, cooperation, and collaboration to succeed.



MEET OUR TAP COORDINATOR



TAP Coordinator Susan

As the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Coordinator for the Regional Park and Open Space District, I am embracing my role of ensuring that cities in Los Angeles County understand TAP and how Measure A funding can benefit their communities regarding parks and open spaces. I look forward to working

with grantees to develop their TAP-eligible projects in high and very-high park-need areas across the County.

I have always had a calling to help communities and give back (directly or indirectly). My passion for giving began during my undergraduate work at UCI. I took classes in Social Ecology, the study that examines real-world social and environmental issues. That led me to earn my master's degree from UCLA's Urban Planning School, where I studied the built environment and public policy. I have been fortunate to hold various positions in the nonprofit and government world, where I worked with elected officials to make positive changes in neighborhoods and communities. The role of TAP Coordinator allows me to return to my roots and become an instrument of change by working with Los Angeles County cities to plant the seeds to create more park space and enhance neighborhoods.

My first park memory was when I was about four years old. I attended preschool at Belvedere Park in East Los Angeles. Since both of my parents worked, my grandfather would take the bus to pick me up every day when preschool ended. Before we left the park, my grandfather would let me play on the swings and playground and feed the ducks in the lake. This memory is special to me because it was a time that my grandfather spent quality time together.

I am thrilled to now work in an exciting position under the umbrella of the Department of Parks and Recreation to help other families create memories in parks and open spaces.



TAP Coordinator Susan with her family.

MY PARK STORY

This past November, I visited the Grand Canyon for the first time. The massive landscape with hues of brown, rusty red, grey, and dusty pink was a sight to behold. On our first day of the trip, we were at the Grand Canyon National Park from sunrise to sunset, admiring the changing colors of the canyon as the day passed by and marveling at the beauty and grandeur from the overlooks along the South Rim. On the second day, we hiked 600 feet below the South Rim to the Ooh Aah Point, aptly named because we ooh'd and ahh'd over the beautiful vista. Even though the hike back up was difficult, it was worth it. Being able to enjoy the Grand Canyon reminds you of the importance of protecting and preserving nature for everyone's enjoyment.



Photo submitted by Emily for My Park Story.

***Thank you, Emily,
for sharing your park story!***

It's always rewarding to see the positive and powerful impact parks and open spaces have on our residents, both within Los Angeles County and beyond.

Do you have a story or memory about visiting a park or the outdoors? We would love to hear your park story! Submit your story with a photo(s) and your story may be featured on our newsletter and website!

**Click here to submit
a park story**



The Ooh Aah Point

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The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

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