



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**Project Title: RecQuest**

**MPRB Division: Recreation/Planning**

**Project Manager: Jamie Neldner**

---

This plan serves as a guide for the community engagement process through the multiple phases of planning and project development for RecQuest. The plan is a living document and will be modified as the project progresses and additional stakeholders and engagement methods are identified. Substantial modifications are to be communicated to stakeholders and the MPRB Board of Commissioners.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The MPRB operates 47 year-round, neighborhood-based recreation centers, and leases two recreation centers to non-profit entities. Most facilities were built in the 1960s and 1970s and are nearing the end of their useful life. In addition, the centers are not keeping pace with changing demographics and recreation trends of Minneapolis. Therefore, the MPRB is embarking on a critical effort to develop a plan – RecQuest – for the next generation of recreation centers in Minneapolis. RecQuest will set the stage for the next 25-30 years of capital improvements for recreation centers, and is an opportunity to tailor recreation center facilities and programs to meet the current and projected recreation needs of communities across the city.

RecQuest will:

- Engage MPRB staff and the community in a collaborative process to inform how the MPRB can best serve current and projected park and recreation needs of communities through recreation center programs and facilities;
- Assess community recreation needs for recreation center programming and facilities;
- Provide a vision for the next generation of recreation center programs and facilities;
- Compile, create, analyze, and illustrate city-wide recreation center facility use and program data;
- Outline guiding principles for management and operations of recreation center facilities; and
- Articulate a 25-30 year investment strategy for recreation centers.

Considering changes in demographics across the city and the fact that RecQuest will set the vision for the next generation of park users citywide, applying a racial equity lens to the planning process will ensure the needs of under-represented and underserved communities are included in the final plan. To augment the MPRB's work to build its capacity around racial equity, Voices for Racial Justice (VRJ) has been contracted to provide guidance and direction for a racial equity impact assessment (REIA) for RecQuest. The staff project team will work with VRJ toward the goal of ensuring that historically

**Community Engagement Plan**

RecQuest

Page 2

underrepresented communities, in particular communities of color, are authentically and actively engaged in project decision making.

RecQuest will take into account existing system plans and concurrent planning efforts (ADA Transition Plan, Service Area Master Plans, Closing the Gap: Investing in our Neighborhood Parks).

Project PhasesThe project will unfold in three general phases:

- **Phase 1: What is.** From November 2014 -August 2015. Staff will establish internal advisory committees, develop a communications plan, develop and implement the community engagement plan, and gather relevant internal data about facilities and programs. Staff will work closely with the hired consultant team to research, map, and begin to communicate existing recreation center programs and facilities. This phase will focus on inventories of programs and services offered, current practices, and facility amenities.
- **Phase 2: What can be.** From August 2015- December 2015. Based on a common understanding of how community centers currently operate and serve community park and recreation needs, staff and the consultant team will work with the community to develop a vision and possible scenarios for recreation centers.
- **Phase 3: What will be.** From January 2016-March 2016  
Staff and consultant team will work with the community to determine preferred scenario.

The following table shows funding sources and uses for RecQuest:

<u>Sources</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
<b>General Fund (Recreation)</b>	\$230,000	n/a
<b>General Fund (Community Outreach)</b>	\$15,000	December 2015

**Engagement Recommendation: Level of Engagement: Collaborate**

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Partner</b>
<b>Engagement Goal:</b>	<i>To provide stakeholders with factual, balanced, and timely information to help them understand the project.</i>	<i>To obtain stakeholder feedback on project analysis, alternatives, or decisions.</i>	<i>To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that perspectives are consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project decisions.</i>	<i>To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision making in order to develop and implement collaborative project solutions.</i>

**Community Engagement Plan**

RecQuest

Page 3

<b><i>MPRB Promise to the Public:</i></b>	<i>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed.</i>	<i>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and work to ensure stakeholder feedback is reflected in alternatives developed.</i>	<i>The MPRB will work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate recommendations to the maximum extent possible.</i>	<i>The MPRB and partner entity will be accountable to their roles as negotiated in the partnership and regularly evaluate overall success of the partnership.</i>
---	--	--	--	---

**Anticipated Project Outcomes**

The primary outcome will be a plan that provides a guiding vision and principles for operations, maintenance, programming, and capital improvements for neighborhood recreation centers that:

- Is data driven and responsive to targets of estimated recreation needs/trends as identified by reliable data sources.
- Is informed by a public input from a diverse range of viewpoints.
- Establishes strategic actions that are relevant, measurable and achievable.
- Is a deliberate and balanced approach to addressing current and future recreation needs of all communities in Minneapolis.
- Utilizes racial equity impact analysis to identify and address disparities.

