



Department of Parks and Recreation
Office of Grants and Local Services
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Advisory Council Focus Group Summary

California's 2020 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Strategy



Photo by Brian Baer

April 2017

Foreword

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is developing the 2020 SCORP to serve as an inclusive plan for nearly 1,000 agencies that operate 14,000 parks and recreational open space throughout California.

A desired outcome of this SCORP includes the fostering of actual change in neighborhoods, where parks and recreation programs become prominent solutions in creating healthy and safe communities.

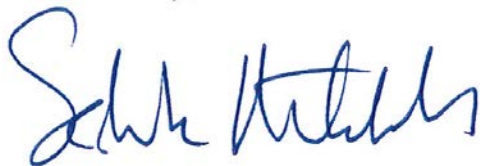
In alignment with this desired outcome, the SCORP Team formed California's new SCORP Advisory Council in 2016, comprised of more than 100 influential leaders.

This summary documents:

- 1. Highlights Advisory Council Focus Group input.**
- 2. Outlines California's SCORP strategy to address the "Issues of Statewide Significance."**

I hope that you find this document compelling and inspirational. Beginning in spring 2017, the SCORP Team will conduct public focus groups throughout the state to discuss California's SCORP strategy. A summary of the public meetings will also become available in 2017.

Through the partnership of Advisory Council and public input, the SCORP Team will craft an influential plan to create healthier communities by expanding park and recreation services.



Sedrick Mitchell
Deputy Director, External Affairs
California Department of Parks and Recreation

About us: The SCORP Team is part of the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS). Since 1965, more than 7,400 parks have been created or improved through OGALS' grant programs. OGALS has administered more than \$2 billion in park grants since 2000. This amount includes the \$368 million Proposition 84 Statewide Park Program, which is currently funding the creation of more than 100 new parks throughout California.

OGALS also administers the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which requires each state to develop a SCORP every five years to remain eligible for LWCF funding.

RECOGNITION PAGE

These Advisory Council members represent academia, the health sector, local and state government, foundations, and community based organizations. They provided dynamic and candid input during seven statewide focus groups from September through October 2016 in Anaheim, Fresno, Oakland, Redding, San Diego, Santa Clarita, and West Sacramento.

* Attended Focus Group meetings held throughout the State.

2020 SCORP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

* Greg Alaniz	City of Whittier, Parks and Recreation
Scott Bangle	Riverside County Parks
* Alina Bokde	Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
* Elizabeth Bowler	University of California, Berkeley
* Kelsey Bozeman	County of Del Norte, Recreation
* Onnig Bulanikian	City of Glendale, Community Services & Parks Department
Deb Callahan	Bay Area Open Space Council
* Spencer Campbell	City of Perris, Community Services
Diane Carbray	Fresno Boys and Girls Club
* Larrynn Carver	California State Parks, Inland Empire District
David Chavez	County of Fresno Behavioral Health
* Sabrina Chavez	City of Perris, Housing and Community Services
* Alejandra Chiesa	Trust for Public Land
* Dr. Deborah Cohen	Research and Development Corporation, Santa Monica Office
Chris Conlin	City of Sacramento, Parks and Recreation
Jess Cooper	California State Parks, Central Valley District
* Albert Cuevas	City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department
* Meredith Dawson	City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department
* Amy DeLisio	Public Health Institute, Center for Wellness and Nutrition
* Lisa J. Easterla, Ph.D.	California State University, Sacramento, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration
* Dr. Fred Edmondson	California State University, Stanislaus, Faculty Mentor Program
Beth Erickson, Ph.D.	California State University, Sacramento, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration
Lars Ewing	Lake County, Public Services
* Joe Fenske	City of Orland, Recreation Department
* Ramona Fernandez	California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways

