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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

FROM: JON KIRK MUKRY 
General Manager

SUBJECT: THE 50 PARKS INITIATIVE

Background

One of the greatest challenges facing the City of Los Angeles is how to provide for the recreation and park needs of the diverse communities that make up the City. This challenge is complicated by ever-changing demands and expectations caused by population growth, increased urbanization and density, shifting community demographics, and a relatively large youth population.

In 2009, the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) completed its Citywide Community Needs Assessment. One of the key findings of the Citywide Community Needs Assessment was that the City's over 420 parks and facilities are not equitably distributed and many communities do not have parks within a reasonable distance. The Citywide Community Needs Assessment identified walking and biking trails, small neighborhood parks, and fitness facilities as the three amenities most needed in the City.

In recognition of the need to develop a coordinated long-term strategy to meet the recreation needs of current, and future, residents of the City, and the fact that recent national economic challenges has provided a unique opportunity to acquire land for new parks and recreational facilities, RAP has undertaken an initiative to acquire and develop at least 50 sites into new public parks -- The 50 Parks Initiative.

The 50 Parks Initiative

Benefits

The goal of The 50 Parks Initiative is to substantially increase the number of parks and facilities available across the City, with a specific focus on densely populated neighborhoods and communities that lack sufficient open space and recreational services.

The development of new public parks in neighborhoods where a large percentage of residents do not live in close proximity to a park or recreational facility will provide innumerable physical, social, health, and environmental benefits to those communities and to the City as a whole. These new parks could help stabilize neighborhoods and property values - by providing needed public infrastructure improvements, removing blight caused by abandoned buildings and empty lots, and beautifying underutilized public property. Additionally, studies have shown that parks and green space provide sustainable benefits to human health by providing opportunities for recreation and increased physical activity; activities that help reduce the risk of obesity and help individuals manage stress. In densely populated urban areas, green space located within walking distance is more likely to promote physical activity outside the home. Finally, green space can benefit communities in a variety of ways including increasing levels of social contact and social integration, particularly in underprivileged neighborhoods.

Program Implementation

Increasing the amount of open space in the City will require the collaboration of City departments and agencies, non-profit organizations, and private individuals and foundations. In order for The Fifty Parks Initiative to be successful, RAP will need to develop and leverage partnerships with community organizations, local businesses, and state and federal agencies.

RAP has analyzed key community demographic statistics, and existing park facilities, parkland, and open space, in order to identify high priority areas where funding and resources could be focused to make the greatest impact. In each of these priority areas staff has worked to identify publicly owned and privately owned sites in these that could be acquired, either via purchase or lease, and developed into new parks.

As part of The Fifty Parks Initiative, RAP will be working with a number of local partner organizations and agencies, including, but not limited to, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, Los Angeles Parks Foundation, and Trust for Public Land, in order to develop and implement many of the new park projects. These community partner organizations will work in close coordination with RAP to help identify and secure funding for potential projects, to conduct outreach and organize local meetings, and design and implement individual projects.

RAP has identified various grant programs and funding opportunities that could be utilized to acquire and develop new park land and open space. It should be noted that, typically, grant programs are very competitive and offer relatively limited amounts of capital funding. RAP has identified various grant programs and funding opportunities that could be utilized to develop new park land and open space. The identification of alternative, non-traditional, sources of funding for The 50 Parks Initiative will be instrumental to its success.

The final cost to develop each park will vary depending on its size, the types of amenities and features included, and the site acquisition costs, if any.

Project Implementation

Each new park created through The 50 Parks Initiative will be implemented through an iterative and incremental development process as resources and funding are identified and secured. The keys to the successful implementation of each project will be (1) the establishment of local partnerships; (2) the use of a community driven design process; and, (3) the strict use of low maintenance design standards.

As funding is identified and secured for each new park site, RAP and/or its community partner organizations will engage in a collaborative planning and design process with area stakeholders in order to customize each park to the needs of local residents. The use of this type of community driven design and development process will help to inspire a sense of “local ownership,” which is a critical component in the long-term success of any public space.

Additionally, and as feasible, each new park will be designed to include certain elements that could be installed by local community members during a “community build day event” where volunteers would have the opportunity to help install park amenities, decorative elements, and plant trees and landscaping.