The project supports the following elements of the MPRB Comprehensive Plan:

- Theme: Dynamic parks that shape city character
  - Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.
  - Goal: Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility, and beauty.
  - Goal: Focused land management supports current and future generations.
- Theme: Recreation that inspires personal growth, healthy lifestyles, and a sense of community
  - Goal: Parks provide a center for community living.

**Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities**

Participants are expected to engage in the process in a manner that promotes respectful civil discourse and enhances mutual understanding of all stakeholder viewpoints. Any requests for public or project information should be directed to the project manager.

**Identification of Project Stakeholders**

RecQuest is designed to engage, in some way, residents and community partners who are or could be involved with MPRB’s recreation centers. Therefore, the various public outreach methods will attempt to notify, involve and engage as many people as possible. The engagement process will require both broad and intensive connections, with a special focus on residents and stakeholders who have been historically underserved by the MPRB.

## Community Engagement Plan

RecQuest

Page 4

To focus the outreach process, six different stakeholder groups have been identified:

- *Recreation center users* includes anyone who interfaces with recreation centers, such as program participants, event attendees, drop-in participants, coaches, volunteers, parents, siblings and individuals and groups who reserve center facilities.
- *Recreation center non-users* includes anyone who has no interaction with recreation centers or their programming.
- *Underrepresented groups* includes any population group whose perspectives are not traditionally captured in public outreach efforts or who have been historically underserved by the MPRB.
- *Recreation interest groups* includes the myriad of groups and leagues involved with recreation center programming, many of which have their own member lists.
- *Community partners* includes a wide range of community service organizations, media outlets, local business, faith/religious organizations, schools/universities, health services organizations, foundations and neighborhood associations.
- *Government entities* includes appointed commissions and committees, elected officials and administrators.

Work has already begun to create an extensive contact list of stakeholders and community partner organizations that may be involved in the planning process. In collaboration with Community Outreach staff, extensive work has been done to identify organizations that serve historically underrepresented communities. These organizations will be engaged throughout RecQuest, to the level of their desire, to assist with reaching out to the communities they serve and to continue to build authentic, long-term relationships with MPRB staff.

### Demographics

The engagement process also will take into consideration community demographics to ensure that different demographic groups are represented. A demographic overview is presented below to better understand the different populations to be served.

According to the 2009-2013 5-year ACS data, the estimated population of Minneapolis in 2013 was 400,070, which would represent a 4.6 percent increase from the 2010 decennial census. This is slightly more than twice the growth rate of the state as a whole (2.2 percent). Women account for just under half of the City's total population at 49.7 percent. By age, the City's breakdown is as follows:

Age Range	Percent (as of 2010)
Persons under 5 years	6.9
Persons under 18 years	20.2
Persons over 18 and under 65 years	71.8
Persons 65 years and over	8.0

As of the 2010 data, nearly two-thirds of the population in Minneapolis identifies as white alone (63.8 percent). This makes the City significantly more racially diverse than the state as a whole, where 85.3 percent identifies as white alone. The full racial composition of Minneapolis is as follows:

## Community Engagement Plan

RecQuest

Page 5

Race	Percent (as of 2010)
White alone	63.8
Black or African American alone	18.6
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2.0
Asian alone	5.6
Two or More Races	4.4
Hispanic or Latino	10.5

A wide range of demographic data is needed to recognize the more complete picture of city's population. A sample of this information, generated from the 2009-2013 5-year ACS data, is below. While these numbers are just estimates, they provide a reliable baseline for moving forward.

