

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Led Transformation: Huntington Park, CA receives the most funds in LA County for parks from the state

City officials and community leaders unite to ensure city policies include significant community participation and engagement.

Today, local residents, community organizations, and council member Graciela Ortiz announced the [\\$4.7 million](#) that was awarded to the city of Huntington Park by the California Natural Resources Agency for the 10 LADWP lots between Walnut St. and Santa Ana Street. The idea of the Linear Park originated from local residents, who gathered over [1,000 signatures](#) online and in writing to propose the city partnership with LADWP and for a genuine community engagement process, one that seeks green space development that benefits park-poor communities. Following the press conference, community went into the city council meeting to speak during public comment to celebrate the funds and advocate for a transparent process. The project is set to be completed by 2020.

Photos from the event can be found [here](#).

“In children, exposure to greenness has been associated with both reduced sedentary behavior and obesity,” **said Jill Johnson, Community Engagement Director for the Division of Environmental Health at USC’s Keck School of Medicine.** “Evidence in this growing area of research shows that contact with green spaces can provide additional health benefits, including improvements in both perceived and objective physical and mental health and well-being.” The full letter can be seen [here](#).

“The Parks in Huntington Park are the backyards and open spaces that many of our residents do not have, they served as my backyard while growing up. That’s why expanding our parks and programs are a priority to this City Council,” **said Graciela Ortiz, council member for the city of Huntington Park.** “We are committed to working with the community and ensuring that the children, youth and families in the beautiful City of Huntington Park get all the resources and the best quality of life that we

all deserve. We can only do this by working together, a united community is a strong community.”

“I live right next to these empty lots and I have seen in many occasions how children jump over these fences, which are in horrible conditions, to simply find a place to play,” **Brittany, a Youth for Environmental Justice core leader from Huntington Park.** “Take a look around- we are surrounded by factories everywhere we go. Like a lot of people in my community, I struggle with asthma, so I’d like to see a park with many trees purifying the air we breathe.”

Huntington Park is a model of the cities that surround it, adding a park is a means to help fight the pollution that burdens communities of color. According to [USC’s research](#) on the benefits of parks for children, “2 in 3 kids in Los Angeles County do not live within walking distance (1/4 mile) of a park.” Huntington Park’s [“Parks and Recreation Master Plan”](#), states that the city’s parks are significantly undersized for the population of the city. Statewide Parks Acreage Standards provide the goal of attaining a ratio of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population. Huntington Park currently provides 0.44 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, grossly below the recommended ratio. The acreage of the LADWP fields would add up to a rough estimate of 5 acres, putting Huntington Park one step closer to the standard goal.

Communities for a Better Environment and the Latino Equality Alliance worked with the city to bring this celebration and opportunity for future community involvement to the public.

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