

City of Huntington Park

Community Meetings & Workshops

**Prepared as part of the City of Huntington Park
Parks & Recreation Master Plan
May 2008**

Community Meetings & Workshops

The residents of Huntington Park were invited to participate in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan process by attending any of a series of three local workshops at various locations throughout the City. The first meeting was held at Freedom Park (Nimitz Middle School) on May 16, 2007; followed by a meeting at Westside Park on May 24, 2007; and a third neighborhood meeting on May 31, 2007 at Salt Lake Park. Valuable input was received at these meetings, but the attendance for all neighborhood meetings was decidedly limited.

The next input meeting was focused on Sports User Groups, at Salt Lake Park on June 6, 2007. The Consultant and Parks & Recreation Staff then met in a workshop format in a joint Commission meeting, on June 20, 2007 with the Parks & Recreation Commission, Youth Commission, and Arts & Culture Commission. Perhaps one of the most valuable outcomes of this meeting was to mix the Commissions' members into brainstorming teams and provide an opportunity for the three Commissions to work together on common parks and recreation goals.

Summary of Workshops

The first question asked at each workshop was in regards to the Community's characteristics. Many of the participants felt Huntington Park was a family-oriented community. They also felt there was an ethnic pride about their Hispanic Heritage.

The next question discussed what types of programs and facilities supported those characteristics and what programs or facilities would the Community like to see continued or increased in availability? Many of the participants wanted to see the Picnic Shelter in Salt Lake Park replaced, as it was torn down a couple of years ago. They also listed Computer Labs, Handball Courts, Weight Room, Bike Trails, Swimming Pool, Basketball Courts, Amphitheater, and more Ball Fields.

Additional Programs they would like to see included more Music in the parks, and possibly Movies in the parks. They also would like to see more Art classes, Yoga classes, First Aid classes, & CPR classes, along with Exercise classes. Another type of program they would like is excursions, for not only seniors, but families as well.

Some of the other general comments that were made:

1. Concern about size of new Westside Park Building
2. Would like one-day classes
3. Would like Park Signage to be in both English and Spanish
4. Several of the participants stated problems with the Restrooms: not enough restrooms and the inadequate conditions of the Restrooms, from structural problems to poor maintenance.



5. Several of the participants also mentioned that Security was an issue. They would like to see more park security, either Police or Park Rangers.
6. Some were concerned about the lack of supervision at the Skateboard Park.
7. Participants also discussed the issue of Circuses and Carnivals, and that they were hard on the parks, especially the turf.

The workshop with Sport User Groups was conducted at Salt Lake Park. The participants were divided into four groups, and asked 5 questions, and then each group gave us the consensus from their group, for each question.

The first question was to name the Best Sports Facilities in Huntington Park and what makes them so. They listed the top three facilities.

#1 Facility:

The #1 facility listed by all four groups was the Baseball Field. The reasons given were that it's well kept and good supervision.

#2 Facility:

Two of the groups listed the Basketball Courts in the Salt Lake Park Gym and at Freedom Park. The reasons given were that Freedom Park is new and Salt Lake Park has new bleachers.

The other two groups listed the softball fields. No reasons were given.

#3 Facility:

Two of the groups listed the Youth Soccer Square in Salt Lake Park. The reason given was better grass than other soccer field.

The other two groups listed the Gym at Salt Lake Park. The reason given was the new bleachers.

The second question was to name the three Worst Sports Facilities in the Huntington Park and what makes them so.

#1 Worst Facility:

Two groups listed the Tennis Courts. The reason given was the playing surface. **



Another group listed the Soccer Circle. The reasons given were the circuses and a lack of supervision.

The last group listed the Salt Lake Park Gym. The reason given was too many teams playing in the gym.

** It should be noted that major renovation of the tennis courts was accomplished in August 2007

#2 Worst Facility:

The #2 worst sports facility was different for each of the four groups. The first group said the Tennis Courts at Salt Lake Park. The reasons given were the surface conditions and the lights.

Another group listed all the Restrooms through out all the parks. The reasons given were how dirty they all were and the poor condition of all of them.



Another group listed Westside Park. The reason given was the lack of maintenance at the park.



The last group listed the Outdoor Basketball Courts at Salt Lake Park. The reason given was the lack of supervision.

#3 Worst Facility:

The #3 worst sports facility, for two of the groups, was the closed Wading Pool at Salt Lake Park. The reason given was the lack of any type of aquatic facility or program in the parks.

Another group listed the Gym at Salt Lake Park. The reason given was the lack of air conditioning.

The last group listed the Skate Park. The reason given was the lack of supervision and that skaters were not wearing helmets.



Question number three was to list the Top three sports facility needs in Huntington Park.

Need #1:

Two of the groups listed a Football Field. Another group listed a Sports Complex. The last group listed a Fitness Room/Gym.