2020 SCORP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

* Andy Field	City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department
* Shara Fisler	Ocean Discovery Institute
Veronica Flores	Community Health Councils
* Viviana Franco	From Lot to Spot
* Leslie Frisbee	McKinleyville Community Services District, Parks and Recreation
* Pamela Galera	City of Anaheim, Community Services
* Rick Gould	City of Santa Clarita, Recreation, Community Services
* Amy Granat	California Off Road Vehicle Association
* Scott Green	California State Parks, Northern Service Center
* Robin Greene	California State Parks, San Diego North Sector
* Jeannie Greenwood	City of Visalia, Parks and Recreation
* Gaby Gregg	Orange County Community Action Partnership
* Marybeth Harasz	City of San Jose, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services
* Heather Hostler	Governor's Office - Office of the Tribal Advisor
* Chris Hurton	City of Red Bluff, Parks and Recreation
* David Johnson	City of Paramount, Community Services and Recreation
* Audree V. Jones-Taylor	Simply Recreating
Dan Keyes	Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District
* Lara Killick, Ph.D.	University of the Pacific, Health Exercise and Sports Services
* Tori Kjer	The Trust for Public Land, Los Angeles
Jill Lankford	California State University Fresno, Community Outreach
* Sam Lankford	California State University Fresno, Recreation Administration Program
* Israel Lara	City of Parlier – Fresno Council of Governments
* Rhea Laughlin	First 5 Contra Costa Community Engagement
* Jeffrey Leatherman	County of Sacramento, Regional Parks
* Kathy LeVeque	City of San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services
* Jonathan Lightfoot	University of California Irvine, Urban and Regional Planning
* Marilyn Linkem	California State Parks, Sierra District
* Vincent Lopez	Cathedral City Engineering
Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris	University of California Los Angeles, Department of Urban Planning
Stephen Lucas	Butte Local Agency Formation Commission

2020 SCORP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Earl Lui	California Wellness Foundation
* John Machiaverna	Boys & Girls Club of Anaheim
* Ileana Maestas	California State Parks, Capital District
* Toody Maher	Pogo Park
* Tiffany Margulici	East Bay Regional Park District, Grants Department
* Buck Martin	City of San Marcos, Parks and Recreation
* Alfred Mata	Healthy Eating Active Living Cities Campaign
* Kristi McClure	City of Chula Vista, Recreation Department
* Sue McIntire	OC Parks
Thom McKenzie	San Diego State University, School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences
Ian McLaughlin	ChangeLab Solutions
* Cindy Mendoza	MIG, Inc.
* Amy Miller	California Baptist University, College of Health Science
Pat Milos	Cathedral City, Community Development, Public Works
* Ann Mino	Community Action Partnership of Orange County
* Dave Mitchell	Sunrise Recreation and Park District
* Manuel Mollinedo	City of Fresno, Parks After School Recreation and Community Services Department
* Mallory Morgan	The San Diego Foundation
Gerardo Mouet	City of Santa Ana, Parks, Recreation and Community Services
* T.J. Newman	Mission Oaks Recreation and Park District
Jeff Nickell	McFarland Recreation and Park District
* Kim Niemer	City of Redding, Community Services Department
* Belinda Ong	Orange County Partnership to Improve Community Health
* Faith Parducho	County of Los Angeles, Parks and Recreation
David Pearson, Ph.D.	California Baptist University, College of Health Science
* Janice Perez	City of San Francisco, Recreation and Park Department
Joe Picotte	City of Alturas, Planning and Zoning Department
* Marcela Piedra	City of El Centro, Parks and Recreation Division
Dr. Nooshin Razani	University of California, San Francisco, Benioff Children's Hospital
* Coire Reilly	Contra Costa County Health Services
* Chester Robertson	County of Modoc Public Works
* Mike Rodriguez	Mount Shasta and Weed Recreation and Park District

2020 SCORP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Danita Rodriguez	California State Parks, Marin District
Bob Roessler	Consumes Community Services District, Parks and Recreation
David Rolloff, Ph.D.	California State University, Sacramento, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration
* Julie Roman	City of Stanton, Parks and Recreation Services
* Paul Romero	California Association of Park and Recreation Commissioners and Board Members
* Melanie Ruvalcaba	Fresno County Department of Public Health, Office of Policy, Planning and Communication
* Marie Sanchez	Kaiser Permanente Central Valley, Charitable Contributions
Vickie Sanders	County of El Dorado
* Gloria Sandoval	California State Parks, Director's Office Public Affairs
* Robert Santana	Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana
* Emilyn Sheffield, Ph.D.	California State University, Chico, Recreation, Hospitality and Parks Management Program
* Robin Shifflet	City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department
Michael A. Shull	City of Los Angeles, Recreation and Parks
* Amy Smallwood	Simpson University Outdoor Leadership Program
* Myrian Solis Coronel	California State Parks Commission
* Anaheim Sporn	City of Anaheim, Neighborhood Services
Stephanie Stephens	California Park and Recreation Society
* Brandon Taylor	CSC, Fresno, Community Recreation and Youth Services
* Mike Trinca	Paradise Parks and Recreation District
* Cindy Tuttle	City of West Sacramento, Parks and Recreation
* Dr. Veda Ward	California State University, Northridge, Department of Recreation & Tourism Management
* Bethany Weisberg	California State Parks, Archeology, History & Museums Services Division
* Nancy B. White	California State University, East Bay, Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism
Kathleen S. Wilson	California State University, Fullerton, Department of Kinesiology
* Irma Yepez-Perez	City of Fresno, Parks After School Recreation Community Services Department
* Dr. Aiko Yoshino	California State University, San Francisco, Recreation, Parks and Tourism
Nicole Zieba	City of Reedley, Fresno Council of Governments