Each park will be designed to include with sustainable landscapes (e.g. smart irrigation systems, drought tolerant landscaping), water and energy conservation elements (e.g solar powered trash cans, solar lighting), and safety and security measures (e.g. decorative fencing, automatic time-lock gates, motion activated cameras). The small size of each park, and the use of the aforementioned sustainable design features, will help limit amount of maintenance required at each park. Finally, while it is anticipated that it will be necessary to utilize existing RAP staff and resources to maintain each park, RAP will work with local partner organizations and non-profits to identify any alternative community resources or partners that may be available to assist in the maintenance of each park.

Current Status

To date, a total of 53 sites have been identified for inclusion in The 50 Parks Initiative. Of these 53 sites, 39 sites have already been secured by RAP and 14 sites are in the process of being purchased, leased, or transferred to RAP.

One park has been completed and an additional 8 parks are currently in construction.

Approximately \$80,900,000 in funding has been secured or identified by RAP and/or its community partner organizations for the acquisition, design, and construction of these new parks. These funds have been secured from over a dozen sources, and include both public funds (Federal, State, and local) and private funds (from foundations, non-profits, and corporate donations).

Once complete and open to the public, the 53 sites currently identified for inclusion in The 50 Parks Initiative would add approximately 183 acres of new public open space to the City's park system.

A summary of the location, size, funding, and status of each project identified for inclusion in The 50 Parks Initiative is provided in Attachment A.

This report was prepared by Darryl Ford, Management Analyst II, Planning, Construction Division, and Maintenance.

50 Parks Initiative
Project Status
8/1/2012

# Park	New Acres	Council District	Implementation Partner(s)	Funding Source(s) Identified or Secured	Funding	Status
SECURED NEW PARK SITES						
1	105th Street	8	Los Angeles Housing Department Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Parks Foundation	First 5 LA Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$350,000	Design
2	111th Place	8	Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative Los Angeles Housing Department	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1) Department Resources Donations	\$535,000	Pre-design
3	49th Street	9	Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Housing Department		\$164,000	Construction
4	61st Street	9	Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Housing Department	Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$265,808	Design
5	76th Street	8	Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Parks Foundation	California Endowment Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$500,000	Construction
6	97th Street	8	Los Angeles Housing Department Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Parks Foundation	First 5 LA Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$350,000	Design
7	98th Street Park	8	Department of Water and Power Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2)	\$4,997,584	Pre-design
8	Albion Riverside Park	1	Department of Public Works - Bureau of Sanitation	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2) Proposition K		Pre-design
9	Arts District Park	14	Department of Water and Power	Proposition O Quimby	\$5,000,000 \$2,500,000	Water quality improvements anticipated to be funded by Prop O Needs Development Funding Grant Cycle
10	Caballero Creek	3	Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority	Prop 84 River Parkways (Rd 2)	\$2,000,000	Needs Development Funding
11	Carlton Way Park	13	Trust for Public Land	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$1,268,007	Design
12	Concord and Lowell	14	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative Trust for Public Land	First 5 LA Department Resources Donations Proposition A	\$780,000	Design
13	Country Club Park Heritage Plaza	10	Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles	Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles	\$218,721	Complete
14	Devonshire Arleta	6			\$750,000	Needs Development Funding
15	El Dorado Park	7	Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2) Prop 84 Urban Greening Program	\$1,625,500	Design
16	Expo-Westwood Neighborhood Greenway	5	Department of Public Works - Bureau of Sanitation		\$750,000	Needs Development Funding
17	Fulton Avenue Park (Fulton/Vanowen)	2	Department of Water and Power	Community Development Block Grant	\$480,000	Construction
18	Gage and Western	8	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative Los Angeles Housing Department Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$514,000	Design
19	Kagel Canyon Street	7	Los Angeles Housing Department Restore Neighborhoods LA Los Angeles Parks Foundation	First 5 LA	\$350,000	Design
20	La Mirada Park	13	Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$1,223,300	Design Awaiting Final State Approval of Transfer of Awarded Grant Funds

