



Photo of L.A. River Greenway. / City of Los Angeles



WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP

Los Angeles

Health and Outdoors Opportunities Assessment

More Access to Green Space, Better Health

Did you know your zip code determines more of your health than your genetic code? Where and how we live in and around Los Angeles makes a difference in how long we live and the cost of our healthcare. When more people have access to trees, trails, parks, and other natural areas, there are measurable improvements in mental health, physical activity, social cohesion, air quality and other social determinants of health (See Fig. 1). This report summarizes how partners in L.A. can plan, build, and maintain green spaces in ways that promote better health.

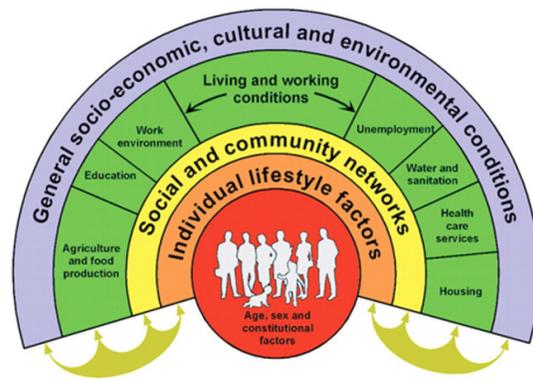


Figure 1. Social determinants of health refer to the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, and work. Health organizations are increasingly looking upstream to these determinants to create community wellness, prevent chronic disease, and increase health care effectiveness.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS FOR LOS ANGELES

Fourteen hospitals and the L.A. County Department of Public Health defined community health needs for Los Angeles. The most frequent needs include:

- **Chronic conditions** (obesity, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease)
- **Mental health**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Social determinants of health** (access to care, community violence, homelessness, and cultural barriers)

OPPORTUNITIES TO LINK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TO HEALTH

In 2015, Los Angeles' 11¹ nonprofit hospitals spent an estimated \$145,507,120² on community health improvement. Hospitals are already spending money on activities such as:

¹ Three hospitals did not release any information about community benefit, even though they produced Community Health Needs Assessments. These are Shriners Hospital for Children, Ronald Reagan Med Center at UCLA, and Resnick at UCLA.

² Community benefit budgets are reported in different ways. Some hospitals combine costs for community health improvement with physician training and education. Actual dollar amount spent on community health is likely lower.

- Cedar Sinai Medical Center’s “Exercise in the Park,” part of the Healthy Habits program for families.
- California Hospital Medical Center’s participation in the Healthy South L.A. Initiative, offering fitness classes in local pocket parks (program led by Cal State University students).
- Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles’ BodyWorks program supports families to establish walking in a local park once a month to address childhood obesity.
- Kaiser’s Fit Club Project offers culturally appropriate chronic disease prevention with a focus on physical activity for Asian Pacific Islander adults.
- White Memorial Medical Center expanded the walking path around their facility and offers weekly walking groups to support healthy lifestyles.
- Keck Hospital at USC’s partnership with L.A. Police Department to increase safety and security at local parks in order to encourage physical activity.

| Rank | Hospital | Total Allocated for Community Health Improvement |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Cedars Sinai Medical Center | \$108,634,000 |
| 2 | California Hospital Medical Center | \$21,823,806 |
| 3 | Children’s Hospital of L.A. | \$4,300,000 |
| 4 | White Memorial Medical Center | \$4,037,754 |
| 5 | Kaiser Foundation Hospital | \$2,080,453 |
| 6 | Kaiser Foundation Hospital - West L.A. | \$1,530,942 |
| 7/8 | USC Hospitals (Keck & Norris) | \$1,247,641 |
| 9 | St. Vincent Medical Center | \$568,519 |
| 10 | Barlow Respiratory Hospital | \$28,725 |
| 11 | Good Samaritan Hospital | \$7,639 |

With slight adjustments, more and better access to green space could create even better health outcomes. Some recommended actions could include:

- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) investment in parks and settings used by community health programs to increase contact with nature for more people.
- Green infrastructure and environmental professionals can be part of the conversation about community safety in parks along with L.A. Police Department and health professionals.
- Encourage community participation in GSI design, planning, and implementation, and encourage input from vulnerable populations.
- Provide advice for community health programs about local settings with substantial opportunities to contact nature.

CONTACT

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