Need #2:

Two of the groups listed Upgraded Baseball Fields. The other two groups listed Soccer Fields.

Need #3:

Two of the groups listed an Aquatic Center. Another group listed Upgraded Soccer Fields. The last group listed a Track and Field Facility.

Question number four was to list the Top three opportunities for meeting the current and future sports facility needs.

Opportunity #1:

All four groups listed the LA Unified School District sites in Huntington Park.

Opportunity #2:

All four groups listed the YMCA, but added that the YMCA has very limited parking and it is already overcrowded.

Opportunity #3:

All four groups listed City Businesses and Sponsorship, so that the existing city facilities could be improved and expanded.

Note: all of the groups discussed the issues of circuses and carnivals and all the damage they did to the playing fields and that they felt the circuses and carnivals should find a different location than the parks.

Question number five was discuss if Leagues should be assessed a fee to help pay for renovation of the fields.

All four groups felt that Youth Groups should not be assessed a fee.

The reasons given were: parents are already volunteering their time in-lieu of paid staff; don't see facility improvements with any fees currently; may loose kids due to cost; and look to raise revenues from business sponsorship.

Three of the groups felt Adult Leagues should be assessed a fee to help pay for the renovation of the fields.

One group felt that the fee should be waived for Adult Teams that volunteered to work with Youth leagues.

Finally, a Joint-Workshop with the Park & Recreation Commission, the Arts & Culture Commission, and the Youth Commission was held at Salt Lake Park. At this joint meeting of the Commissioners, there were 5 - Parks & Recreation Commissioners, 4 - Arts & Culture Commissioners, 5 - Youth Commissioners, and some residents.

The discussion was focused on what they would like to see more of and, conversely, like to see less of, with regards to Park Facilities and Recreation Programs.

Parks and Recreation Commission

They would like more of: sharing school sites with LAUSD; safety patrols by either rangers or police; more green areas in the parks; themed areas in the park; rebuild the tot pool in the park or create a splash area in the park; a swimming pool; computer room; bike lanes; dog parks; and more open-space around the City like the DWP utility corridor (See further discussion of DWP corridor in Section H).

Additional Programs they would like to see include: more low-cost youth programs; carnivals just once a year; hours for women in the weight room; health fair; and rodeos.

They would like less of: poorly maintained restrooms; smelly ball fields (a follow-up by Field Services staff is warranted to confirm if lingering trash, stagnant standing water, or other factors cause this condition and where it occurs); and vandalism and security issues in the parks.

Arts & Culture Commission

They would like to see the following: greater green areas in the parks with landscape amenities; a historical museum; a learning academy; a gazebo; the Warner Theater restored to a multimedia center.

Additional Programs they would like to see include: more visual arts programs; cultural fairs; concerts-in-the-parks; battle-of-the-bands; and computer classes about how to use the internet.

Youth Commission

They would like to see: an amphitheater, instead of a skateboard park; stronger partnership with school district for use of facilities; and distance markers in the park for walkers and joggers.

Additional Programs they would like to see include: more recycling programs; more arts classes; more youth involvement in community events and programs; youth-mentoring programs for filling out job applications and college applications; scholarships for youth to take some of the contract classes that have a fee; and more security at carnivals and circuses.

Additional Discussion Items

All of the Commissioners talked about the carnivals and circuses and the impact that it had on the parks; and yet some felt it was a good form of family entertainment.

All of the Commissioners talked about the value of cultural fairs, and concerts-in-the-parks.

Many of the Commissioners talked about the Telemundo Sports Day and its positive impact on the Community.

Many of the Commissioners talked about more excursions, to local places like the beach, or LA museums, or baseball games. They would like to see trips that encourage families to go together (See discussions in Section N).

Summary Comments

Community input was broad-based, including the following:

- discussing concerns about the level of maintenance of existing recreation buildings and outdoor recreation spaces;
- the current level of park security personnel (with specific reference to the Skate Park) and the sense of being secure in the parks;
- the lack of enough sports fields (particularly for soccer), both for available play time and alternative fields to allow for renovation periods, if this will lead to better turf and play field conditions;
- over-scheduling of gymnasium activities;
- the lack of water play / swimming pool facilities;
- a moderate level of frustration with the lack of accessibility of school facilities during after-school hours and weekends;
- the over-whelming negative impacts that Carnivals and Circuses have on sports field facilities;
- and caution in proceeding with user fee increases for the majority of youth participants.

There was, generally, a lack of requests for improved ADA accessibility within the parks. This Consultant's conclusion is that those citizens with special physical challenges requiring full accessibility are likely not using the City's parks extensively, and, therefore, declined to, or were not aware of an opportunity to participate in the Community Input Process.

For more specific summary of requests for park improvements, see Section O; and requests for expansion of Recreation Programs, see Section N.