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#	Park	New Acres	Council District	Implementation Partner(s)	Funding Source(s) Identified or Secured	Funding	Status
21	Lakeside Park (Phase 1)	70.00	7	Department of Water and Power	Quimby	\$2,000,000	Needs Development Funding
22	Lexington and Madison Park	0.50	13	Trust for Public Land	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2)	\$2,182,267	Phase 1 Scope Includes Only Trails and Parking Pre-design
23	McKinley Avenue	0.10	9	Los Angeles Housing Department	Donations	\$56,000	Construction
24	Monitor Avenue Park	1.10	15	Restore Neighborhoods LA	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$4,999,468	Design
25	Normandie and Cordova	0.05	10	Trust for Public Land	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$518,200	Design
26	Old Fire Station 84 (Woodland Hills)	0.28	3	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative	Quimby	\$1,000,000	Pre-design
27	Orchard Ave	0.14	9	Los Angeles Housing Department	Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$500,000	Construction
28	Patton Street Park (Echo Boys & Girls)	0.40	1	Restore Neighborhoods LA	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$2,719,650	Design
29	Sheldon-Arieta Park	41.00	6	TPL	Proposition K	\$5,553,878	Construction
30	South East Valley Skate Park	2.30	6	Department of Public Works - Bureau of Sanitation	Proposition 40	\$2,561,538	Bid & Award
31	Spring Street Park (Phase 2)	N/A	14		Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	\$3,500,000	Construction
32	Sunnynook River Park	N/A	4		Proposition K	\$2,100,000	Construction
33	Vermont and Gage	0.38	9	Los Angeles Housing Department	Proposition 50 (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy)	\$945,650	Grant Cycle
34	Vermont Miracle Park	0.11	8	Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust	California Resources Agency (EEM)	\$1,492,664	Pre-design
35	Via Dolce	N/A	11	Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2)	\$200,000	Needs Development Funding
36	Wall Street Park	0.12	9	Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Housing Related Parks Program (2010)	\$265,808	Design
37	Warren Oil (Drum Barracks)	N/A	15	Los Angeles Parks Foundation	Proposition K	\$500,000	Needs Development Funding
38	Watts Cultural Crescent	2.95	15	Trust for Public Land	Housing Related Parks Program (2011)	\$945,650	Grant Cycle
39	West Boulevard	0.51	10	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$762,500	Design
ACTIVE PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS / LEASES							
40	Aliso Creek	1.80	3	Trust for Public Land	Proposition 84 Urban Greening Grant Program (2010)	\$1,500,000	Acquisition
41	Columbus and Tupper	0.29	7	Department of Water and Power		\$325,000	Needs development funding
42	E Street	0.11	15	Los Angeles County Flood Control District		\$325,000	Acquisition
43	Harbor Gateway	0.14	15	Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority	Quimby	\$400,000	Acquisition Process
44	Laurel Canyon / Mulholland	6.00	4	Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority	Department Resources	\$1,500,000	Needs development funding
45	LAX Northside Open Space	33.00	11	Los Angeles World Airports	Proposition K	\$0	Grant Cycle
46	Nevin Avenue Park	0.26	9	Department of Public Works - Bureau of Sanitation	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$2,898,640	Pending discussions with LAWA Awaiting Final State Approval of Transfer of Awarded Grant Funds

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# Park	New Acres	Council District	Implementation Partner(s)	Funding Source(s) Identified or Secured	Funding	Status
47 Ord and Yale Street Park	0.85	1	Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 1)	\$4,999,705	Awaiting Final State Approval of Transfer of Awarded Grant Funds
48 Palace Platting	0.47	9		Prop 1C Infill Infrastructure Grant Program Proposition K Quimby	\$3,430,857	Acquisition
49 Saint Andrews Place	0.28	10		Quimby	\$1,253,250	Acquisition Needs development funding
Sherman Village River Greenway						
50 Park	1.53	4	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Quimby	\$1,073,577	Needs development agreement
51 South Victoria Avenue Park	0.26	8	Trust for Public Land	Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2)	\$1,942,297	Acquisition
52 Ventura and Strathern	0.69	6			\$1,000,000	Acquisition
53 York / Avenue 50 Park	0.30	14		Prop 84 Statewide Parks Program (Rd 2)	\$2,875,000	Acquisition
	182.75			Total	\$80,948,519	