Park Equity, Life Expectancy, and Power Building
Project partners
Recent infrastructure investments

- **Measure A**
  - Parks
  - $94 Million per year

- **Measure W**
  - Stormwater
  - $300 Million Per year

- **Prop 68**
  - Parks/Water
  - $4 Billion
Goals of this presentation

• Review evidence of park and green space and related health inequities
• Describe results from new research linking park access to life expectancy
• Lay out a framework for achieving park equity
• Propose policy recommendations
What do parks have to do with health and health equity?

Image Source: Los Angeles Department of Public Health
Park Access is Not Equal Across Communities

- African Americans and Latinos are likelier to live in areas that have less park space per capita compared to Whites and Asians.

- Access to parks associated with:
  - ↑ physical activity, environmental benefits
  - ↓ asthma, stress, violence

Image Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Average Acres per 1,000 Residents in Each Need Category

- Very High: 0.7
- High: 1.6
- Moderate: 11.5
- Low: 12.5
- Very Low: 52.0

County Average: 3.3

Image Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Production of park inequity in the land use system

Selected Policies, Practices, and Procedures That Have Produced Inequities in Parks and Green Space. Adapted from: Prevention Institute. Countering the Production of Health Inequities: An Emerging Systems Framework to Achieve an Equitable Culture of Health
Production of park inequities

Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Research synopsis

Park Equity, Life Expectancy, and Power Building
Research Synopsis
Reduced Life Expectancy in High and Very High Park Need Areas with Low Tree Canopy or Vegetation

Priority Tracts
Latino: 63.9%
Black: 14.4%
Median Household Income: $48,781

LA County
Latino: 48.6%
Black: 7.9%
Median Household Income: $64,251

The highlighted census tracts are areas in LA County with low tree canopy or vegetation and low life expectancy in areas of high and very high park need as identified in the LA County Park Needs Assessment.

Boyle Heights & unincorporated East LA

Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Reduced Life Expectancy in High and Very High Park Need Areas with Low Tree Canopy or Vegetation

Panorama City, Pacoima, and Sun Valley

Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Reduced Life Expectancy in High and Very High Park Need Areas with Low Tree Canopy or Vegetation

The highlighted census tracts are areas in LA County with low tree canopy or vegetation and low life expectancy in areas of high and very high park need as identified in the LA County Park Needs Assessment.

South Los Angeles

Source: Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment
Reduced Life Expectancy in High and Very High Park Need Areas with Low Tree Canopy or Vegetation

Priority Tracts
- Latino: 66.7%
- Back: 28.7%
- Median Household Income: $40,758

LA County
- Latino: 48.6%
- Back: 7.9%
- Median Household Income: $64,251

Reversing inequities: A Framework for Park Equity

- Procedural Equity
- Distributional Equity
- Structural Equity
Procedural equity

- Decision-making about all aspects of park and green space functions
- Community engagement to secure input at each stage of park development
- Condition and quality of park and green space infrastructure, amenities, and features
- Staffing and services related to operations, maintenance, and programming
Distributional equity

- Distribution and accessibility of parks and green spaces in communities
- Distribution of facilities, amenities, and features placed within a park or green space
- Fiscal allocation formulas for park and green space development or improvements
Structural equity

• Improving staff representation at all agency levels among people of color and other marginalized groups

• Internalizing and operationalizing equity and racial justice across agency staff and leadership

• Designing and programming park facilities and green space to function as sites of healing and resilience
Roadmap to equity: Recommendations for reversing park inequities
COVID-19

Image source: Creative Commons, Ke4roh
Policy change and accountability
Power building and procedural equity
This project is supported by the Urban Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Measuring life expectancy neighborhood-by-neighborhood across the United States

Image Source: National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS)