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July 31, 2024

Honorable Eunisses Hernandez, Chair
Neighborhoods and Community Enrichment Committee
City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Eric Villanueva

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL FILE 23-0491:

Report back regarding the Community School Parks Program with the Los Angeles Unified School District and related matters

BACKGROUND

The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) have a long-standing partnership involving joint use of schools and parks, which has been predominately focused on pool facilities and sports fields. However, many LAUSD elementary schools and middle schools are currently locked during weekends, holidays and summer.

A community school park is a designated area on a school campus made available for public use for recreation and play during non-school hours. Community school parks have been set up by non-profit partners and other school stakeholders at LAUSD campuses under various operational models for more than 15 years.

According to the [Trust for Public Land's \(TPL\) Park Score](#), only 63% of Angelenos live within a 10 minute walk of a park. While RAP continues to acquire new property, especially in dense, park deficient areas of the City, opening schools during non-schools hours offers an incredible opportunity to expand access to recreational activities and green space in park deficient areas of the City.

Made possible through a joint partnership between the RAP and the LAUSD, the Community School Parks (CSP) Program provides access to school yards during the weekends in park deficient areas of the City. In this partnership, LAUSD provides access to selected school sites while RAP provides funding for equipment and



materials, maintenance funding, and part time staffing to monitor park activity. RAP intends to offer periodic programming based on available resources.

The CSP program is part of RAP's mission to increase communities' access to walkable parks and open spaces within one-half (.5) mile or a 10 minute walk. It is a tool that continues the Department's ongoing relationship with LAUSD and utilizes LAUSD properties as parks to help RAP fill gaps in the city where park access is limited. The following provides a summary of RAP's recent CSP related activities:

- In early 2018, RAP and LAUSD opened the initial four (4) Community School Parks in high park need areas of the City: 75th Street ES, Cahuenga ES, Harvard ES, and Leo Politi ES .
- In early 2020, the program was suspended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- In late 2022, RAP and LAUSD relaunched the program through Barack Obama Global Prep MS, Bethune MS, and Northridge MS.
- In early 2024, RAP and LAUSD added Open Magnet Charter School to the CSP Program. Originally, Open Magnet Charter School was opened to the community by a partnership with Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust.
- RAP and LAUSD target (6) additional sites to open throughout the summer, pending availability and approval by school principals.
- Typical CSP Operation of Hours are during the weekends Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Current CSP Schools opened earlier this summer 2024:

LAUSD School	Council District	Board District	Notes:
Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Middle School 155 W 69th St, Los Angeles, CA 90003 (323) 541-1800 https://www.bethunems.org/	9	7	Closed June 9 through August 11, 2024 for construction.
Barack Obama Global Preparation Academy 1700 W 46th St, Los Angeles, CA 90062 (323) 421-1700 https://obamapreacademy.lausd.org	8	1	Open Saturdays only.

Northridge Middle School 17960 Chase St, Northridge, CA 91325 (818) 678-5100 https://northridgems.lausd.org/	12	3	Currently operating.
Open Magnet Charter School 5540 West 77th St. Los Angeles, CA 90045 (310) 568-0735 https://www.opencharter.org	11	4	Currently operating
Leo Politi Elementary School 2481 W 11th St, Los Angeles, CA 90006 (213) 480-1244 https://leopolities.lausd.org/?cfredir=1	1	2	Officially opened June 22, 2024.
Harvard Elementary School 330 N Harvard Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90004 (323) 953-4540 https://harvardes.lausd.org/	13	5	Officially opened June 29, 2024.

The following are the LAUSD schools to open for later this summer 2024:

LAUSD School	Council District	Board District	Notes:
Garden Grove Elementary School 18141 Valerio St, Reseda, CA 91335 (818) 343-4762 https://gardengroves.lausd.org/	4	4	Officially opened July 20, 2024 w/ Grand Opening upon student return in October.
Pio Pico Middle School 1512 Arlington Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90019 (323) 733-8801 https://www.piopicoms.org/	10	1	Officially opened July 20, 2024.
Ramona Elementary School 1133 N. Mariposa Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90029 (323) 663-2158 https://ramonaes.lausd.org/	13	5	Soft opening August 10, 2024.
Camellia Elementary School 7451 Camellia Ave, North Hollywood, CA 91605 (818) 765-5255 https://camelliaavees.lausd.org/?cfredir=1	2	6	Soft opening August 17, 2024.

