PARKS MAKE LONG BEACH
PRM STRATEGIC PLAN

LONG BEACH PRM STRATEGIC PLAN
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY
PREPARED BY CITY FABRICK
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Participants: 75

#LBPARDS
Q1. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE LONG BEACH PARK OR BEACH AND WHAT MAKES IT SO SPECIAL?

Stakeholders pointed out the overrepresentation of Eastside parks in Survey #1 results, which was most likely due to greater resource and financial investments in that area of the City as compared to North, West, and Central Long Beach.

Goal 1. Provide safe, accessible public spaces.

- I’m a mom and grandma so I take my grandchildren to all of the Long Beach parks. Besides the shade, bathroom accessibility and parking - it’s safety. We feel safe in those spaces.
- Growing up, I wouldn’t hang out at the park closest to me since there were too many police officers over there.
- It seems like the commonalities in these top parks are that they are big and have lots of space for community groups and can have events, such as Cesar Chavez Park & Bixby Park.
- Oftentimes we don’t pay attention to the small pocket parks. There is so much need for us on the Westside, since we do not have an El Dorado Park.
- A lot of these parks are in the upper East Side area, so it seems like most of the respondents are from that area. It’s concerning that there aren’t responses from other areas, like Drake Park, Caesar Chavez Park, Admiral Kidd Park, Silverado Park.
- This survey appears to lack the feedback of our underserved neighborhoods in West, North and Central Long Beach.
Q2. IN THE FUTURE, HOW DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IMAGINE USING PARKS AND BEACHES, CONSIDERING COVID-19 AND SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Many people shared the importance of parks as a destination for programs, gatherings, and events. They wanted to see more uses of the City’s open spaces as places for learning and connecting to community, nature, and culture.

Goal 6. Establish an environmentally sustainable park ecosystem.

- Breathing is something that is missing here. Trees help to eliminate pollution. The most polluted areas of Long Beach have the least amount of parks with forests.
- I would love to draw more kids into parks to have more of an outdoor learning experience through nature, wetlands, and trees.
- Parks are great for mental health, for meditation, birding opportunities, and just for people to be out and about in nature.
- I would like to see more people learning about the native landscape and animals. This can really help people connect where people live.
Goal 2. Offer meaningful recreational programming and events.

- I’ve never seen so many people using parks to work out, it’s cost effective as well. Really surprised at the number of people walking and taking photos outside.

- A critical part of any city is having good youth athletic programming. Long Beach has always had a great reputation for the athletes coming out of this city, we have the best programs here.

- We have found that we can social distance and still bring art and bring people together. Concerts in the park, yoga in the park, and mural projects are great.

- My community is mostly low-income people of color. Since we have less open space, it’s important for our kids to have sports.

- Many of our community members are seeking spaces and places where they can get information about economic health, engagement, culture and linguistic spaces.

- Recreation classes are so diverse, highly used, and are great. I know that summer programs have been affected by COVID-19, but hopefully that will change with the vaccine.

- What I don’t see here is recreational activities for teens and the youth, with opportunities to explore cultures and historical fairgrounds in Long Beach.
Q3. WE HEARD THAT PROGRAMS FOR KIDS AND TEENS ARE POPULAR, AND WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU HAD IDEAS TO ATTRACT MORE ADULTS AND ELDERS?

Stakeholders believed that adding more culturally diverse programming and providing better language access would be helpful in engaging more older adults and elders.

Goal 2. Offer meaningful recreational programming and events.

- More weekend and evening classes would be nice. Getting classes that would appeal to a larger range of abilities and age groups within the “senior” umbrella would improve enrollment.

- For our Pacific Islander community and Asian American community, elders are interested in culturally appropriate activities, like cultivating foods. Our community of elders would appreciate having activities and information in their main language as well.

- One thing PRM could do is programming regular classes related to diversity, such as during Women’s month or African American history month. It would encourage people to engage in diversity in an active way.

- Since most of our community is Black, Latinx, or Cambodian, tailoring programs to those cultures would be great.

- I see a lot of Latino elders there who are monolingual and sometimes are not able to communicate or are intimidated by younger folks.

- Expand programs that encourage intergenerational social engagement, to promote sharing history and culture, whether it is around preparation and sharing food, gardening, or others.

- What I don’t see here is recreational activities for teens and the youth, with opportunities to explore cultures and historical fairgrounds in Long Beach.
Q4. WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE OUR PARK AND BEACH FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS MORE EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS AND USE MORE OFTEN?

Many stakeholders had positive experiences to share regarding communication with the PRM Department. Others pointed to a need for funding to increase staff availability via phone, online, and in-person.

Goal 5. Connect internally and with the community clearly and transparently.

- My community has great communication with the city, the people have been awesome and they let me know when we have issues. Any time we had meetings with the city, the staff has been so patient, supportive, encouraging, informative.
- There needs to be person-to-person interaction. I understand there is little staff at parks, but it’s really needed.
- Looking at it through the equity lens, the PRM Department has one of the lowest budgets, but its impact is tremendous and it could be even more so if there was funding allocated to this department.
- It would be great if we could have Park Ambassadors to help activate the park and also do education, workforce development, and cross digital and cultural divides.
- Offer programs in non-English languages and provide spaces for adults and elders about digital literacy like keyboarding or email or using the internet.
- Social media is a powerful tool.
Q5. How can park staff better relate to the communities they serve?

A common suggestion was for parks staff to be from the community they serve, or come from a similar background. Stakeholders said staff retention was important as well as opportunities for full-time employment and promotions.

Goal 7. Ensure a diverse and dynamic workforce.

