PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (PARA)

What is the PARA?

The PARA is a tool used to measure the condition of community Physical Activity (PA) Resources. It was originally developed by Dr. Rebecca Lee as a research tool. PARA measures:

- Features (equipment or specifically designed space, like play equipment or soccer fields)
- Amenities (things that make it nicer to be at a PA resource, like bathrooms)
- Incivilities (things to minimize at a PA resource, like litter or vandalism)

There is no "perfect score" on the PARA, because the score depends on how many features, amenities, and incivilities are counted at each PA resource.

Each **Feature** and **Amenity** item on the PARA is rated as 0 (Not Present), 1(Poor), 2 (Mediocre) or 3 (Good). In the PARA Protocol Guide, you can look item by item, but in general:

0	Not Present	You do not see the listed item
1	Poor	Very bad condition, not safe or usable
2	Mediocre	Needs minor repair or improvement, but is still usable
3	Good	Clean, good condition, very usable and safe

Each **Incivility** item on the PARA is rated as 0 (None), 1(Little/Few), 2 (Some) or 3 (A Lot). In the PARA Protocol Guide, you can look item by item, but in general:

0	Not Present	You do not see the listed item
1	Little/Few	Hardly noticeable but it is there a little bit, not irritating
2	Some	Noticeable and interferes with enjoyment, 2-4 small or 1 large incivility
3	A Lot	Very noticeable, unpleasant, makes you want to leave the area

What do PARA Scores mean?

For individual Feature and Amenity items, scores closer to 3 mean items in better condition. For individual Incivility items, scores closer to 0 mean better condition.

For **features, amenities, and the overall score**, means are calculated that account for a total score across the section (or the whole PARA tool) divided by the number of items rated. For **incivilities**, all 12 items are counted as rated because even if the item scored a 0, the person doing the rating decided it was not present.

What can be done with PARA results?

High PARA scores (overall score close or equal to **3**) may be used to encourage PA Resource management. You might then focus on activities like offering direct education or a physical activity class/club at the resource, or assessing how easy it is to travel to the resource (using, for example, Safe Routes to Parks).

If the overall PARA score is closer to **1**, you may choose to focus on prioritizing improvements to the resource, considering factors like safety, importance to community residents, and availability of funds.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (PARA)

Before submitting the PARA tool, a LIA staff member should answer the following questions about your overall perceptions of the physical activity resource (PAR), your site partners, and community engagement.

LIA Name: **LIA Lead:**

Email Address: **Assessment Date:**

Site Name: **Site Address:**

1. Does this area feel safe?

○ Yes   ○ No

2. Is this area nice to look at/attractive?

○ Yes   ○ No

3. Is this area walkable?

○ Yes   ○ No

4. Does this area have enough activities/equipment for families with young children?

○ Yes   ○ No

5. Who are the partners who can help make changes at this site (check all that apply)?

○ Parks & Recreation Department

○ Neighborhood Association

○ Active Living Coalition

○ Other (Please describe in Q6)

○ Have not identified partners related to this resource

6. **If you checked any of the partner boxes in Q5, please list the name(s) of your partner(s) on the lines below:**

7. **Check the appropriate box(es) below to describe the Community Engagement you did related to this PARA:**

○ Community engagement before LIA staff conducted a PARA, to check in with community members about which site to assess and/or their feedback about their local PA resource(s).

○ Community engagement during the time LIA staff conducted a PARA, to check in with community members using the resource for feedback about the PA resource.

○ A Community-engaged PARA, where one or more community members complete the PARA assessment alongside LIA staff.

○ Community engagement after staff conducted a PARA, to check for agreement with PARA findings and collect additional feedback

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (PARA)

1) Type of Resource
1 fitness club   **2** park
3 sport facility   **4** trail
5 community center   **6** church
7 school   **8** plaza
9 green space   **10** combination _____

2) Approximate Size: **1** small **2** medium **3** large

3) Capacity (indoor) _____

4) Cost
1 Free
2 Pay at the door
3 Pay for only certain programs
4 Other _____

5) Signage – Hours   yes ☐   no ☐

6) Hours a) open _____am / pm   b) close _____am / pm

7) Signage – Rules   yes ☐   no ☐

Feature	Rating			
	N/A	*Poor*	*Mediocre*	*Good*
8) Baseball Field	0	1	2	3
9) Basketball Court	0	1	2	3
10) Soccer Field	0	1	2	3
11) Bike Rack	0	1	2	3
12) Exercise Station/Weight Room	0	1	2	3
13) Play Equipment	0	1	2	3
14) Pool > 3 ft deep	0	1	2	3
15) Sandbox	0	1	2	3
16) Sidewalk	0	1	2	3
17) Tennis Court	0	1	2	3
18) Trail – running/biking	0	1	2	3
19) Volleyball Court	0	1	2	3
20) Wading Pool/Splash Pad	0	1	2	3