Current Update and Challenges:

The shared use of school yards for a park purpose is not a new concept. Over the years, LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles have had success at developing joint use projects like pools and sports fields. The CSP Program focuses on Elementary and Middle Schools, and as described above had been initiated, discontinued during the pandemic, and then re-established in the last two years.

Currently, there is no formal Agreement between RAP and LAUSD for the CSP Program. In order to move forward with opening school sites to the community, RAP has a temporary solution through the LAUSD Civic Permit process. RAP applies for a Civic Permit through LAUSD to operate the CSP Program on school property each semester. LAUSD permit rates and fees are applied and paid for by RAP. RAP pays permit fees per school, per school semester. This interim solution allows both RAP and LAUSD to work on a Master Use Agreement or Joint Powers Agreement. Both RAP and LAUSD recognize civic center permits as a temporary measure as there are some challenges with Civic Center permits during the weekends with lack of LAUSD staff.

Some of the challenges that are at the forefront of this program from its earlier versions still continue today, namely in terms of funding, program staff, and interest.

Funding Requirements:

For the fiscal year 2023/2024, we have allocated a budget to fund ten (10) Community Service Program (CSP) sites. Each CSP program requires an initial investment, which includes LAUSD permit fees, a storage bin, sports and recreational equipment, first aid supplies, promotional materials, canopies, tables, chairs, and other essential items. The estimated cost for setting up and operating a comprehensive CSP program is approximately \$90,000 per site annually, covering part-time staffing. However, RAP's FY24-25 budget included across the board reductions to part time and equipment accounts, which impact all RAP programs including the CSP program. Further program expansion to additional sites would require additional funding resources.

Staffing:

Each CSP site is a hub of activity, requiring the dedicated service of two (2) part-time staff. These individuals play a vital role in ensuring adequate supervision, community outreach, customer service, and emergency preparedness. An additional recreation instructor is added to offer structured sports, classes, and clinics, further enriching the program.

Additionally, CSP is managed by a Principal Supervisor, a Recreation Supervisor, and a Senior Recreation Director. Expansion of the CSP program would require additional full-time positions.

Interest:

Although this is a program that has garnered positive support from elected officials, LAUSD staff and RAP staff and non profit partners, RAP maintains the approach that school principals and school staff commitment and endorsement

are key to the success of a site. RAP's goal is to communicate with the principals, staff, and when appropriate, the surrounding neighborhood on the importance of this program and the benefits to the students and larger community. RAP has also acknowledged that not all CSPs are the same and not all CSPs garner the same interest in participation. RAP recognizes the importance of communicating to the larger community of programs available and has created a marketing plan to address this matter.

Moreover, although RAP targets schools located in the areas where park access is lacking, it respectfully moves on from those schools in which principals have expressed that they are not interested.

MASTER JOINT USE AGREEMENT / JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

With the anticipation of the CSP expanding program, RAP is looking forward to transitioning from Permit issued use of LAUSD school sites to working under a ratified Master Joint Use Agreement or Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), as an amenable collaborative partnership. RAP developed a draft master agreement and provided it to LAUSD in September 2023. RAP then received a proposed updated version of the Agreement from LAUSD in June 2024 and is currently working to finalize it for RAP Board and City Council approval. This Agreement will define the roles and responsibilities of both RAP and LAUSD and solve some of the staffing issues that have come up through the permitting process.

The JPA aims to address issues that include but are not limited to the following:

- Liability and Indemnification
- Supervision and Staffing minimus, duties, and responsibilities
- determining outdoor areas of campus for programming
- making it easier to add new schools
- Maintenance and Operations

JPA also anticipates involvement of non-profit organizations to help sustain this program and allows for the possibility of a third party service provider in the future.

