



CONTACTS:

Lourdes Perez

Public Health Advocates
Office: (844) 962-5900 x316
LP@PHAdvocates.org

David Wescott

Public Health Advocates
Office: (844)962.5900 x279
DW@PHAdvocates.org

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City of Livingston Awarded \$7.3 Million from Prop 68 for New Livingston Rec-Plex

LIVINGSTON, CA — The city announced it has obtained \$7.3 million in state funding from the highly competitive [Proposition 68](#) Statewide Park Program. The City submitted its proposal to the state last year and earned the award with assistance from a coalition of community groups.

The funding will help create the new Livingston Rec-Plex in the city of Livingston. The project includes acquisition of a 2.05 acre parcel of land. It also converts a 25,000 square foot warehouse into two indoor/outdoor multi-use courts with retractable doors, a music/art studio, stage, a large playground, a ninja gym and exercise area with fixed stations, a walking path with mile markers, a small splash pad, three picnic areas, a public art piece, a concession/restroom building, two parking lots, and landscaping and lighting throughout.

“This is a great win for our city and our neighborhoods,” said Livingston Mayor Juan Aguilar. “The Livingston Rec-Plex will enhance our quality of life and lead to stronger, healthier families.”

This year, \$X million in state funds were made available to cities and other local governments to create new parks and introduce new recreation opportunities specifically in California’s low-income communities. The goal: to support underserved communities, increase health equity and reduce health disparities. Of that, \$7.3 million was allocated to the Livingston Rec-Plex.

The facility was proposed by a coalition of community partners.

“Livingston has fought hard for more parks so that every resident has the same opportunity to be healthy and happy,” said Lourdes Perez, Director of Local Policy at Public Health Advocates and a leading coalition member supporting the Rec-Plex. “Parks reduce crime, increase physical activity and connect communities. We’re grateful to be part of the coalition that pushed for state funding and we commend the Mayor and the City Council for their leadership.”

Passed in June 2018, Proposition 68 allocated \$4 billion in bond funds to improve the availability and quality of parks. \$720 million of those funds were earmarked to create new parks and recreational opportunities in underserved communities across California over three years.

According to researchers at the University of Miami, parks play a significant role in creating healthier communities by improving physical and emotional health, promoting social cohesion, boosting local economies, protecting the environment and making neighborhoods more attractive. An *American Journal of Public Health* study shows that those living near park and recreation facilities are five times more likely to exercise weekly.

Despite their benefits, parks are not distributed equitably across the state, with low-income areas more likely to be park poor than higher income areas. A Los Angeles County Department of Public Health study showed that high income neighborhoods have 10 times more park space per capita than low-income areas. Predominantly white neighborhoods have almost 20 times more park acres per capita than African-American neighborhoods and over 50 times more acres than Latino neighborhoods. These communities suffer from disproportionately higher rates of obesity and chronic disease.

To help communities apply for Proposition 68 park funds, Public Health Advocates partnered with Kounkey Design Initiative (KDI) to offer cities and counties, including the County of Los Angeles, resources, technical assistance and a [Park Bond Equity Toolkit](#). The project is funded by Kaiser Permanente, The Gilbert Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation and The California Endowment. Communities interested in additional assistance accessing funds in future funding rounds can contact Lourdes Perez at LP@PHAdvocates.org.

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Public Health Advocates is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that brings a public health lens to some of the most important social justice issues of our day. We leverage decades of successful state and local campaign experience to help communities change the entrenched systems that perpetuate racial, economic and health disparities. PHAdvocates has helped more than 200 California cities establish local policies promoting the health of their residents. For more information, visit: PHAdvocates.org.