Amenity	Rating			
	N/A	*Poor*	*Mediocre*	*Good*
21) Access Point	0	1	2	3
22) Bathroom	0	1	2	3
23) Bench	0	1	2	3
24) Decorative Art	0	1	2	3
25) Drinking Fountain	0	1	2	3
26) Landscaping Efforts	0	1	2	3
27) Lighting	0	1	2	3
28) Picnic Table - shaded	0	1	2	3
29) Picnic Table - no shade	0	1	2	3
30) Shelter/Ramada	0	1	2	3
31) Shower/Locker Room	0	1	2	3
32) Trash Container	0	1	2	3

Incivilities	Rating			
	N/A	*Little*	*Some*	*A lot*
33) Broken Glass	0	1	2	3
34) Dog Refuse	0	1	2	3
35) Dogs Unattended	0	1	2	3
36) Evidence of Alcohol Use	0	1	2	3
37) Evidence of Substance Use	0	1	2	3
38) Graffiti/Tagging	0	1	2	3

Incivilities	Rating			
	N/A	*Little*	*Some*	*A lot*
39) Litter	0	1	2	3
40) No Ground Covering	0	1	2	3
41) Noisy Environment	0	1	2	3
42) Overgrown Grass/Weeds	0	1	2	3
43) Sex Paraphernalia	0	1	2	3
44) Vandalism	0	1	2	3

Comments:

If you could improve one thing about this physical activity resource it would be:

Protocol

General Directions
- At an indoor facility, stop at the reception area and introduce yourself to desk staff and/or management. Briefly describe the project, and explain the purpose of your visit.
- If an outdoor location, if possible, drive around the resource perimeter to assess the safety before getting out of the car.
- The outlying boundary for a physical activity resource(s) will be as follows:
    - If a gate is surrounding the physical activity resource, then the physical activity resource will be assessed from the gate in.
    - If there is no gate, but there is a sidewalk, then the physical activity resource will be assessed from the outer edge of the sidewalk in.
    - If there are consecutive posts that signify a boundary, then the physical activity resource will be assessed from those posts in.
    - If there is no clear indicating boundary for the physical activity resource, then the physical activity resource will be assessed from the end of the adjacent street(s) in.

Completing the PARA Fields

Section A – Resource Information
1) *Type of Resource* (circle one)
    - **1**   fitness club – aka health clubs
    - **2**   park – city or county park
    - **3**   sport facility – baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, soccer fields
    - **4**   trail – walking or biking trail (other than sidewalk that is part of a street curb)
    - **5**   community center – public building, may include outdoor space
    - **6**   church or other religious organization
    - **7**   school (may have a joint use agreement or some other way for public to use facility)
    - **8**   plaza
    - **9**   green space
    - **10**   combination of 2 or more resources: describe in detail
2) *Approximate Size* (circle one)
    - **a.**   sm. = Small = ½ square block
    - **b.**   med. = Medium = > ½ square block up to 1 square block
    - **c.**   lg. = Large = > 1 sq. block
3) *Capacity* = (for an indoor facility) The maximum capacity number which should be posted, or ask the management

4) *Cost* = cost for use of facility
    - a.   Free, no charge to use
    - b.   Pay at the door (You must pay to gain entry in the facility)
    - c.   Pay only for certain program (You can use the facility for free, but certain program/classes have a fee)
    - d.   Other (List any other type of cost or payment fee, incl. membership fee)
5) *Signage* – Hours of Operation = place a check on the appropriate box
6) *Hours of Operation* = The hour that the resource opens and closes (use am and pm)
7) *Signage* – Rules of Use = place a check on the appropriate box

Section B - Features
Numbers 8 – 20
Rate each item individually by circling a number. Operational definitions describing each are found below, in the section on *Operational Definitions*.

> *0 = Not Present   1 = Poor   2 = Mediocre   3 = Good*

Special note on item 13) Play Equipment. If it is 'typical' equipment such as a slide, swings, horizontal bar; no description is necessary. When the equipment is unusual, please describe and use the *Comments* space as necessary.

Section C - Amenities
Numbers 21 - 32
Assess for entire resource

Rate each item by circling a number. Operational definitions describing each are found below, in the section on *Operational Definitions*.

> *0 = Not Present   1 = Poor   2 = Mediocre   3 = Good*

Section D - Incivilities
Numbers 33 - 44
Assess for entire resource

Rate each item by circling a number. Operational definitions describing each are found below, in the section on *Operational Definitions*.