Category	Measure
Foreign born persons	15.2%
Language other than English spoken at home for population over age 5	20.3%
High school graduate or higher for population over age 25	88.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher for population over age 25	45.7%
Households	165,438
Median household income	\$49,885
Persons below poverty level	22.5%

Different outreach and engagement strategies will be used to reach out to different demographic groups. The project team will utilize culturally appropriate outreach and engagement methods and will provide language translation and interpretation as needed. To ensure the final plan is reflective of the park and recreation needs of the city as a whole, the project team will develop engagement methods for users and non-users of the current recreation centers and programs based on the following categories:

- Race and ethnicity
- Primary language spoken
- Gender/gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Education level
- Socio- economic status/employment status
- Type of household- (family composition as well as renters/homeowners)
- Geographic location
- Age- youth, young adults (including college students), seniors
- Disability status

A number of outreach and engagement tools have been proposed for RecQuest. Some outreach methods are needed to inform residents and stakeholders about the planning process and opportunities to be involved. Others engagement activities are designed to collect feedback and

consult with residents on options for recreation center enhancement, reaching as many people as possible. Additionally, special techniques are needed to collaborate with partners and key stakeholders to achieve project outcomes. In addition, meetings with four advisory groups are proposed to provide direction, guidance and decision-making throughout the project.

The methods and tools proposed for this project are noted below.

*Outreach Methods and Tools*

- **Contact List.** This will be used to send out e-notices and other project information. All those who sign in or provide contact information during the project will be added to the contact list.
- **Project Comment Email.** A single project comment email will be created for placement on all public engagement materials, agendas and online.
- **Public Information Updates.** These are short blocks of text that can be used for website content, email blasts, newsletters and press releases. They will be produced at regular points during the process, timed to announce engagement activities or delivery of key work products.
- **Social Media Campaign.** The social media campaign will use established social media sites (i.e. Facebook and Twitter) to generate participation and dialogue. This will include a production schedule of tweets and postings, and should include consideration of paid promotions.
- **Information Posters.** Information posters can include a brief project description, QR code and link to the project website to reach the online questionnaires and other project information. These posters should be displayed at other Service Area Master Plan meetings and Closing the Gap meetings. Posters can also be displayed in recreation centers lobbies, in computer labs, and at other community locations to advertise opportunities to be involved in the RecQuest planning process.
- **Flyers/Business Cards.** Small flyers or business cards for distribution can include a QR code and link to the project website to reach online questionnaires and other project information.
- **Media Outlets.** Press releases and communications through various media channels include opportunities for both earned and paid media in print, radio and television.

*Engagement Methods and Tools*

- **Listening Sessions.** These are informal events designed to encourage participation from traditionally underserved groups. Participants can share their thoughts in a welcoming environment while developing trust with community organizations and City staff. MPRB staff, in collaboration with Voices for Racial Justice and the Hope Community, will host up to 10 listening sessions.
- **Neighborhood Organization Roundtables.** Particularly when held in neighborhood meeting places, roundtables provide neighborhood organizations with a comfortable, informal outlet for expressing their ideas and concerns. These work well when held within walking distance of neighbors, and are critically important where neighborhood organizations are or could be involved in funding recreation programs. Two roundtable sessions have already been completed.
- **Intercept Events.** Intercepts take the planning process to community events that are already occurring and to locations where people already gather (including recreation centers). Using posters with questions, short questionnaires, or other tools, people can then contribute feedback on the spot. This method is effective in reaching people who otherwise would not participate in the planning process, as well as people who are not inclined to attend meetings or go online. Intercept events can also be used as a fun and engaging way to advertise the online questionnaire

or project website for people who would like additional information or to provide more detailed comments.

- **Stakeholder Interviews.** These short, one-on-one interviews with key partners or representatives of stakeholder groups (or recreation interest groups) may occur in person or on the phone. This format allows for confidential discussion of issues that participants may not discuss in an open forum.
- **Focus Groups.** Focus groups are small group meetings, usually with invited or recruited participants that share a similar interest. These are often organized by specific topics or target populations to obtain more detailed feedback and discussion.
- **Online/Paper Questionnaires.** An online questionnaire will be developed and administered to allow people to participate at the time and place of their choosing (even in recreation center computer labs). Similar paper versions of the questionnaire can be available for people who do not have online capabilities or resources. Questionnaires can be publicized using the contact list, social media sites and blog. If publicized properly, online methods are more effective than traditional meetings at generating participation from younger adults, professionals, and families with children.
- **Community Workshops.** In community workshops, participants are engaged in a facilitated exercise or review of materials to provide specific feedback or help provide the direction needed for future decisions. An online workshop can be paired with a traditional face-to-face workshop to broaden participation.
- **Workshop Kits.** Workshop kits are “meetings in a box”, where an agenda, activity, and feedback form allow people to host their own input meetings and provide feedback.
- **Public hearing.** A public hearing will be held at the end of the project when the plan is presented to the Board for approval.
- **Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings.** A minimum of three community advisory committee meetings will be convened for this project, a detailed description of the CAC is below.