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



Photo by Annie Bang

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOCUS GROUPS

Summary of Input and Ideas

To initiate the development of California's 2020 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Advisory Council Focus Group members shared their vision for the future of parks and recreation. Each group agreed with the proposed SCORP focus on expanding park and recreation services through the lens of public health and safety. The Advisory Council made clear that issues rooted within the park and recreation sector must be addressed first, in order to position parks and recreation as a greater solution for community health.

Regardless of focus group region, similar **"Issues of Statewide Significance"** were reported:

- Some budget decision makers do not take parks and recreation services seriously due to the "fun image" of this public service; local park agencies are often required to become revenue generators, or are being renamed or merged into non-park agencies; local directors often feel that they are competing with other public service agencies for budget support.
- Public safety and park access issues, homelessness, and other social issues confronting park and recreation services were also consistent themes. Reasons why some parks are underutilized also emerged from discussions.

As a result, the SCORP Team grouped the above challenges into this **unifying Issue of Statewide Significance**:

Parks and recreation must be positioned as an essential public service to address public health and safety needs.

The 2020 SCORP strategy is designed to address challenges rooted within the park and recreation sector, in order to position parks and recreation as a greater solution for health.

- The new SCORP strategy and a 2017-2020 "Next Steps Timeline" is found at pages 11 through 16.
- Focus group discussions transformed the SCORP Team's proposed strategy. Pages 3 through 10 summarize how.
- "Raw Notes" from each focus group meeting are available at www.parks.ca.gov/SCORP/products

FOCUS GROUP FORMAT

To assist each Council member in preparing for focus group discussion, the SCORP Team sent informational packets to each participant several weeks in advance. The packets provided conceptual ideas about the items listed below. The SCORP Team wished to explore whether these items might help position parks and recreation services as a greater solution for public health. During each three-hour focus group, the SCORP Team asked Advisory Council members for feedback about these items.

The Team summarized pre-focus group concepts, focus group reaction, and post-focus group concepts for each item below.

1. Active Recreation Cost Benefit Calculation

SCORP Team's Pre-Focus Group Concept: Explore what data is currently available, or should be developed, to estimate the cost savings achieved through an active recreation program for both health funders and individuals.

Focus Group Reaction: This topic generated a passionate exchange of ideas and perspectives. From a humanitarian perspective, trying to place a monetary value on parks and recreation services seemed superficial to some Advisory Council members. It might give the public-service a profit-driven appearance. This quote summarizes the feeling: "It is hard to come up with a value for recreation. It is an experience that happens. Instead of looking at things so much in numbers, maybe we need to look at the experiences that people have. How do we identify happiness, well-being, and quality of life from the experience?"

All focus groups appeared to agree that *personal stories are needed* to show the possibly unquantifiable range of health benefits of parks and recreation (personal and community, social, cultural, environmental and physical health).

Other participants spoke in favor of making cost-benefit data available. As one participant shared, "There is no data to help support the advocacy. Statistics mean a lot...(they) can be shown to (budget) decision makers to prove that there is a financial benefit." There reportedly is not one "go to" tool, or report, that quantifies the cost-benefit of active recreation. Some participants, represented by this quote, felt that past efforts to quantify the financial benefits have resulted in inconsistent calculations: "Cost effectiveness is difficult; the estimates are all over the place. In looking at the assumptions, they are putting the cost effectiveness on the cost of a human being. If you could calculate the extra years that you may live if you are physically active, it could really change."