> *0 = Not Present   1 = Little/Few   2 = Some   3 = A Lot*

Section E - Comments
Comments = Write any questions or clarifications here. You can also take a picture if you are unsure, to show to your supervisor, or submit to the evaluation team.

If there are major features, amenities, or incivilities present that are not on the list above, you can list them here along with a rating (1, 2, or 3) for them.

If you could improve one thing = As you are considering the resource, what might be one thing that would make it a better place to be physically active?

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (PARA)
PROTOCOL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Operational Definitions

Feature	1 - Poor	2 - Mediocre	3 - Good
8) Baseball Field	Surface of fields is uneven, unsafe, no overhead lighting, no benches for players, fencing in poor condition or nonexistent	Surface of fields is uneven, slightly unsafe, no overhead lighting, + benches for dugouts. Some fencing existent, but not 100% intact	Surface of fields is uniform, no rocks/barriers to running bases, have overhead lighting, + benches for dugouts. Have bleachers for spectators, intact backstop fencing
9) Basketball Court	Court or hoop is in very bad condition, almost unstable	Hoop is missing a net, rim is bent, court has cracks or weeds	Hoop is straight and has a net or chain, court is playable
10) Soccer Field	Grass coverage may be poor in 50% or > of the field, rough surface, hazards and/or trash on the field	Grass coverage may be sparse in a few places, grass may be too high, some trash or debris on field	Field has uniform grass coverage and is well-mowed, no trash or debris on field; nets, if furnished, are intact
11) Bike Rack	Rack is in poor condition, almost unstable or has poor access	Rack is bent, or missing paint, but otherwise usable	Rack is sturdy, usable, may have a few cosmetic blemishes
12) Exercise Station/Weight Room	4 or > stations need major repair – are not safe to use. Signage may be missing or in poor condition for several stations. Path between stations is unsafe. For weight room, 4 or > pieces need maintenance and/or room is unclean and/or unsafe	3 or < stations may need minor repair or maintenance, path between stations need minor improvement. For weight room, 3 or < pieces may need minor maintenance and/or room environment could use improvement	Stations themselves are in good condition and safe. 5 or > stations with safe path between them. For weight room, 5 or > pieces of equipment in good repair
13) Play Equipment	Several pieces are in need of major repair and is almost or unstable, there is a lot of trash, and the ground is overgrown or barren	Some equipment is in need of minor repair, there is some trash, and the ground needs some improvement	In good condition, variety of pieces, ground in good condition, well-kept and clean
14) Pool > 3 ft deep	Swimming pool has very discolored water or too little water; surrounding surface is in need of repair; trash in or around pool – not safe for use	Swimming pool or deck needs minor cleaning or treatment	Swimming pool is clean, well-lit; surrounding surface is safe as well as exit/entry points
15) Sandbox	Sandbox is < or ½ full, and/or needs cleaning (replacement sand). Box itself needs major repair, and is almost unusable	Sandbox is only ¾ full, and is mostly clean; the box or edging could use minor repair	Sandbox has adequate clean sand, all sides/edging are sturdy and there are safe places for children to sit
16) Sidewalk	Sidewalk has major damage and needs repair, almost unusable	Sidewalk has some debris, cracks or uneven surfaces, but otherwise usable	Sidewalk is smooth, clear of debris

