



OurCounty Topical Workshops | Summary Brief

Topic 1: Green / Blue Space & Food - Ecosystems, Parks, Waterways and Coastlines, Food Systems and Food Waste

Strategies

2D: Ensure a climate-appropriate, healthy tree canopy that is equitably distributed

Tree canopy is a crucial component of the County's natural infrastructure that furthers sustainability goals from stormwater capture to food production to shading and cooling. Through a CAL FIRE grant, LA County developed and released *Room to Grow: A Community Forest Management Plan* (CFMP), an actionable, long-term strategy to support an equitably distributed, healthy tree canopy in unincorporated LA County and across the region. Adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2024, the plan aims for all unincorporated County residents to live in a community with 15% canopy cover or greater, which requires not only maintaining existing trees but expanding green space through depaving. In support of these goals, the County was awarded \$8 million in federal funding to plant 1,600 trees in 76 disadvantaged census tracts in unincorporated LA County and to hire directly from these communities for the planting, maintenance, and management of the community forest.

5A: Increase ecosystem function, habitat quality, and connectivity and prevent the loss of native biodiversity in the region

The County has taken several important steps to protect native biodiversity. In 2022, the Board passed a motion titled "Enhancing Biodiversity and Saving Water with Native Plants at County Facilities," directing County departments to explore ways to replace traditional landscaping with native plants at County-managed facilities.

County departments are also incorporating biodiversity awareness and knowledge into their daily operations. For example, the Department of Beaches and Harbors developed training materials on best practices for maintaining sensitive species, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is working to ensure that all grounds maintenance staff participate in the California Native Plant Landscaper Certification program through the Theodore Payne Foundation.

5B: Preserve and enhance open space, waterways, and priority ecological areas

In support of the statewide 30x30 goal, which aims to conserve 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by 2030, the Board unanimously adopted the *Parks Needs Assessment Plus* (PNA+) in December 2022. The PNA+ builds upon and supplements the 2016 *Parks Needs Assessment* (PNA) with data and analyses about regional and rural recreation needs as well as information to help guide future environmental conservation and restoration efforts. Specifically, the PNA+ identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration, including both natural lands and the restoration of degraded lands.

Expanding public knowledge about local ecosystems is key to conservation, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) offers a variety of public programs to support that. In 2021, the department launched Every Body Explores, which encourages discovery and connection to nature through workshops and free exploration backpacks available at seven County Nature Centers. The County also supports and participates in the City Nature Challenge, which is an annual global, community science competition to document urban biodiversity.

6A: Improve access to parks, beaches, recreational waters, public lands, and public spaces

Since 2019, over 110 acres of new or renovated parkland has been developed across unincorporated LA County, with more projects underway. The *Parks Needs Assessment Plus* (PNA+) highlights the needs and priority areas for regional and rural recreation across LA County. Since 2023, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been partnering with a coalition of community-based organizations and three major conservancies—the Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy—to develop an implementation plan for the PNA+.

6B: Adopt inclusive design and programming for parks, beaches, public lands, cultural amenities, and public spaces

Increased access to parks and natural resources also means offering new or expanded programming so that everyone can enjoy outdoor recreation. A key example is DPR's Parks After Dark (PAD) program, which promotes health, safety, fitness, and fun for residents in communities with high rates of violence, obesity, and economic hardship. PAD has expanded its reach and impact to hundreds of thousands of people, and in 2023, the program made permanent its year-round offerings and added mental well-being programs. Additionally, the *Parks on the*



Move Program is also expanding outdoor recreation activities in communities that lack access to park space, helping bridge the gap between long-term parks projects and immediate parks needs.

Recognizing the important role arts and culture play in civic life, the Board approved the *Countywide Cultural Policy* in 2020 to help ensure that every resident has meaningful access to arts and culture. One significant outcome was the development of a Countywide Land Acknowledgment recognizing the region's original inhabitants and their historic mistreatment. The LA City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), now part of the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, has advanced a number of collaborative efforts with local Tribes and the American Indian and Alaska Native community, such as the LANAIC Recommendations Report and the Indigenous Peoples Day Report.