Other participants noted research by Kaiser, RAND, The California Endowment, and reports by Trust for Public Land may provide useful data to local agencies statewide.

Finally, the participants felt that a cost-benefit analysis should go beyond a physical activity focus and include social, environmental, psychological, and economic cost benefits analysis.

Otherwise, the whole value of a park or recreation program would be underrepresented.

Post-Focus Group Concept Development:

- a. Test Personal stories: The “Demonstration Study” will include an analysis of which personal stories are most influential at informing decision makers about the need for, and benefits of, parks and recreation programs for health.
- b. Test Data: A cost-benefit calculator tool will not be developed at this time, but this concept may merit future attention. Instead, the SCORP Team will attempt to collect and distribute key findings about how investments in park projects and recreation programs stimulate benefits measured by dollars or using other quantifiable techniques.

2. Local Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Database

SCORP Team’s Pre-Focus Group Concept: Develop an interactive statewide database of local park projects and recreation program funding gaps based on self-reporting from local agencies. In other words, the database would show what projects and programs the local agency would like to proceed with, and how much funding is still needed to achieve the goal.

Focus Group Reaction: Some park agency directors felt they did not have the staff (or staff time) to accurately report funding gap needs for each park project, and desired recreation programs, in their jurisdiction. Others were concerned with local political restrictions on reporting unmet needs, or whether the reporting would be based on general plans, compared to new community input.

One participant suggested that the SCORP highlight that “*In Los Angeles County alone, \$21.5 billion in unmet need was reported.*” ([Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment](#)).

Post-Focus Group Concept Development: A Local Needs database will not move forward during the current SCORP process. However, the Los Angeles County Needs Assessment may be cited as an example of local needs.

3. SCORP Public Survey: California’s Perceptions of Parks and Recreation Services

SCORP Team’s Pre-Focus Group Concept: Measure how the public views the role of parks and recreation programs for improved community health, and solutions to

increase park use (what would get the public to use parks more frequently). Draft survey questions were sent to the Advisory Council in advance of the focus groups.

Focus Group Reaction: This concept generated enthusiasm and creative ideas. Participants asked if the statewide survey instrument could allow for local use, to enable local agencies or university students to survey their own target population.

Comments such as “we can help administer survey taking if the State develops everything first”, helped plant a statewide partnership idea. Participants with survey expertise offered to assist the SCORP Team in refining the survey questions.

Other ideas included “creating a buzz” through a statewide campaign prior to the launch of the statewide survey in July 2017. July is “parks and recreation month”. A contest for the highest local participation was also suggested.

Post-Focus Group Concept Development: A statewide survey instrument that can be used by local agencies and organizations will be developed. The SCORP Team will distribute revised questions and test the questions through public focus groups before launching the survey instrument in July 2017. The survey instrument will be developed to include geo-coding for local agencies to identify and analyze responses for their communities.

4. Health Funding Resource List

SCORP Team’s Pre-Focus Group Concept: Connect local park and recreation providers to health funding resources (health grants) by creating a funding resources list. This list would indicate which health-related grants *could* fund new recreation programs and projects in parks.

Focus Group Reaction: The Advisory Council supports the idea of working with state agency grantors to identify “existing, flexible” sources that could fund recreation programs and projects in parks. Examples such as funding available through the Department of Public Health, Cap & Trade, Climate Change, Employment Development Department funding, etc., were mentioned.

Participants also explained that dedicated and sustained state funding is needed for recreation programs and park projects. “The projects completed in my city would not have been possible without state funding” stated a city director. Others suggested that in addition to looking at existing flexible state funding, a coordinated effort to attract health insurance company investments in parks and recreation is needed.

Post-Focus Group Concept Development: The Health Funding Resource List is moving forward as originally proposed and the list will be developed in partnership with California’s Health in All Policies Task Force (HiAP). This list will become part of the Demonstration Study’s Toolkit feedback process to analyze whether the list leads to increased funding for new recreation programs and health related projects in parks.

5. Health Trends Data

SCORP Team's Pre-Focus Group Concept: Provide data regarding current Californian health trends and issues. Identify communities with the greatest health needs.

Focus Group Reaction: This Advisory Council quote summarizes support for a SCORP focus on health: "If we can intrinsically connect parks and rec to health that would be important. We need the data to be able to show that. Having a tool to be able to talk about health and parks more concretely will start to push parks and rec as more of a necessity to communities. Right now, lots of budgets do not recognize that."

Post-Focus Group Concept: Include products in the "Demonstration Study" Toolkit to analyze which data is the most influential at informing decision makers. See pages 11 through 16 for more information.

Use GIS Technology to identify communities with the greatest health needs. The existing [Community FactFinder](#) that provides park and demographic data can include new health data. To help foster success, the health data must "drill down" to the community level, and must be available to all statewide areas. Currently, health data is often only captured at the county and city level, or is not available for statewide use drilled down to community levels within cities and counties. The [CalEnviroScreen](#) appears to serve as the only current GIS data set option *that relates to health and drills down to the community level, statewide*. It is a multi-year in depth, peer reviewed, and community reviewed tool and is used for other state funding opportunities. This "tool" is developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA).

Cite key health data in a Statewide Campaign "message brochure". Design the "brochure" to educate decision makers about how parks and recreation programs can become a greater solution for the health and wellness of communities.

CHALLENGES OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

While discussing the above concepts, and during open topic periods, the Advisory Council shared other concerns and solutions that should be considered for the SCORP. Throughout northern, central, and southern California, a pattern of similar challenges facing park and recreation services emerged that was not planned for discussion.

The SCORP Team will continue to explore how these concerns and solutions can be incorporated into the SCORP.

The "Fun" Image:

An intriguing discussion arose about how marketing the "fun" of parks and recreation often works well to attract the public, but may affect the image and perception of these services as essential. Participants questioned whether governing boards (budget

decision makers) view “fun” services as a high budget priority compared to other public services. The focus groups touched on the nation’s work-driven culture that generally does not recognize “fun” or “play” as an essential activity. The work-driven cultural norm appears to clash with the park and recreation sector’s belief that play and fun are critical for personal wellness and a community’s social health.

Local park agency directors candidly expressed, “I feel we are not taken seriously” and “we need to do a better job telling our story.”

These directors spoke passionately about being on the “front line” and “in the trenches.” Many park agencies are placed in the position of providing social services such as meals, counseling services, health screenings, clothing distribution, after school tutoring, providing a positive alternative to gangs, life skills classes, etc.

Therapeutic recreational programs for war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and employment development programs were also cited as examples of park agency “functions.”

The Advisory Council recommended forming a statewide campaign, supported by data and personal stories, to inform decision makers and the public about why parks and recreation services should be expanded for public health and safety. “Celebrate your successes, if you can show that you are changing the community, people want to be a part of it” advised one participant.

Alternatively, a few Advisory Council members pointed out that the parks and recreation “benefits movement” has been a long-standing effort within the profession. This is an important point for the SCORP Team to consider. Advocacy must go beyond saying how great current park and recreation services are, and must also include a vision for a greater investment in parks and recreation to achieve new health benefits. Expanding services to confront health challenges may require a philosophical change in the profession.

The Advisory Council suggests encouraging “strong” *non-park and recreation leaders* to “co-sign” the vision and message. Co-signers could include health sector leaders, law enforcement, and the business sector, to name a few. For example, some peace officers may endorse youth programs in parks as an essential public service.

“Pay to Play” and “Revenue Generation” trend:

Local park agency directors reported that they are required to function under a business model in order to support operations due to budget constraints. “*This (focus) shifts our service focus and mission*” said a local agency director.

Some focus groups stated that the new business model emphasis may cater to those who can afford to pay, while widening the “equity” service gap for economically disadvantaged youth, seniors, and families.

Sense of competing against other public services:

Some local park agency representatives shared that they have to “*compete with police and fire,*” and cuts to park and recreation services come first.

The loss or renaming of local park and recreation agencies:

Possibly due to the “fun image” and not being recognized as an essential public service, some local park agencies have been merged into general services or public works departments. In other cases, the term “Parks and Recreation” is being dropped from agency names in favor of “Community Services”.

While some participants described challenges with the above issues, other participants briefly described solutions that have worked well in their field.

As suggested solutions, a few participants said they were able to encourage their city council to view parks and recreation as a public safety and health provider, and are now at the same table during police and fire budget negotiations. These discussions also generated examples of finding mutual benefits and combining resources with other governing entities, instead of viewing them as budget adversaries.

Some participants said that they were adding “Wellness” to their agency name with “Parks and Recreation” to create a clearer health-benefit perception in order to increase budget support.

The importance of organizing local community advocacy to persuade local government to invest in new programs and projects was also cited as a potential solution.

Veteran park directors acknowledged that more should be done to transfer their knowledge to new park and recreation professionals such as, how to navigate budget discussions, and the importance of the public service.

When budget negotiation or fundraising solutions were mentioned, some participants said it would help them to learn how the agency was successful.

The terms “recreation” and “parks” have different meanings to different audiences:

While exploring how parks and recreation can be positioned as a greater solution for health problems, the Advisory Council pointed out a basic, fundamental issue often not recognized by park professionals: the word “recreation” is not universally understood.

Therefore, simply using the word recreation for advocacy, public surveys, and planning documents, may not always be effective unless the type of recreation is clear.

Participants said that their local survey revealed the general public and some decision makers may interpret “recreation” as ways to spend free time instead of being a public service (such as watching television, shopping, playing video games, tourism, etc.) Even within the park and recreation sector, “recreation” is a complex service to define. Recreation may include music, dance, and visual arts, riding off-highway motorized

vehicles, boating, visiting historic sites, and other activities beyond sports programs, hiking, or camping.

Similarly, the Advisory Council suggested that the word “park” may need to be more clearly defined in context because it may not evoke a consistent image across different audiences. Some may think about local city or pocket parks, but not state or national parks, or vice versa. While evoking a consistent image of what a “park” is may sound like a simple task, it is not. The Advisory Council recognizes that local, regional, state, and national parks meet diverse needs and interests, ranging from neighborhood play areas to community sports or cultural centers, as well as iconic historic sites and wilderness areas that draw international visitors. In addition, a public beach or “open space” preserve with a trail is often not envisioned or labeled as a “park”, but provides public recreational opportunities comparable to many regional, state, or national parks.

Thus, when developing the goals for public survey questions and other SCORP products, the Advisory Council recommended being clear which types of “parks” and “recreation” are under consideration.

Homelessness:

Homelessness was identified as a significant issue by each focus group; the Advisory Council stated that the public’s perception of safety and cleanliness deters use of some local parks. If a local park is perceived as unsafe or not clean, it receives less use and provides fewer benefits. When parks are underutilized, vandalism and other illegal activities may also increase in parks.

Discussions revealed solutions that indicate that parks tend to receive more visitors when programs and special events are offered – which in turn makes people feel safer in parks. Also, the “more active parks” reportedly were less popular with the homeless populations compared to “passive” open space parks in the same regions.

Advisory Council members shared that local park agencies are stretched beyond recreation because of a lack of funding for other public services: “We are not just about balls and bats anymore, we now deal with mental health a lot” stated one participant.

Underutilized Parks:

“Many existing parks are untapped solutions for health issues.” As reflected by this participant quote, some focus group participants spoke in detail about the opportunity to do more through the use of parks and recreation programs to address health and social issues. For example, they noted that parks can support activities similar to health clubs, for free.

One Advisory Council member shared a recently completed study that reveals solutions to increase healthy physical activities in parks:

[The First National Study of Neighborhood Parks: Implications for Physical Activity](#)
published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 51, Issue 4,
October 2016, Pages 419–426

Based on this reference, and potentially others, the SCORP Team has an opportunity to explore these solution resources further.

Access To Parks:

The Advisory Council suggested that “close to home” is a common phrase used to describe ideal park access, but it may mean a different distance to different communities. As some observed, even “walking distance” may have a different meaning to different communities depending on how heavy street traffic or gang activity is in the area. Advisory Council members mentioned that distant parks are more difficult to access due to economic, daily schedule, and physical barriers. Some Californians cannot afford to drive to distant parks, and busy schedules don’t leave time to drive to distant parks on a daily basis.

Post-Focus Group Concept:

Based on the discussions summarized above, the SCORP strategy will now include a Demonstration Study that tests Toolkit Products designed to accomplish the following:

- 1) Create a unifying statewide message designed to position parks and recreation as an essential public service. The message will propose key solutions and include co-signers from outside the park and recreation sector.
- 2) Provide data and [personal](#) stories (such as videos from the public’s perspective) that make clear the benefits of parks and recreation.
- 3) Create a recognition (awards) program to encourage park agencies to share their knowledge and “Tricks of the Trade” to new park professionals seeking solutions to common issues. “Tricks of the Trade” may provide “how to” guidance for budget negotiation, fundraising, forming partnerships, local advocacy, and other solutions.