17) Tennis Court	Courts have cracked surface, nets are in major need of repair, debris is evident; almost unusable	Court surface and nets are in need of some repair, but otherwise usable	Tennis court surface and nets are in fairly good condition
18) Trail – running/biking	Surface is unsafe in many places, there is a lot of debris, no signage about appropriate use	Surface is in places uneven or in need of minor repair, may be a few hazards or avoidable debris	Surface is smooth, without unmarked hazards or debris; has signage re: appropriate users
19) Volleyball Court	Playing surface has debris or cracks or bumps all over; net is almost unusable or missing	Playing surface has some debris or cracks or has 1 – 5 bumps; net is sagging or has holes	Playing surface is free of debris and smooth; net is in good condition
20) Wading Pool/Splash Pad < 3 ft deep	Pool/Pad has discolored water, or no water; trash in or around pool – not safe for use	Pool/Pad needs minor cleaning or repair	Pool/Pad is clean and well-kept
Amenities	**1 - Poor**	**2 - Mediocre**	**3 - Good**
21) Access Point	Either all or most (50%) appear as potentially unsafe areas, unkempt, not well-marked	At least one access point is not clearly marked. Some may have trash or overgrown grass.	Clearly visible, safe, free of debris or overgrown grass; if gated, works properly
22) Bathroom	Bathroom is not clean, not well-stocked; more than 50% of fixtures are in disrepair	Bathroom is fairly clean, stocked, and most sinks' and toilets' plumbing is in good working order	Bathroom is clean, well-lit, stocked; all plumbing is functioning well
23) Bench all types of affixed seating	Benches are in bad condition, unusable	Benches are missing some paint or boards, may be crooked, but otherwise usable	In good condition but could have minor cosmetic flaws
24) Decorative Art Fountain, Metal Art, Tile Mural, Embellished Wall	Art is in disrepair or defaced. Area at base is in poor shape.	Art is in adequate repair. Area at base could use a little improvement	Art is in good condition; area at base is well-kept
25) Drinking Fountain	Either all or most (50%) are broken	At least 1 of the total fountains not in working operation	Working, clean fountains with clean surrounding area
26) Landscaping Efforts this does not include grass	Trees, shrubs, flowering plants, or cactus appear dead or more than 50% overgrown with weeds (does not include grass)	Trees, shrubs, flowering plants or cactus in ground, but do not appear healthy and/or colorful; existing weeds	Attractive live trees, shrubs, flowering plants and/or cactus; perhaps decorative material such as rock or mulch
27) Lighting for an outdoor resource such as a park, this is within the boundaries	Area has limited lighting, inadequate for safety	Areas has some lighting	Area or building has effective overhead lighting which is sufficient for safety
28) Picnic Table - shaded	Tables are in need of major repair, unclean, almost unusable	Tables are usable, but need minor repair, partially clean	Tables are sturdy and in good condition, clean
29) Picnic Table – no shade	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above

30) Shelter/Ramada	Structures are not intact – so rain would get into area; if seating/tables are present, they are in major need of repair or are missing	Structures are in need of some repair, provide protection from weather; if seating/tables are present they are usable but need minor repair	Structures are intact, provide protection from weather; if seating/tables are present, they are clean
31) Shower/Locker Room	Unclean, may not be well-lit, inadequate dressing space or receptacles provided; plumbing is almost unusable	Most areas are clean, lockers and/or dressing space provided (but is inadequate); plumbing could be improved, but works	Clean, well-lit, lockers and/or dressing space provided; plumbing works well
32) Trash Container	Unclean and/or in poor condition, more care needed; full with trash or overflowing	Partially unclean or in < perfect condition, but scattered; unstable	Clean on exterior, distributed throughout, not overflowing with trash

Incivilities	1 - Little/few	2 - Some	3 - A lot
33) Broken Glass	A few pieces of broken glass (the equivalent of 1 bottle)	Several pieces of broken glass (the equivalent of 2 – 4 bottles)	Many pieces of broken glass (5+ bottles)
34) Dog Refuse	1 refuse pile from dog	2 – 4 dogs refuse piles from dogs	5 or > refuse piles from dogs
35) Dogs Unattended	1 dog unattended	2 – 4 dogs unattended; may be associated noise	5 or > dogs unattended, definitely unsafe; may be associated noise
36) Evidence of Alcohol Use	1 bottle, can, or bottle cap visible	2 – 4 bottles, cans, or bottle caps visible	5 or > bottles, cans, or bottle caps visible
37) Evidence of Substance Use	1 piece: syringe, paint can, rag, baggie, rolling paper	2 – 4 pieces: syringes, paint cans, rags, baggies, rolling papers	5 or > pieces: syringes, paint cans, rags, baggies, rolling papers
38) Graffiti/Tagging	1-3 small	4+ small or 1 large	2 + large
39) Litter	A few items (<5) are on the ground	Several items (5-10) are on the ground	Many items are on the ground (11+)
40) No Ground Covering	A small area without ground covering	A moderate portion of the area without ground cover	A large area without ground cover (more than with ground cover)
41) Noisy Environment	Sound is not irritating, but is (hardly) noticeable	Sound(s) is (are) noticeable and interfere(s) with enjoyment of resources	Noticeable sounds which are unpleasant; reaction is to leave area
42) Overgrown Grass/Weeds	A little bit, hardly noticeable	A moderate amount, noticeable	A lot, very noticeable; may be obstructing some equipment
43) Sex Paraphernalia	1 used or unused contraceptive devices and/or 1 piece of pornographic reading material visible	2 - 4 used or unused contraceptive devices and/or 2 - 4 pieces of pornographic reading material visible	5 or > used or unused contraceptive devices and/or 5 or > pieces of pornographic reading material visible
44) Vandalism	Hardly noticeable, but it appears up to a few pieces of equipment or an area of indoor space has been defaced	Noticeable, more than a few pieces of equipment are vandalized, or < 50 % of the space has been rendered unusable by vandalism	Very noticeable, more equipment in disrepair than in good order; between 50%-100%, signs of vandalism are obvious