



COUNCILWOMAN
LENA GONZALEZ

R-29

Date: July 18, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FR: Councilwoman Lena Gonzalez, District 1
Councilmember Dee Andrews, District 6
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, District 7
Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, District 9

Subject: Park Equity

BACKGROUND:

The City of Long Beach is home to over 3,000 acres of park space across 162 parks. In addition, our Parks, Recreation and Marine Department (PRM) manage 26 Community Centers, 6 miles of beach and 4 community pools in addition to other city assets. However, these park spaces are not promoted and programmed in a way that both fair and equitable. For Example, in the Summer Edition of "Recreation Connection" which covered the months of March-May 2017, two Council districts represent nearly two-thirds of all advertised and available programmed hours offered by the City of Long Beach on a weekly basis. These park spaces have the ability to transform our city if utilized properly and equitably.

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), key factors that drive park usage and success are available space, programming and marketing to name a few.¹ Additionally, the NRPA goes on to say that parks in urban and metropolitan areas "play an essential role in a community's ability to create jobs, stimulate growth, entice business investments, recruit a highly skilled workforce and attract tourism dollars"²

Recently, PRM created the Partnership to Enhance Parks, Programs and Services (PEPPS) which aims to create new sponsorship opportunities, however the policy does not include any plans to incentivize the use of parks in underserved urban areas.

As public servants, it is our job to continue to examine where our dollars are being spent and how they are benefiting the residents of every region of the city. We must take a deeper look at leveraging our limited city resources and community assets within our park system to ensure that we obtain a fair and equitable system that guarantees every resident the same opportunities to thrive, regardless of zip code. In addition, the City of

¹ <http://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/fact-sheets/park-programming-better-health/>

² <http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks%20Revitalization%20Act%20One%20Pager.pdf>

Long Beach has formulated many plans (CX3, Westside Livability, etc.) that are related to quality of life as it pertains to poverty levels, unemployment rates, obesity rates and life expectancy. Historically, zip code, 90813 and 90805 have unfortunately experienced challenges in this respect, while also experiencing less park programs and hours, relative to other areas in the city. We can work together to find ways to elevate park programming in areas that do not experience weekly programming or consistent after-school and summer hours.

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to work with our Parks, Recreation and Marine (PRM) Department on this item and return to the City Council, within 120 days, detailing the following:

- Overview of city –wide park programming (hours and funding expended in each location)
- Basis of prioritization for programming in each area
- Overview of current park programming participants based on zip-code
- Policies/processes that can be re-reviewed, example:
 - Waiving park permit fees for organizations that are activating our parks in low programmed areas
 - Providing umbrella permits for annual community events vs. having community groups apply each and every year for the same event
 - Outlining clear rules for city-wide park entertainment, so that it either includes each region of the city OR provides the funding in lieu of, for areas that did not receive the benefit of the city-wide park entertainment
 - Overall suggestions for more equitable programming city-wide from our Parks department

Request the City Manager, or his designee, return to the City Council within 120 days with a plan to incentivize the use of underutilized parks that do not over burden community organizations. This plan should include but not be limited to: free or severely reduced fees for groups planning events at underutilized parks, multi-year permits for annual events, and targeted promotion in the surrounding areas for classes offered at underutilized parks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendations.