

Community Engagement Assessment

Please fill out this form if your project, program, or initiative includes community engagement. All Community Engagement Assessments should be filed as Petitions and Communications with the MPRB Board of Commissioners and submitted to the MPRB Engagement Portal on SharePoint.

Staff Lead: Andy Schilling

Division/Department: Design and Project Management

Level of Engagement: Consult

Project, Program, or Initiative Name: Willard Park Improvements

Project Description (100 words recommended):

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board seeks to revitalize worn facilities within Willard Park including improvements to expanded park area. Prior to this work, MPRB will acquire on a fee title transfer Minneapolis Public Schools' (MPS) 2.4 acres immediately adjacent to the existing 1.16 acres at Willard Park, expanding the park by over 200% to 3.56 acres. The deed transfer will protect the whole park into perpetuity. The proposed program will upgrade and/or replace existing facilities at the park, which are worn, past their useful life, and pose safety hazards. The project will reconstruct most facilities in the park according to a community-driven long-range plan: play area, basketball courts, pathways, skate-spot elements, athletic field amenities, an outdoor community gathering area with seating and shade furnishings, trees and turf to pollinator habitat conversion, and a restroom/storage building to serve the park.

Review the criteria to determine the level of engagement that your program, project, or initiative falls under. Provide an explanation of how your project meets the criteria in the Justification section below.

Level of Engagement	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner
Engagement Goal	To provide stakeholders with factual, accessible, balanced, and timely information to help them understand the project, program, or initiative.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on project, initiative, or program analysis, alternatives, or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that perspectives are consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project, program, or initiative decisions.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision making in order to develop and implement collaborative project, program, or initiative solutions.
Criteria to Determine Level of Engagement (Which level of engagement best describes your project?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a decision that should be based on technical, operational, or safety constraints only. This is a project, program, or initiative that does not result in a change in the type, location, or extent of the current facility or service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project takes place in a park that has been master planned. This a new city-wide initiative or program. This is a new public policy or public policy update. The outcome is likely to change based on community input. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project requires a CAC. This project does not have other policy guidance such as an existing master plan or public policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This program, project, or initiative is being developed in partnership with another agency or organization.
MPRB Promise	MPRB will keep you informed.	MPRB will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, work to integrate stakeholder feedback into the alternatives, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and to incorporate recommendations to the extent possible.	The MPRB and partner entity will be accountable to their roles as negotiated in the partnership and regularly evaluate overall success of the partnership.
Examples of project types	Repaving a parking lot, cutting down a tree, beach or swimming pool closures, ADA improvements, rehab	Approved master plan design implementation, city or service area wide program development, public policy development, Participatory Project Scoping	Master plans, any process that includes a formal public body making recommendations.	Jointly owned and/or operated facilities, co-creation, public/private partnership, community led projects.

This engagement grid was adapted from the IAP2 International Federation 2014 Public Participation Spectrum.

Justification (100 words recommended): Please explain how your project meets the criteria in the Engagement Grid on pg. 2. Provide a justification for each criterion corresponding to the Level of Engagement that will guide your project.

This project is included in the North Service Area Parks Plan. Community and staff feedback gathered throughout the project will help to inform the outcome. Updates on the project will be shared at key project milestones along the way.



Date of Board P+C: 7/16/2025

Date of Board Approval (for CAC's only):

Date of Most Recent Update:

Please fill out this form if your project, program, or initiative includes community engagement beyond the "Inform" level. All Community Engagement Plans should be filed as Petitions and Communications with the MPRB Board of Commissioners and submitted to the MPRB Engagement Portal on SharePoint (<https://minneapolisparcs.sharepoint.com/planning/SitePages/Home.aspx>.)

Staff Lead: Andy Schilling

Department or Division: Design and Project Management

Project Name: Willard Park Improvements

Engagement Level: Consult

This plan serves as a guide for the community engagement process for the Willard Park Improvements project. The plan may be modified as circumstance warrants during project duration. Substantial modifications are to be communicated to stakeholders and the MPRB Board of Commissioners.

