

INFRASTRUCTURE: THE ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Park infrastructure, including lands, water, trails, recreation facilities and more, are a critical part of a community's infrastructure investments. America's public park infrastructure supports 7 billion recreational outings per year and contributes to a robust recreation economy whose economic impact is valued at \$887 billion per year. **Local parks alone have a \$154 billion per year impact on the United States economy and support 1.1 million jobs in communities across the country.** Local park and recreation agencies are on the frontlines of producing economic value to communities by utilizing local, state and federal funds to make communities more business friendly and to make parks and recreation infrastructure more resilient and connective.

NRPA ASKS CONGRESS TO:

During consideration and debate of an infrastructure package, NRPA encourages Congress to allow cities and states maximum flexibility in how they use funding, including the ability to use the funding for park related activities.

LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION ARE INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

Park and recreation agencies are a critical part of local communities' active transportation networks, providing reliable access to alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling and walking, and reducing traffic impacts, air pollution and congestion. Creating safer, more accessible places to bike and walk makes communities a better place to live by increasing connectivity, encouraging healthy lifestyles, benefiting the environment and supporting the local economy.

APPROXIMATELY **50%**
OF CAR TRIPS
TAKEN IN THE UNITED STATES
**COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY
RIDING A BICYCLE FOR 20 MINUTES
OR LESS**

81% OF MILLENNIALS AND
77% OF ACTIVE BABY BOOMERS SAY
**AFFORDABLE AND CONVENIENT
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES**
ARE SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT WHEN
DECIDING WHERE TO LIVE AND WORK



Located in the heart of downtown Columbus, the Scioto Mile connects downtown to the Scioto River through a system of parks, boulevards, bikeways and pedestrian paths.

Green Infrastructure

Communities across the country are finding that managing stormwater and reducing impacts of flooding by green infrastructure is environmentally beneficial and a cost-effective alternative to gray infrastructure. Green infrastructure is effective in mitigating economic damage from stormwater runoff, reducing flood hazards and improving water quality. Open space areas such as parks, parking lots, recreation facilities, visitor centers, playing fields, natural areas and trails are designed using natural, permeable surfaces that absorb and safely retain stormwater and reduce flooding and erosion.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN PARKS
CAN REDUCE STORMWATER IMPACTS
FROM 50-90 PERCENT
DEPENDING ON DESIGN

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
CAN REDUCE THE "HEAT ISLAND"
EFFECT IN URBAN AREAS,
REDUCING SOME HAZARDS
AND IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH



Historic 4th Ward Park brings together residents around a 2 acre lake designed to control stormwater as its' centerpiece.

Resiliency

Park and recreation agencies play an integral role in helping communities become more resilient to the effects of extreme weather events. From improving water quality and mitigating storm water runoff through green infrastructure, to reducing the heat island effect and decreasing CO2 emissions through reforestation, parks ensure that our communities can successfully adapt and thrive in the face of extreme weather. In the face of rising sea levels and increased flooding, parks and open space can provide increased floodplain capacity and valuable buffers during storms, while providing much needed access to green space year-round.

84% OF PARK AGENCIES
INVEST IN
SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITIES
AND PRACTICES FOR THEIR
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

61% OF PARK AGENCIES
IDENTIFIED A **LACK OF**
FINANCIAL RESOURCES
AS A MAJOR REASON WHY
THEY DIDNT DO MORE
TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



Buffalo Bayou Park in Houston is designed to flood during periods of heavy rain, but during the rest of the year it is enjoyed by joggers, bikers and walkers of all ages. During Hurricane Harvey the park was filled with 40 feet of water.

*Questions? Email NRPA's Senior Government Affairs Manager,
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