Los Angeles Parks Foundation:

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) has been dedicated to supporting the CSP Program. Because RAP and LAUSD have differing missions, administrations, perspectives, goals and priorities, a collaborative team of stakeholders working on this topic, reached the consensus to utilize a consultant charged with addressing the many complex issues and set up a plan to move the topic forward and on a large scale. LAPF has taken charge of developing funding to hire a consulting team to project manage the deliverables while achieving the joint "long-term grand" goal to successfully open all feasible elementary and middle schools as community school parks. On February 6,

2024, LAPF Board Members agreed to take on the Consulting Agreement for project management to open Community School Parks in Los Angeles, thereby negating the need for a Request For Proposal (RFP).

Once the scope of the Consulting Agreement is executed and a notice to proceed, the Phase I deliverables are to be completed within 6 months. However, RAP will continue to meet with school principals of the potential CSP schools to move forward with our goal of opening 10 CSP sites by the end of 2024.

Marketing Plan:

RAP intends to implement a comprehensive marketing plan to promote the recreational activities to be offered on weekends at our CSP sites, effectively engaging both students and parents while fostering a sense of community involvement.

1. **Identify Targeting Audience** - Focus on youth, parents, and community members around the CSP site to understand their preferences and challenges related to weekend recreational activities.
2. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Work with the CSP school site Principal, staff, and local businesses to plan, promote, and support the program, ensuring trust and student participation.
3. **Effective Promotion:** Design engaging flyers, posters, and banners with essential details (dates, times, location, activity description) and leverage social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) to share updates and generate excitement.
4. **Partner with Schools and Council Districts:** Email promotional materials through school newsletters and collaborate with CSP site Council Districts to promote the program via their newsletters and updates.
5. **Community Engagement Events:** Host events at each CSP site with information booths, fun activities, and demonstrations to raise awareness and showcase the benefits of the program.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** Gather feedback from participants and parents through surveys or face-to-face interviews to improve the program's quality and relevance. Additionally, Introduce a re-branding of the CSP Program to maintain relevance and strengthen messaging and visual identity within communities.

Included as Appendix 1 to this report is a deck that can be used as an introduction to Community School Parks. This can be used for school principal / school staff meetings.

Proposition K - Youth Schools Category

The below information was provided to RAP by the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) as it relates to the Proposition K Youth Schools funding category:

The BOE Proposition K Program typically releases an RFP to allow recreation related entities to compete for Prop K Competitive funds. The 1996 Ballot Measure that established the program also established categories for the competitive distribution of \$143,650,000 of Prop K funds. Funding has been expended for every category except the Youth schools/ Recreation Projects, and the Acquisition of Parks/ Natural Lands. \$10,650,619 remain in the Youth schools/ Recreation Projects category.

The Motion requested the BOE to extend the deadline for the Prop K 11th Cycle competitive RFP, and to report back on challenges that the BOE, RAP, and LAUSD have experienced in meeting the goals for this category.

Per the Motion, the application deadline was extended 6 months to give the BOE and interested Council Offices the opportunity to conduct more outreach. The BOE also met with RAP, LAUSD, and other nonprofit education entities to discuss the past challenges experienced with the application, site programming, and the grant award process.

The major issues that deterred applicants from submitting proposals for this category were centered on the requirement of the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) with RAP, construction costs, and programming for the site.

Previous Prop K RFPs required the applicant to finalize a JUA with RAP and to submit it as part of their initial application. This requirement created a significant amount of work for the applicant before they are notified of the feasibility of award for their project. The Prop K RFP was modified to delay the submission of JUA, until after their projects have been shortlisted.

The increased yearly escalation of construction costs has caught many applicants off guard in the past, and forced them to either withdraw their application, or to delay the implementation of the project, until additional funds are obtained. The BOE conducted 3 additional Technical Assistant Seminars to educate applicants on the minimal escalation percentages that should be included in their project budgets.

Per the JUA, programming responsibilities for the Prop K funded recreation areas are the responsibility of RAP. RAP and LAUSD are in discussion to identify opportunities to permit 3rd party recreation related entities to utilize the spaces in a manner that meets the spirit of the Prop K Ballot Measure.

The BOE received proposals from LAUSD that will utilize all of the remaining Prop K Competitive funding for this category, and a letter of Intent to award has

been provided to LAUSD so that they may obtain LAUSD Board approval to develop the JUA's with RAP.

Recommendations:

To note and file this report.

RAP intends to return to this Committee for future updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J/Kim', is written over the printed name 'JIMMY KIM'.