As required by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Community Engagement Policy, this project requires a Community Engagement Plan because the project falls under the Consult category of community engagement for which MPRB is required to obtain stakeholder feedback on project, initiative, or program analysis, alternatives, or decisions. This CE Plan was used with a GARE Racial Equity Tool Kit framework.

Key Stakeholders should be engaged in the creation of this plan. Please explain who was engaged:

This is to be filled out before the CE Plan is submitted to the Board as a P+C.

NRRC Near North and Willard Neighborhood Association

North Commons Rec Center (MPRB contacts)

Youth Engagement - Delshon Strickland

1. Project Description

1a. Project Overview:

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board seeks to revitalize worn facilities within Willard Park including improvements to expanded park area. Prior to this work, MPRB will acquire on a fee title transfer Minneapolis Public Schools' (MPS) 2.4 acres immediately adjacent to the existing 1.16 acres at Willard Park, expanding the park by over 200% to 3.56 acres. The deed transfer will protect the whole park into perpetuity. The proposed program will upgrade and/or replace existing facilities at the park, which are worn, past their useful life, and pose safety hazards. The project will reconstruct most

facilities in the park according to a community-driven long-range plan: play area, basketball courts, pathways, skate-spot elements, athletic field amenities, an outdoor community gathering area with seating and shade furnishings, trees and turf to pollinator habitat conversion, and a restroom/storage building to serve the park.

1b. MPRB Outcomes:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Goal: | Strategy: |
| 03. Provide core services with care | 3.11: Design and implement parks that are welcoming, climate resilient, ecologically healthy, playful, beautiful and safe as they age. |
| 05. Expand focus on health equity | 5.11: Encourage and support healthy play for all ages and abilities. |

1c. Project Timeline:

Fall 2025 – Winter 2025/2026

- Community Engagement and Concept Development

Winter 2026 – Spring 2026

- Design and Construction Documents

Summer 2026 – Fall 2027

- Construction

1d. Project Funding:

<u>Capital Sources</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
NPP20	\$1,398,000	
Neighborhood Capital Levy	\$100,000	n/a

<u>Supplemental Sources</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
Federal Funding	\$1,300,000	9/30/2027

Total:	\$2,798,000	
--------	-------------	--

2. Project Data:

2a. What are the boundaries of the community engagement area?

Willard-Hay neighborhood and City of Minneapolis

2b. What are the demographics of the community engagement area?

Total Population

Minneapolis	Willard -Hay neighborhood
426,877	8,942

Age by Percentage of the Population

Age	Minneapolis	Willard -Hay neighborhood
Under 18 years	19.1%	32.3%
Over 18 years	80.9%	68.4%

Race by Percentage of the Population

Race	Minneapolis	Willard -Hay neighborhood
American Indian and Alaska Native	3.1%	N/A
Asian	6.7%	7.0%
Black or African American	21.6%	40.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	Combined with 'Asian' above
White	69.6%	29.2%
Some other race	7.3%	N/A
Two or more races	7.8%	7.4%

Percentage of the Population that Speaks a Language Other than English at Home

Minneapolis	Willard -Hay neighborhood
21.0%	24.0%

Population with a Disability

Minneapolis	Willard -Hay neighborhood
11.2%	14.0%

Source: MN Compass

2c. List any key findings or excerpts from relevant plans or policies that are informing this project, program or initiative, especially if community was engaged in the policy or plan: *The purpose of community research is to collect data that will best inform specific project decisions or strategic direction and support the policy goals of effective community engagement. Research completed in advance of and during project development may include review of previously completed directives or mandates, activity plans, master plans, community studies, industry trends and historical and demographic data. MPRB staff is responsible for determining the research data necessary to support and document decision-making for a project and building off prior community engaged planning, policy, and design.*

North Service Area Parks Plan - 2019

2d. What are the data gaps? What additional research needs to be done to understand the project stakeholders and project scope?

