



PARKS, JOBS AND EQUITY ACT

The Trust for Public Land is leading a coalition of over 200 nonprofits, community groups, and companies are calling for an emergency \$500 million investment in local parks.

This historic, one-time investment will put local parks to work as communities recover from dual health and economic crises. Together, we can create good jobs, spur economic development, and expand outdoor recreation, all while addressing historic inequities in park access.

Why now?

During the coronavirus pandemic, the outdoors have taken on a whole new importance. Parks are where we turn for exercise, fresh air, and finding respite from anxiety and grief. But in too many communities, parks are too few and far between, unwelcoming, rundown, or unsafe. Elsewhere, open space is blocked by locked gates and “No Trespassing” signs.

Just as America’s great outdoors have never been more in demand than they are during the pandemic, the consequences of park inequities—for our health, resilience, and prosperity—have never been more acute. COVID-19 is a wake-up call: the time to address the long-standing gaps in outdoor access and quality has come.

What are the details?

The Parks, Jobs and Equity Act will establish a federal grant program administered by state and local governments, which will ensure park investments happen quickly and respond to local priorities. All cities with a population of over 30,000 would be eligible, and unlike similar programs in the past, these funds would not require a local match – allowing cities and towns suffering from declining revenues to make strategic, priority investments.

What can we accomplish?

Create over 8,000 new jobs. We can also preserve 100,000 at-risk seasonal jobs through investments in recreation services – like park programming – in addition to creating new jobs and job training opportunities building parks.

Add \$1.37 billion to local economies. These federally funded grants can greatly assist state and local governments and revitalize local economies hit hardest by COVID-19. In 2017 alone, local parks in the U.S. generated more than \$166 billion in economic activity, and this program will protect the growing sector from pandemic-related losses.

Fund over 1,000 new or upgraded local parks. These parks will help the one-in-three Americans, including 28 million kids, without close-to-home access to nature during the pandemic. By investing in local parks, playgrounds, trails, and green spaces in communities where they’re needed most, we can help provide critical health infrastructure.

What are the benefits?

Health: Investing \$500 million in local parks will have lasting benefits for public health. Scientific research finds that parks, green space, and outdoor activity reduce anxiety, stress, and depression, and improve physical health. During COVID-19, the health benefits of parks are more important than ever, and the effects of park inequities have never been more severe—especially as access to other physical activity opportunities and infrastructure is restricted.

Physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do to help curb obesity and weight gain, and lower chances of developing or worsening chronic conditions. Too often our ability to be active is directly linked to our surrounding environment.

Climate: This emergency investment will also allow critical upgrades to our green space infrastructure and help mitigate climate change. Parks improve climate resilience by reducing flooding, absorbing air pollution, and filtering stormwater to keep rivers and lakes cleaner. Green, shady parks also protect people from rising temperatures, and can reduce the deadly “urban heat island effect” by as much as seven degrees.

Equity: A \$500 million investment in local parks would meaningfully reduce long-standing park inequities that plague our communities. Today, over 100 million people in the U.S., including 28 million children, do not have a quality park or green space within a 10-minute walk of home. A recent analysis by The Trust for Public Land finds parks serving primarily nonwhite populations are half the size of parks that serve majority white populations and serve five times more people per acre.

Communities without adequate parks tend to be the same ones that suffer from unemployment, a lack of affordable housing, under-resourced schools, and a shortage of healthy food access. Inequities in these social determinants of health put Black, Hispanic, and Native American people at increased risk of preventable health conditions.

Who is involved?

Over 200 groups from across the country signed on to support the Parks, Jobs and Equity Act over the last year. From neighborhood park clubs and mom-and-pop outdoor stores to racial equity groups and public health organizations, the breadth of support we see demonstrates just how critical this funding is. For a full list of coalition members visit tpl.org/parks-jobs-equity-act.



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

tpl.org

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