The Demonstration Study feedback process will inform the SCORP Team about how to improve Toolkit products after they have been tested by local agencies and other advocates.

See pages 11 through 16 for more information about the SCORP Strategy.

CALIFORNIA'S SCORP STRATEGY



Photos by Annie Bang



CALIFORNIA'S SCORP STRATEGY

To test how to position parks and recreation as a greater solution for health, the new SCORP strategy involves an interactive statewide “Demonstration Study.” The study will encompass three major actions. Additionally, the SCORP Team will use a series of questions to evaluate success and areas of improvement.

1. **Launch a statewide campaign** to prioritize and expand the use of Parks and Recreation Programs as an essential public service for health and wellness. Local advocates and agencies will present Toolkit products to local decision makers and then provide feedback through an online system.
 - a. **Demonstration Study Objective:** Collect quantitative and qualitative data from local advocates and agencies that use the Toolkit products to determine what information is the most effective. A statewide analysis of the feedback from local advocates and agencies that reveals what worked and lessons learned will be included in California's 2020 SCORP Report.
 - b. **Demonstration Study Questions:** Evaluation questions for this action include:
 - Which Toolkit products are the most effective at showing the need for, and strengthening the image of, local parks and recreation as an essential public service for community health and wellness?
 - What makes the products effective and how can they be sustained?
 - Which Toolkit products need to be improved or are not effective?
 - What might those improvements look like?
2. **Create new recreation programs and projects designed to improve the health and wellness of Californians** through increased funding and identifying new partners that emerge from the statewide campaign.
 - a. **Demonstration Study Objective:** Measure the effectiveness of the campaign's Toolkit products by documenting the scope of new funding and partnerships for new projects and programs. Local advocates and agencies will report achievements through an online system. A statewide analysis of the funding, partnerships, programs, and projects that emerge will be included in California's 2020 SCORP Report.
 - b. **Demonstration Study Questions:** Evaluation questions for this action include:
 - Will the presentation of a Toolkit product(s) to local decision makers (per the campaign objectives above) result in new/increased funding or new partnerships that otherwise would not have occurred?
 - If so, what are the scopes and goals of the funding, partnerships, programs, and projects that emerge?

3. **Study the public's use and health benefits** of the new projects or recreation programs that emerge through 2 above.
 - a. **Demonstration Study Objective:** Measure the success of the new projects and programs using a standardized evaluation system (example: number of users and hours comparing original goals to actual participant counts, and self-reporting about health/wellness benefits from participants).
 - b. **Demonstration Study Questions:** Evaluation questions for this action include:
 - How successful were the new programs and projects?
 - What are lessons learned from projects and programs that met or exceeded original goals?
 - What can be learned from projects or programs that did not meet the original goals?

The lessons learned through steps 1-3 will help establish California's 2020-2025 SCORP Action Plan, including but not limited to future grant program priorities.

Basic Overview Steps to the Demonstration Study

Step 1: Create a campaign **TOOLKIT** that addresses the Issues of Statewide Significance.

Step 2: Evaluate which **TOOLKIT** products used in the campaign lead to new funding or partnerships for new park projects or recreational programs.

Step 3: Determine if these new park projects and recreational programs were successful in improving public health.

Demonstration Study Evaluation and Analysis Overview

Local park and recreation providers and advocates participating in the Demonstration Study will test the **TOOLKIT** product solutions that address the “Issues of Statewide Significance”, and complete standardized evaluations to reveal what worked and lessons learned. These evaluations will then be posted to the SCORP website.

At least annually, the SCORP Team will provide a report that responds to the following **TOOLKIT** product analysis and updates:

- Which products reportedly helped a local agency form a new partnership or obtain new funding that otherwise would not have occurred without the product?
- Which products are not effective or need improvement? Improvements to the products will be made based upon this feedback.
- New versions of **TOOLKIT** products will be numbered for long term evaluation and tracking purposes.
- A list of all new and proposed park projects and recreation programs that evolve through a statewide campaign.
- Public use and health benefits of the new projects and programs

The Demonstration Study analysis will lead to 2020-2025 SCORP Action Plan Items that establish California’s priorities to:

- Address the Issues of Statewide Significance (How best to strengthen the role of Parks and Recreation as a solution to community health challenges).
- Use Land and Water Conservation Fund grant funds to create new projects that address community health challenges.