- We should make the conscious effort to hire staff that look like the community that they are serving. A career in parks can be really good for our young people who are considering their careers.
- It would be better if staff could speak in different languages representing different communities to provide equitable service.
- In general, I feel like the PRM staff are really responsive and go the extra mile to do the things that need doing.
- If employees want to be seen as leaders in the community, they have to be attached to the community in some way.
- I would like to see the frontline workers reflect the communities, particularly Black folks.
- My children benefited from having that part time staff continually, I can remember 5 guys that worked with my kids for 10 years and were a huge part of their lives. Even though they were just part-time, I think consistency is really important.
- I love the fact that part-time staff were consistent, but we need a career path for people to advance. That’s the way to retain good people.
Q6. HOW SHOULD THE PRM STAFF PRIORITIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- IMPROVING EXISTING FACILITIES
- CREATING NEW PARKS IN PARK-POOR COMMUNITIES
- OFFERING HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS TO THE COMMUNITY

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Goal 3. Prioritize health equity across the City.

- Once open space is lost, it is lost forever. We need to address maintaining parks while also developing new parks in areas that are most in need.
- I want to see more programming about the environment, since youth are really into saving the Earth and recycling.
- It would be great to make playgrounds more wheelchair accessible.
Goal 1. Provide safe, accessible public spaces.

- We want to give access to parks in park-poor communities, thinking about how they get to the parks - especially in North LB where it’s harder to safely access parks without a car.
- I live in a park-poor community. We’re fighting for space right now along the LA river. We have some lovely parks here but they are not accessible to my community. We could take advantage of the sidewalk medians to create greenbelt areas that people want to walk along - it will slow traffic and beautify the space.
- I see that there is a priority for improving existing parks, but the sheer imbalance of park space in North Long Beach is so striking. It really has to be the top-priority to create parks in park-poor communities. They don’t have to be big - pocket parks are great as well.
- All for new park space, but we must consider operations and maintenance.
- Would like to see improved bike and pedestrian facilities.
- I think they are all priorities. I can see making most of what we got, but I think it’s important that we build more parks in West, Central, and North Long Beach. We’re covered here on the East side!
Q7. HOW SHOULD THESE DRAFT CORE VALUES BE PRIORITIZED:

- EFFECTIVE / THOUGHTFUL / CAREFUL
- TRANSPARENT / OPEN / ACCESSIBLE
- UNITED/UNIFIED / COLLABORATIVE / CONNECTED
- RESPECTFUL / NURTURING / STEWARDSHIP
- RESILIENT / RESOURCEFUL / ADAPTIVE / RESPONSIVE

Many stakeholders found it difficult to prioritize the core values, with many agreeing that they are all important and interconnected. People suggested that the PRM Department should continue to cultivate strong relationships with the Long Beach community through strong communication and honesty.
Goal 5. Connect internally and with the community clearly and transparently.

- I think all of these are very thoughtful. Every interaction I’ve had I’ve been impressed. From the people maintaining the park to programming it, it’s been nothing but positive experiences. I think they are living these core values.

- Seeing the parks staff interact with the community while I was a kid was one of the only times where I thought “that could be a fun job.” If the parks staff know you and your siblings or parents, it just makes it feel a lot safer and gives a sense of community.

- Parks are personal and when someone goes to a park, they expect to experience something safe, wholesome, and caring. Everyone in the community should feel like they belong at the park.

- I think all of these are very thoughtful. Every interaction I’ve had I’ve been impressed. From the people maintaining the park to programming it, it’s been nothing but positive experiences. I think they are living these core values.

- We do live in a very, very diverse city. Somehow we can force these silos to mix and mingle. It’s a great opportunity to meet with people from different cultures, and orientations. I think staff that are bilingual or working in different parts of the city that they aren’t familiar with would really break down barriers.

- In our community, being transparent resonates, transparency and honesty is important.

- Being able to make a phone call to talk to someone is really important.
Q8. How would you prioritize the following draft goals for the PRM Department:

- Equity for safe, high quality public spaces for all communities
- Accessibility of meaningful recreational and cultural programs and events
- Stewardship of parks, waterfronts, public assets, and resources
- Communications and partnership with city government and the community
- Leveraging the open space ecosystem for the city’s environmental and public health

Most stakeholders were drawn towards “equity for safe, high quality public spaces for all communities,” “accessibility of meaningful recreational and cultural programs and events,” and “leveraging the open space ecosystem for the city’s environmental and public health.”
Goal 1. Provide safe, accessible public spaces.

- I think equity should be at the top. We don’t have an equitable situation in Long Beach. It’s really important to make sure everybody has access to safe, clean parks.

- “Accessibility of meaningful, recreational and cultural programs and events” is important.

- Something that stood out to me was “for all communities”. When you think of parks, there’s young people and kids, but also older people just walking or exercising. There’s also the cultural aspect, where parks are one of the first places people congregate for protests.

- We have homeless people who are always at our park. One man has been there for more than 10 years. I think we should view these people as a resource - it’s just that the opportunities aren’t there.

- Our homeless community spends a lot of time at parks. Something that we can do is to partner with homeless shelters, food shelters to offer them support or jobs to help them. Instead of making homeless people a negative thing, why not help them out? Our homeless population is part of our community, regardless of if they’re housed or not.

- The PRM Department has so much to manage, but I think safety and accessibility for everyone is important.
Q9. IF YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN PROVIDE PROGRAMMING AT ANY OF OUR LONG BEACH PARKS AND BEACHES, WE’D LOVE TO HEAR MORE FROM YOU.

Many organizations were eager to partner with the PRM Department to run programming, increase the Department’s capacity for outreach, or provide other resources. Many of the ideas shared in this section are incorporated into the outcomes and action items of Goal 4: Build Innovative & Lasting Partnerships.