



ERIC GARCETTI  
MAYOR

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 31

Issue Date: December 6, 2021

**Subject: Achieving Park Equity**

Parks and open space are indispensable to our quality of life in Los Angeles. In a sprawling city of 4 million people, these are the places where we can immerse ourselves in the natural world, watch our children play, stay healthy through outdoor recreation, gather with family and friends, build friendships and community with neighbors, and seek refuge in nature from the demands of our urban lifestyle. The environmental benefits of parks are also vital: they play a critical role in removing pollution, acting as noise buffers, serving as wildlife habitat, cooling increasing temperatures, filtering stormwater, and replenishing groundwater.

Our City's commitment to equity demands that the advantages of parkland and open space be available to every resident regardless of ZIP code, and my administration has taken extraordinary steps in that direction. The year after I took office, 52.5% percent of Angelenos lived within a half-mile of a park; today that number is 64% and climbing, because of our focused efforts to expand access through an equity lens.

We've made those strides because the need is clear: communities with less park space per capita have higher rates of premature mortality from cardiovascular disease and diabetes, a higher prevalence of eating and activity-related chronic illness among children, and greater economic hardship compared with cities and communities with more park space per capita.

Even as my administration has made tremendous progress since 2013 — opening 37 new parks, acquiring over 164 acres of new parkland, investing millions of dollars in new park improvements, and negotiating an agreement to create a \$160 million fund to bring very low-cost youth sports, adaptive sports, and fitness programs to struggling families before the Olympic and Paralympic Games arrive here in 2028 — we must press forward, because the need remains great.

In order to achieve even greater park equity in the City, we must continue to be intentional in our pursuit of even more impactful, sustainable, and accessible strategies to increase parkland in the communities that need it most. If we can increase park acreage to the median level in 347 specific census tracts with park deficits and low tree canopy levels (see Figure 1), we stand to gain approximately 64,350 years in life expectancy among the population living in those neighborhoods.

Taking action today means a more equitable outcome and a brighter future tomorrow. To ensure that the benefits of parks and open space are available more equitably now and into the future, **I hereby direct as follows:**

1. ***Park Equity and Access Analysis.*** The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and the Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) shall undertake an independent review and develop a park equity and access analysis that documents and analyzes the historic policies, practices and procedures that led to current park inequities in the City of Los Angeles. The analysis shall also identify proactive policy and systems change solutions to achieve procedural, distributional and structural equity.
2. ***Park Equity and Access Working Group.*** RAP and LA Civil Rights shall establish a Park Equity and Access Working Group to assist in defining, guiding and contributing to a park equity and access analysis and implementing its recommendations. The Working Group shall consist of diverse, public members comprised of park advocates, academics, and representatives of community-based organizations who will work with representatives of the Mayor's Office, including the Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), the City Council, the Department of City Planning (DCP), Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD), Youth Development Department (YDD), Department of Aging (DOA), Department on Disability (DOD), Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN), Bureau of Engineering (BOE), Bureau of Street Lighting (LA Lights), Bureau of Street Services (Streets LA), Department of Transportation (LADOT), Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and County Department of Public Health.
3. ***Direct Funding and Increased Investment for Parks.***
  - a. The City Administrative Officer (CAO), in consultation with RAP, the Board of Public Works (BPW), LADWP, and LADOT shall develop a pilot effort to link area-focused, City local-return funding from County Measures A, H, M and W, City Quimby funds, and other park related funding sources, to address the lack of park access in the census tracts of the highest need;
  - b. CAO, in consultation with the RAP, BOE, DOD, and DCP shall develop a Park Capital Improvement and Program Expenditure Plan utilizing equity-based criteria, accessibility standards, access to adaptive and youth sports,

and other authoritative data and mapping tools to ensure resources are allocated to achieve equity and produce parks that are universally accessible.

- c. CAO, in consultation with RAP, BOE, the Chief Legislative Analyst, and the City Attorney, shall work with stakeholders, including the Park Equity Working Group and other park advocates, to evaluate the possibility of a park funding measure with strong equity components. The new funding measure or revenue stream should be flexible in providing funding for parks and other green infrastructure, park buildings and other amenities, maintenance, youth sports, adaptive sports, and tree canopy.
  - d. RAP shall launch a public Park Resource Dashboard for the entire City of Los Angeles that shows distribution of capital and programming expenditures, existing park amenities and park safety data.
- 4. *Increase and Improve Park Access.***
- a. RAP, the General Services Department (GSD), and CAO shall work with the City Attorney and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to examine and resolve the liability and other structural barriers to a master joint use policy applicable to all schools in the District to establish community school parks, especially those in park-deficient communities.
  - b. CAO, GSD, RAP, BPW, LADWP, DCP, LAPL, in consultation with Council Offices, Neighborhood Councils, and Metro shall identify locations for parks and recreation facilities on existing City-owned parcels in park-deficient areas consistent with operational needs, and shall identify ways to support the design, development, operations and maintenance of those spaces as publicly-accessible parks and/or open spaces. Additionally, CAO and GSD will provide to the City Forest Officer an analysis every 5 years of City-owned parcels and assets that are available for planting trees.
  - c. BPW, LADOT, and RAP shall engage partners such as Metro, where appropriate, to analyze improvements to parks and their surrounding environs, especially in park-deficient communities, with the goal of enhancing overall user experience and accessibility. Improvements can include but are not limited to enhancing mobility options, wayfinding for safe routes to parks, improving connections to interior park uses, reinvigorating infrastructure for the future, introducing urban cooling strategies as well new technologies, and incorporating water capture/conserving solutions. Through the study and analysis, the aforementioned departments will identify (20) initial park locations to test a playbook/menu of design solutions, and develop preliminary cost estimates for implementation and future maintenance.