Understanding the changes in dynamics to the park with the recent sale of the school buildings for redevelopment

- Understanding what impacts, if any, to the Queen Ave N trail with the developer purchase
- Understanding any new connections/access from building/developer location to the park (e.g. walkway or steps)
- Understanding whether there are any programming opportunities or changes to Willard given North Commons expansion.

3. Community Engagement:

3a. Identify Project Stakeholders

Project Stakeholder <i>(students, ethnic communities, neighborhood groups, community leaders)</i>	Outreach: How will you reach out to the stakeholder? <i>(i.e. go to parks, neighborhood listserv, engage with cultural media)</i>	Engagement: How will they participate? <i>(i. e. online survey, focus group, community open house, intercept survey)</i>	Reflecting Back: How will stakeholder groups be reflected back to about the project progress or outcomes? <i>(Posted on project website, ribbon cutting, e-blast, site visit, celebration)</i>
Youth	On-site signage, talk with people on site, reach out to MPRB staff and organizations that program the space for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys – online and/or intercept - Focus group - Open house - Community events 	Project website, GovDelivery, direct email to people who program the space for youth
Queen ave n trail users – new and existing	On-site signage, social media, neighborhood newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys – online and/or intercept - Open house - Community events 	Project website and GovDelivery
Surrounding community and residents	On-site signage, social media, neighborhood newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys – online and/or intercept - Open house - Community events 	Project website and GovDelivery
Skaters interested in the skate spot locations / City of Skate	On-site signage, talk with people on site, direct email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys – online and/or intercept - Focus group - Open house - Community events 	Project website, GovDelivery, direct email to people who program the space
Basketball Groups or associations	On-site signage, talk with people on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys – online and/or intercept - Focus group or meetings with organization reps - Open house - Community events 	Direct email, project website and GovDelivery

NRRC Willard Hay neighborhood association	Direct email	- Surveys – online and/or intercept - Neighborhood meeting - Open house - Community events	Direct email, project website and GovDelivery
---	--------------	---	---

If needed, describe the outreach, engagement, or reflection methods you will use that are referenced above:

3b. Advisory Committees:

Technical Advisory Committee: This roster is a list of agencies and groups that are on the TAC
N/A

Project Advisory Committee: This roster is a list of MPRB departments and divisions that are on the PAC
Asset Management
Communications and Marketing
Environmental Management
Forestry
Park Police
Recreation Centers and Programs
Strategic Planning

3c. Will a Community Advisory Committee be required for this project, program, or initiative?

No

4. Analysis:

4a. What questions will you be asking community to respond to in your outreach and engagement?

Examples:

- *What makes a successful basketball venue – court layout?*
- *What kind of playground features do you prefer?*
- *How may art be integrated into the project?*
- *What types of shade and seating furnishings do you prefer?*
- *What design approaches promote safety and placemaking?*

4b. How will your community engagement outreach, engagement, and methods make MPRB a more equitable system?

Engagement and implementation of this project will help to raise awareness about Willard Park and create an improved destination for people to enjoy within the park system. Reaching out to youth as part of this project could contribute to increasing the portion of youth voices impacting design decisions.

4c. Identify one or more key project milestones when project evaluation will be performed

Draft design review

5. Evaluation Summary: *To be completed at one or more project milestones as identified in 4c.*

5a. Who was engaged during the process? *(i.e. demographic info from online survey participants, the CAC, and community engagement whenever possible. Refer back to Section 2 in the CE Plan and how your engagement reflects the diversity of the community in the engagement area.)*

5b. How did the engagement inform the project outcome? *(i.e. public tabulation and amendments following a public comment period)*

5c. Please describe any new or innovative engagement methods used during the process:

5d. What recommendations do you have for future engagement around this topic, park, or area?

5e. What, if any, were the unintended outcomes of your CE Plan?

5g. Were there any barriers to successful implementation of your CE Plan?

5h. Were you adequately resourced, including staff support, expertise, and funding?

5i. If applicable, how can this project, program, or initiative, or MPRB continue to partner and deepen relationships with underrepresented communities?