6C: Utilize sustainability best practices in the design and management of parks and recreation facilities

DPR developed the *County of Los Angeles Park Design Guidelines and Standards (2017)* which promotes sustainability in parks by integrating environmentally responsible design principles, water conservation strategies, and efficient infrastructure planning. It emphasizes the use of native and drought-tolerant plants, stormwater management techniques, and sustainable building materials to reduce environmental impact. Additionally, the guidelines support multimodal transportation access, energy-efficient lighting, and green infrastructure, ensuring that parks contribute to community well-being while minimizing ecological footprints. However, DPR has encountered challenges in incorporating sustainability certifications into park and recreation facility design due to the costs and administrative burden of obtaining and maintaining these credentials. As a result, it is exploring alternative approaches to integrate sustainable design principles into new facilities more effectively.

9D: Capture organic waste and develop regional capacity for beneficial reuse

California's SB 1383 has driven municipal action on organic waste and edible food recovery. The legislation sets a goal of reducing organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025, requiring cities and counties to implement organic waste collection programs and procurement requirements for recycled organic products. In compliance with State regulations, LA County passed the *Mandatory Organic Waste Disposal Reduction Ordinance* which permits on-site organic waste management and requires commercial haulers to purchase renewable fuel or purchase compost and mulch for distribution to County residents. To reduce food waste, the Food DROP program provides education, outreach, and resources for businesses to donate excess food to local charities.

10A: Improve access to healthy food

Despite high levels of food insecurity in Los Angeles County, participation in CalFresh – which helps low-income households afford food – has historically been low. Over the past five years, the Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS) has worked to improve the application process and engaged with many partners, including Code for America, Compton College, and community-based organizations, to maximize CalFresh enrollment. The Food Equity Roundtable, co-led by the County and LA-based philanthropic organizations, released a comprehensive plan to address food insecurity and improve food system resilience, and the County has released over \$20 million in American Rescue Plan funding to community based organizations whose work is advancing that plan. Furthermore, the *Community Forest Management Plan* identifies public spaces to pilot fruit tree planting at County-managed facilities.

10B: Support the fair and sustainable production of food

In 2024, the Board adopted a motion to overhaul County food procurement policies in support of sustainable food production and healthier food options at County facilities. As a result, the Department of Public Health has updated its Nutrition Standards for Prepared Foods, Snacks, and Beverages, which will increase the amount of plant-based food options in County food contracts and decrease the production of greenhouse gas emissions from County-purchased foods. The updated nutrition standards will now be integrated into all new and renewing County food service contracts.

Sample Targets

Target	Progress
Ongoing: No loss of native biodiversity	Over 17% increase in reported in native species from 2018 to 2022; 5,017 reported native species total
By 2025: Increase the percentage of protected wildlife corridors to 75%	Protected critical habitat linkages increased from 57% in 2018 to 62% in 2022



By 2025: Increase enrollment of eligible households in CalFresh/SNAP to 100%	Enrollment of eligible households in CalFRESH/SNAP increased from 69% in 2017 to 82% in 2021
By 2025: Increase acceptance of CalFresh and EBT to 100% of farmers markets	Acceptance of CalFresh and EBT at farmers markets from 63% in 2017 to 88.9% in 2024

Recent Plans and Policies

- [Community Forestry Management Plan](#) (LA County Chief Sustainability Office, 2024)
- [Enhancing Biodiversity & Saving Water with Native Plants Motion](#) & Report Back (LA County Board of Supervisors, 2022)
- [Parks Needs Assessment Plus \(PNA+\)](#) (LA County Parks and Recreation, 2022)
- [Park Design Guidelines and Standards](#) (LA County Parks and Recreation, 2017)
- [California SB 1383](#) (Cal Recycle, 2016)
- [Food Equity Roundtable Action Plan](#) (LA County Food Equity Roundtable, 2022)