

OPEN SPACE WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

From April through June 2017, the Department of City Planning convened four meetings of an Open Space Working Group for OurLA2040, the City's update to the General Plan. These discussions brought together key experts and practitioners to share information and develop early background analysis for a future Open Space Element of the General Plan, in preparation for the launch of the plan's larger community engagement program this fall. Below is a summary explaining the working group process, and its relationship to OurLA2040's forthcoming community engagement and plan development phases.

For the first time in a half-century, the City of Los Angeles is undertaking a comprehensive update to its guiding vision, the General Plan. This initiative, OurLA2040, will result in a new 20-year citywide plan to be adopted in 2020, putting into place strong and visionary policies to help create a more prosperous, livable, and sustainable Los Angeles.

Crafting a new vision for a diverse city of over four million people – one that spans nearly 470 miles – is an enormously complex task. The Department of City Planning, which is spearheading the plan, must conduct research and analysis, analyze data on current and future trends, incorporate specialized expertise from multiple disciplines, prepare environmental analysis, and craft policy proposals. Just as importantly, it is essential to build ongoing public consensus to ensure that the plan reflects the concerns and aspirations of community members. To achieve these objectives, OurLA2040 began in 2016-17 with its initial research and analysis, laying the groundwork for a more extensive community engagement process to begin in the fall of 2017.

In conducting its research and policy development on citywide plans, the Department has consistently convened diverse "working groups," bringing together key experts and practitioners in a field. These discussions assist Department staff in analyzing technical information, understanding recent trends and best practices, and developing early ideas on policy concepts. All of these ideas and concepts are then further vetted and refined through subsequent public engagement. The Department's three most recently adopted General Plan Elements – the Housing Element (adopted in 2013), the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles (adopted in 2015), and Mobility Plan 2035 (adopted in 2016) – were all significantly informed by working groups consisting of key experts and practitioners in these respective fields.

The OurLA2040 team began its technical work with the Open Space Element both because of the unique importance of open space and parks to quality of life and sustainability in Los Angeles and because the City's most recent Open Space Element was adopted more than 40 years ago, in 1973.

The OurLA2040 team facilitated these four working group meetings earlier this year as part of an initial research phase to gather background information and develop early concepts for the future Open Space Element. The working group was comprised of a broad cross-section of knowledgeable open space practitioners, including representatives from the National Park Service, the City's Department of Recreation and Parks, the Mountains Recreation and

Conservation Authority, Friends of the Los Angeles River, the Theodore Payne Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, Los Angeles Walks, Pacoima Beautiful, People for Parks, the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and the Council for Watershed Health ([click here for complete list of participants](#)).

The working group meetings focused on four topics: Parks and Recreation, Wildlands, Waterways and Beaches, and Connections. Participants provided the OurLA2040 team with guidance in identifying key issues, challenges, and opportunities related to parks and open space, and generating early ideas for new policy concepts.

In the discussions with local Open Space experts, several “cross-cutting themes,” spanning the four topics, emerged from the working group meetings, which will help guide further policy and program development as work on the Open Space Element continues. Among these key preliminary themes were:

- Create a network of interconnected urban open spaces and green infrastructure
- Capitalize on opportunities to repurpose existing land for parks
- Strategically invest in improving equity and access to parks
- Promote citizen education, involvement, and stewardship
- Identify opportunities for climate-smart open space investments that deliver multiple environmental benefits

To ensure that the content of the working group discussions was fully transparent to the public, the Department has posted all meeting presentations, handouts, and summaries on the OurLA2040 web site; links to these materials may be found below.

In conjunction with the working group meetings, the OurLA2040 team also sought out early public input on some of the key themes that could guide a new Open Space Element. An [Open Space Vision Survey](#) was released to the public during April 2017 on the OurLA2040 web site and through community-based organizations. More than 100 members of the public completed this survey, articulating their broad ideas and personal values on open space in Los Angeles. The OurLA2040 team will continue to promote this survey, as well as other community engagement tools, through the project web site, community engagement meetings, and social media. The public’s continued feedback will be used to help establish the guiding principles for the Element.

Building upon this early background work and preliminary outreach, OurLA2040’s larger community engagement program will be launching this fall. The initial themes and preliminary policy concepts for the Open Space Element will be supplemented, refined, and discussed through a robust community dialogue that will shape all of the proposed General Plan Elements. The goal of OurLA2040’s multi-faceted public engagement program is to offer community members opportunities to participate in various ways, whether through smaller group meetings, topical discussions, larger community workshops and conversations, online surveys, and review of emerging General Plan content.

The first of these citywide workshops will be held in September and October and will focus on Open Space and Community Assets. Visit us at www.ourla2040.org, where you can learn more about the new General Plan and sign up now to receive more information about our upcoming

series of community conversations and workshops launching this fall. Everyone is welcome and invited to attend. We hope you'll also follow us twitter.com/ourla2040, and www.facebook.com/ourla2040, and take part in this exciting opportunity to shape the future plan for Los Angeles!

Open Space Working Group Materials and Links

Meeting 1 Links (April 12, 2017)

[Meeting Presentation \(pdf\)](#)

[Display Board: Proposed Open Space Chapters \(pdf\)](#)

[Display Board: Open Space Timeline - Part 1 \(pdf\)](#)

[Display Board: Open Space Timeline - Part 2 \(pdf\)](#)

[Handout: General Plan Overview \(pdf\)](#)

[Handout: OurLA2040 Overview \(pdf\)](#)

[Discussion Paper: Open Space Element \(pdf\)](#)

[Open Space Goals and Objectives Reference Guide \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Open Space Vision Activity \(pdf\)](#)

[Open Space Working Group Participant List \(pdf\)](#)

Meeting 2 Links (April 26, 2017)

[Meeting Presentation \(pdf\)](#)

[Display Board: Proposed Elements, Chapters and Topics \(pdf\)](#)

[Activity Board: Proposed Chapter Topic Exercise \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Proposed Chapter Topics Exercise \(pdf\)](#)

[Activity Worksheets \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Connections Chapter \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Parks and Recreation Chapter \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Waterways and Beaches Chapter \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Wildlands Chapter \(pdf\)](#)

[Open Space Working Group Participant List \(pdf\)](#)

Meeting 3 Links (May 10, 2017)

[Meeting Presentation \(pdf\)](#)

[Activity Worksheet: Areas of Need \(pdf\)](#)

[Activity Worksheet: Map Supplement \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Connections Goal and Refinements \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Parks and Recreation Goal and Refinements \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Waterways and Beaches Goal and Refinements \(pdf\)](#)

[Notes: Wildlands Goal and Refinements \(pdf\)](#)

[Open Space Working Group Participant List \(pdf\)](#)

Meeting 4 Links (June 7, 2017)

[Meeting Presentation \(pdf\)](#)

[Policy Concepts Feedback Form \(pdf\)](#)

[Display Board: Draft Parkland Opportunity Areas \(pdf\)](#)