- d. DCP and RAP shall develop additional guidance for land dedications, in-lieu fees and credits for Privately Owned Park and Recreational Facilities associated with the implementation of LAMC Section 12.33 to encourage the inclusion of green spaces where feasible.

**5. *Economic Development and Jobs.***

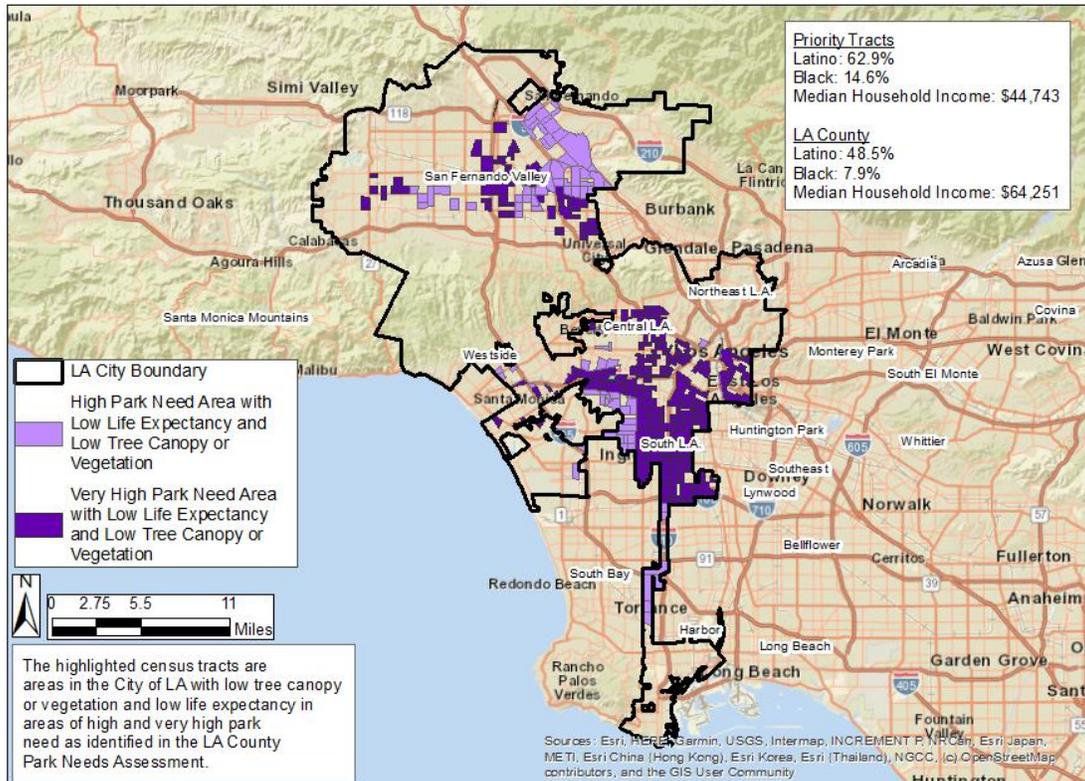
- a. EWDD and the LA Housing Department in consultation with RAP, BPW, DCP, LADWP, City Attorney, CAO, and LADOT shall develop an equity strategy and policy framework that will apply to new significant park or public infrastructure investments to support existing communities and businesses and reduce displacement.
- b. EWDD in partnership with RAP, CIFD, and YDD shall prioritize job training and placement for youth, seniors, and other vulnerable groups in parks via existing programs including Hire LA's Youth and LA Rise.

Executed this 6th day of December, 2021.

  
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ERIC GARCETTI  
Mayor

**FIGURE 1**

**Reduced Life Expectancy in High and Very High Park Need Areas with Low Tree Canopy or Vegetation: City of LA**



Data Sources: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment (2016), USALEEP Life Expectancy 2010-2015 Estimates (2018), TreePeople and Loyola Marymount Center for Urban Resilience 2016 Tree Canopy Coverage (2019), National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) Aerial Imagery (2016), United States Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2018)

Source: Prevention Institute. September 2020. [Park Equity, Life Expectancy, and Power Building Research Synopsis.](#)