

The Economic Benefits of the public park and recreation system in the City of Los Angeles, California

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It is impossible to imagine Los Angeles without the beauty and positive environmental impact of its large and varied park system, or the tremendous human benefits of its recreational opportunities. Many people understand these public spaces are a valuable component of a healthy, vibrant Los Angeles, but this value has not been quantified until now. A new report by The Trust for Public Land analyzes the public parkland in Los Angeles and documents a selection of the significant economic benefits that the park and recreation system provides to area residents and businesses.

For the full report visit
www.tpl.org/econbenefits-losangeles.

Los Angeles boasts more than 40,000 acres of city parkland, and county, state, regional, non-profit, and federal preserves. These include natural spaces and facilities such as dog parks, golf courses, Echo Park Lake, Griffith Park, hundreds of playgrounds and picnic areas, beaches, gardens, trails, and other amenities. This park and recreation system generates numerous economic benefits for residents by providing natural goods and services such as filtering air pollutants and retaining stormwater, offering recreational opportunities, improving human health, increasing property values, attracting visitors, and playing a significant role in building community cohesion.

Providing essential natural goods and services

Parks reduce stormwater by capturing precipitation, slowing its runoff, and reducing the volume of water that enters the stormwater system. Parks in Los Angeles provide stormwater retention valued at **\$8.03 million** annually. Meanwhile, trees and shrubs in parks remove air pollutants that endanger human health and damage structures. Such spaces provide health benefits and reduce pollution control costs in Los Angeles by **\$1.58 million** per year.

Offering recreational opportunities

Residents also enjoy Los Angeles parks, trails, and recreation centers. Nearly 75 percent of children and 43 percent of adult residents visited park facilities in the last 12 months. Each year residents of Los Angeles receive a benefit of **\$334 million** for the recreational use of these park facilities.

Generating health care cost savings

Independent research shows that park use translates into increased physical activity, resulting in medical care costs savings. Approximately 106,000 adult residents use Los Angeles parks, trails, and recreation centers to engage in physical activity at a level sufficient to generate measureable health benefits, yielding annual medical care cost savings of **\$151 million**.

Boosting the local tourism economy

Visitors to Los Angeles come to enjoy parks, trails, recreation centers, and beaches in the city. Out-of-towners also come for numerous park special events and festivals, such as the Lotus Festival. The Trust for Public Land estimates that these visitors spend **\$415 million** annually in the local economy and generate **\$27.5 million** in local tax revenues.

Bringing the community together

Parks create a community cohesion benefit of people

coming together to improve their parks. This “know-your-neighbor” social capital, while difficult to fully capture, can be measured in terms of the amount of time and money that residents donate to their parks. Annually, **\$12.5 million** worth of volunteer time and financial contributions are donated to Los Angeles parks.

Enhancing property values

Parks and trails increase the value of nearby residential properties because people enjoy living close to parks and trails and are willing to pay for the proximity. Parks in Los Angeles raise the value of nearby residential properties by **\$2.29 billion**, and increase property tax revenues by **\$27.2 million** a year. With wider economic forces increasingly displacing low income and communities of color in urban areas, it is important to employ policies that will protect existing communities to ensure these economic benefits are felt by low income residents.

Source: The Trust for Public Land, *The Economic Benefits of the public park and recreation system in the City of Los Angeles, California*, San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land, 2017. For the full report, visit www.tpl.org/econbenefits-losangeles.

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The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

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