JIMMY KIM
General Manager

CC: Councilmember Heather Hutt, CD10
Councilmember John Lee, CD12
Councilmember Nithya Raman, CD4

enc: [Appendix 1](#)



COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARKS PROGRAM (CSP)

A joint partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and the Los Angeles Unified School District

Contacts:

Recreation and Parks: Juan Soto | juan.soto@lacity.org

LAUSD: Al Grazioli | albert.grazioli@lausd.net



What is a Community School Park?

A community school park is a designated area on a school campus made available for public use for recreation and play during non-school hours at no cost to the public.

This community school park is made possible through a joint partnership between the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to provide access to school yards during the weekends in park-deficient areas of the City. LAUSD provides access, while RAP provides funding, staffing, and maintenance.

Who supports Community School Parks?

Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, the LAUSD Board of Education, and the Department of Recreation and Parks support this Community School Parks program. This program is also provided in partnership with Los Angeles City Council Members who support community school parks in their district.





Why is this school a Community School Park?

The Department of Recreation and Parks is dedicated to providing all residents access to safe parks and open space within a 10-minute walk from home. Providing access to new recreational opportunities is particularly important in areas where fewer parks exist.

To increase park access, the City has partnered with LAUSD to open some school playgrounds that are usually closed on the weekends to provide a safe place to play. This school is located in an area where we aim to increase those opportunities for the benefit of the community.

Will there be programs at these parks?

Recreation and Parks intends to provide periodic programming dependent on available resources. The program's primary goal is to provide access for young children to a playground and/or open space that is walking distance from home.

Are Community School Parks Safe?

This Community School Parks program is a collaborative effort of the school principal, RAP, local non-profit organizations, and law enforcement to provide a safe place to play. RAP employs site monitors, who are generally from the local community and know the school, to open and close the school gates.

As with many of our parks, during the hours they open, they will be monitored like a regular pocket park with City resources such as the Police Department as needed. RAP is also ensuring that we maintain the cleanliness of the grounds during public use.

Can I drop my child off at this school on the weekend?

Like with any of our pocket parks or playgrounds in the City, we highly recommend that parents accompany younger children to the school on the weekends.



● 2018

In early 2018, RAP and LAUSD opened the initial 4 Community School Parks in high park need areas of the City at:

- 75th Street ES
- Cahuenga ES
- Harvard ES
- Leo Politi ES

Collectively these 4 sites provided the opportunity to serve approximately 40,000 - 50,000 residents within ½ mile.

● 2020

In early 2020, the program was suspended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

● 2022

In late 2022, RAP and LAUSD relaunched the program through:

- Barack Obama GPA
- Bethune MS
- Northridge MS

● 2024

RAP and LAUSD have identified 7 additional sites to open by December 2024.

● 2025

RAP, LAUSD and other partners are exploring the sustainability of the program and the funding and staffing changes needed to open a total of 25 CSP sites by December 2025.

History of Community School Parks



Shared Use of Schools

Benefits



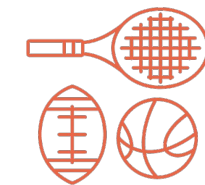
Improves Health

Creating more access to safe public spaces like parks and playgrounds increases physical activity levels, helps combat obesity.



Promotes Park Access

Many cities and local jurisdictions have used joint or shared use as a strategy to improve walkable park and playground access (case studies: NYC and City of San Francisco).



Provides Programming Opportunities

LAUSD elementary and middle school play yards provide opportunities for activation and programming during weekends.



Improves School Attendance

Access to open space can improve school attendance and positively impact community health, well-being, and livability.



Promotes Collaboration

RAP and LAUSD have a long-standing partnership that involves the joint use of schools and parks.



Strengthens Communities

Activation of elementary and middle school play yards by RAP on weekends allows the communities to have a safe space to enjoy recreation programs in the most park-deficient areas of the City.

Opportunities for CSP Program Growth



Improve marketing and engagement through outreach and social media.



Provide structured recreational and cultural activities through RAP programs, including fitness and sports classes, clinics, and mobile recreation vehicles.



Coordinate with LAUSD to implement greening and other improvements.



Create a pathway for non-profits and other organizations to fund and support CSPs in their communities.