Every five years, the SCORP Team will continue this analysis and additional Action Plan Items will be created.

Products of the **TOOLKIT**

These Toolkit products will be used by local partners during the “Demonstration Study” to test solutions that address “Issues of Statewide Significance”. Improvements to the products will be made based on Demonstration Study feedback.

1. Messaging Brochure about how parks and recreation programs can be a greater solution for community health and wellness (California’s Health in All Policies Task Force partnership).
2. Recognition program to encourage SCORP Success Stories clearinghouse submittals from local agencies.
 - a. Tricks of the Trade (“how to” guidance sharing knowledge from one agency to others)
 - b. Personal stories (benefits of parks and recreation programs from public view)
3. Public Survey Instrument to survey local needs, and how the public values local park and recreation services, including health benefits. Design ideas include:
 - a. Make survey available in multiple languages in order to collect responses from the diverse populations of California.
 - b. Include photos or images and written explanation, when needed, that aids the public to clearly understand questions in order to best answer the questions.
 - c. Geocode web-based survey to show locations of respondents that allows for local, regional and/or statewide analysis of the responses.
 - d. Local agencies and other interested parties will be able to gather survey responses and obtain results for their jurisdictions/target populations.
4. GIS Tools that show park deficient areas. Will include the “Park Access Tool” and a “Community Fact Finder” data merge with CalEnviroScreen public data. CPAD updates will also be obtained from local agencies.
5. Health Funding List will include existing flexible state sources that can fund new recreation programs and projects (California’s Health in All Policies Task Force partnership).
6. Collection of Supporting Research that provides data about the benefits of parks and recreation (web-based library concept).

2020 SCORP Timeline

Below is a proposed timeline with goals for the 2020 SCORP. The timeline is subject to change based on evolving priorities.

Develop California's 2020 SCORP Five Year Strategy: September 2016-2017

1. **September through October 2016 - Advisory Council Focus Groups**
2. **February through April 2017 - Public Input Period**
 - Post the "California's 2020 SCORP Strategy (Advisory Council Focus Group Report)" for public review and comment at www.parks.ca.gov/scorp
 - Notice to the general public, 900 local park and recreation agencies, and the Advisory Council, requesting comments sent to SCORP@parks.ca.gov
 - Host Public Focus Groups
 - Ask the public to identify Park and Recreation challenges (unmet needs) and solutions (improving quality of life)
 - Request personal stories for video recording/sharing
 - Discuss draft Public Survey questions and **TOOLKIT** products with Advisory Council members from various universities
3. **April – June 2017 Draft Public Input Report**

Release **TOOLKIT to Start Demonstration Study**

4. **July 2017 - Launch the Demonstration Study**
 - Local partners use the **TOOLKIT** and provide Evaluations
 - Launch of the Public Perceptions Survey
 - Host technical assistance workshops for using the **TOOLKIT**, Public Perceptions Survey, and Evaluation Forms and Reports

2020-2025 SCORP Summary Report

5. **2019 – Draft California's 2020 SCORP Summary Report**
 - Includes an analysis of the Demonstration Study – what worked and lessons learned
 - 2020-2025 Action Plan
 - Final Public Perceptions Survey Report
 - Final Demonstration Study Report
6. **2020 – Publish California's 2020-2025 SCORP Summary Report** after Governor's Office and National Park Service approval.

“It is so surreal to stand here knowing this will become a soccer park. It will build kindness in our community. Here, youth will learn pride with purpose and become fit. We have seen kids turn their lives around through sports.”
Rafael Torres, Soccer Coach



Photo by Brian Baer

The SCORP Team
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Sedrick Mitchell, Deputy Director, External Affairs
Jean Lacher, Chief, Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS)
Viktor Patiño, Manager
Jana Clarke, Supervisor
Noelle Nichols, Analyst
Xochi Prock, Analyst



Contact Us



Address: 1416 9th Street Rm. 918, Sacramento, CA 95814 | P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296 Attn: SCORP Team



Office of Grants and Local Services: (916) 653-7423



Email: SCORP@parks.ca.gov