



The City Project



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Diversifying Access to and Support for the San Gabriel Mountains and Recreation Area

The San Gabriel Valley suffers from some of the highest childhood obesity and diabetes rates in California. The San Gabriel Valley also severely lacks parks and open space where families, young people and seniors can exercise and recreate. This health crisis and lack of open space have brought together a diverse and growing alliance in the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign to create the San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area.

Toyporina, a Tongva/Gabrieleña woman who led a revolt against the San Gabriel Mission. © Judy Baca and SPARC, bit.ly/d818Qn.

The San Gabriel Mountains represent almost 70% of the open space in Los Angeles County and are in the largest “urban” forest in the nation.¹ 10 million people live within an hour’s drive of these mountains, which provide opportunities for recreation and physical activity, as well as education, spirituality, and an escape from the stresses of urban life. The San Gabriel watershed provides about 1/3 of the drinking water for local communities² and is a critical source of environmental benefits such as clean air and clean water.

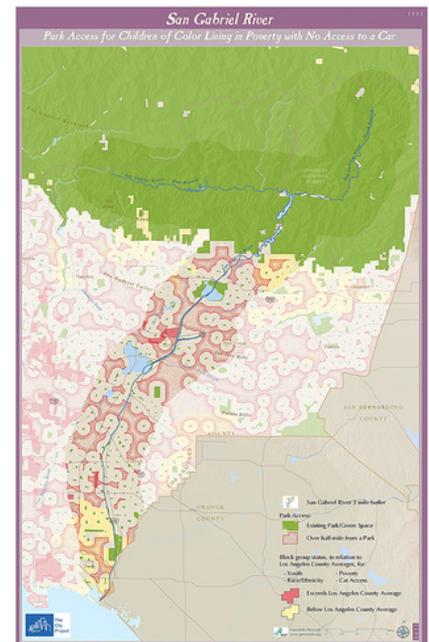
The San Gabriel Valley is ethnically and economically diverse. Unfortunately, people of color do not enjoy equal access to the region's recreation and natural space resources. Latinos are nearly 50% of the population, but only 11% of visitors to Angeles National Forest are Latinos. While 25% of residents are Asian, less than 5% of Angeles visitors are Asian. Only 1% of Angeles visitors and 0% of visitors to wilderness areas in the forest are black.³

San Gabriel National Recreation Area

One strategy for improving access to places for physical activity in the San Gabriel Mountains is the creation of a diverse and robust San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. The San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign is coordinating a region- and nation-wide push for the creation of a National Recreation Area managed by the National Park Service. We are diversifying support for and access to the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains and the proposed National Recreation Area.

Transit to Trails

Transit to Trails can improve access to the national parks and forests including the proposed San Gabriel National Recreation Area. Transit to Trails can take inner city children on fun, educational and healthy trips to mountains, beaches, rivers and other green space throughout the nation, for low or no cost compared to the benefits. Transit to Trails enriches education about land, water, wildlife, and cultural history, and the importance of physical activity and healthy eating for life-long health, for children and their families and friends.



¹ U.S. Forest Service, *Angeles National Forest: About Us* (2010).

² Louis Sahagan, *A Push to Preserve the San Gabriels*, Los Angeles Times (May 16, 2010).

³ U.S. Forest Service, *Race/Ethnicity of Visitors to Angeles National Forest (2000 Survey)*, <http://www.laalmnac.com/parks/pa07.htm>

Although inner city children in Los Angeles live only an hour from mountains and beaches, many have never been there, because parents often work two or more jobs, and do not have access to cars or to information to plan trips. Transit to Trails is diversifying access to and support for parks and forests -- and letting people have fun doing it!

Transit to Trails serves all people, but is particularly useful to the working poor with limited or no access to cars. Transit to Trails provides choices to people who have none. Transit to Trails helps reduce traffic congestion and parking problems, improves air quality, and reduces run-off of polluted water into rivers and the ocean. It helps reduce dependency on the automobile and fossil fuels.



Why Does Equal Access to Parks, Forests and Recreation Matter?

The San Gabriel Mountains offer multiple benefits: the simple joys of being in parks and forests; social cohesion, or bringing people together; improved physical, psychological, and social health; youth development and improved academic performance; positive alternatives for at risk youth; violence, gang, and crime prevention; economic vitality for all; climate justice and conservation values of clean air, water, land, and habitat protection; art, culture and historic preservation; spiritual and indigenous values in protecting the earth and its people; and equitable infrastructure investments. Fundamental principles of equal justice and just democracy cut across these other values.



Physical activity can help stop and reverse childhood obesity. Throughout much of the San Gabriel Valley, more than 30% of all children are overweight or obese!⁴ The numbers are even worse for adults. Obesity can lead to a range of health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and cancers.⁵

The City Project with other social justice and environmental leaders is diversifying access to and support for the San Gabriel Mountains and the National Parks and Forests. Our goals include places and policies for physical activity and healthy eating, Transit to Trails, green local jobs including diversifying ranger staff, and other funding and resources to build connections from the community to parks, forests, and recreation areas.



Learn more about National Parks and the San Gabriels, bit.ly/eN3Dj; the demographics of the San Gabriels, bit.ly/b3zozM; *Economic Stimulus, Green Space, and Equal Justice*, bit.ly/a9pHuG, and saving endangered state parks, bit.ly/bs3F52.

Tribal Circle © Ricardo Duffy, bit.ly/b40oun.

What Can You Do?

A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area and equal access to green space is possible -- but we need your help! You can become a part of our campaign: follow The City Project blog, sign up for our mailing list by emailing sstrongin@cityprojectca.org, or call us below.



The City Project

Equal Justice, Democracy, and Livability for All

Visit our website and blog at www.cityprojectca.org

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Donations are tax deductible

⁴ California Center for Public Health Advocacy, *The Growing Epidemic: Child Overweight Rates on the Rise in California Assembly District* (2005).

⁵ White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, *Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity Within a Generation* (2010).