#### **Advisory Committee Overview**

The project advisory groups are described in more detail below. Advisory committee and Board members are important stakeholders in the project who typically represent different interests. As representatives, they can be involved in reaching out to different communities and interest groups through communications and, where appropriate, open public hearings.

#### **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**

An **appointed** Community Advisory Committee is recommended, based on the MPRB’s Community Engagement Policy, because RecQuest will set a vision and make recommendations for citywide design, program, operations, and maintenance. The RecQuest CAC will be primarily engaged in providing stakeholder feedback on vision, goals, and objectives. An appointed CAC will assist with community outreach, review, and communication of the plan. It is important to note that the CAC is one tool in the overall community engagement plan for RecQuest.

The recommended composition and charge of the CAC was designed in consultation with Voices for Racial Justice. The project team will implement new strategies aimed at increasing the pool of CAC applicants and is proposing a CAC composition that will ensure that the CAC is reflective of the diversity of the City of Minneapolis. To ensure shared language and to set the foundation for the CAC, the project team (including staff and VRJ) will provide training for CAC members on racial equity and the use of racial equity tools in decision-making.

**The charge of appointed CAC for RecQuest is to:**

- Work collaboratively and provide input toward final project recommendations for approval by the Board of Commissioners.
- Become knowledgeable about the project and its scope and advise MPRB staff and consultants throughout the planning process.
- Contribute to broad community outreach and engagement by enhancing the project's interaction with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Understand and represent the needs of all community members.
- Apply equity principles in decision-making based on training provided by staff and project consultants.
- Report back to appointers or appointing bodies, as requested, on the plan process, information presented, and possible recommendations.
- Evaluate potential scenarios and deliver a preferred, actionable alternative for recreation centers and programs to the Board of Commissioners.

Since this project impacts all neighborhood recreation centers and facilities, the CAC is proposed to include members appointed by Commissioners as well as a slate of up to four additional members as needed to ensure representation on the CAC is reflective of the diverse population of Minneapolis. A slate of recommended candidates will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners who will be the final appointing authority. In considering the need for recommended additional appointments, demographic diversity will be considered in the same terms as other stakeholders targeted in the project.

Once the CAC composition and charge is approved by the Board, an application will be posted on the project webpage. Applicants will be sought by the staff and consultant project team utilizing existing tools including: notices on MPRB website, news releases through media outlets, outreach to key community leaders, neighborhood and community organization newsletters, email notification, personal invitation from Commissioners to apply. In addition, the listening sessions that will be convened in collaboration with Voices for Racial Justice and Hope Community will be used to identify potential interested CAC members. Project team staff and VRJ will actively recruit listening session participants who articulate an interest in becoming more involved in RecQuest decision making to apply for the CAC and will connect interested applicants with appointers. In addition to identifying emerging community leaders, the goal is to forge relationships between underrepresented community members and MPRB staff and Commissioners.

Staff will provide regular reports to Commissioners of the appointments that have been made so that Commissioners are aware of how their appointments fit in with appointments made by others with the goal of ensuring diverse community representation.

**Community Engagement Plan**

RecQuest

Page 9

<u>Appointing entity or person</u>	<u>No. of CAC appointees</u>
Park Board President Wielinski (appoints chairperson)	3
Commissioner Tabb	2
Commissioner Olson	2
Commissioner Forney	2
Commissioner Erwin	2
Commissioner Young	2
Commissioner Vreeland	2
Commissioner Bourn	2
Commissioner Musich	2
Board approved slate	Up to 4
<hr/>	
	Up to 23

Project Steering Committee

A project steering committee has been established to provide decision-making and frequent oversight of the entire project. The committee will be a small group comprised of MPRB Planning, MPRB Recreation, MPRB Community Outreach and Access, MPRB Communications and Marketing, MPRB Administration and MPRB Environmental Stewardship.

Technical Advisors (TAC)

Staff will convene a TAC of key advisors from other agencies. Staff may meet with these advisors in small groups or individually, as schedules and needs warrant. The TAC will provide technical insight into the research, outreach, planning, and proposed vision and goals associated with the project. The TAC will assist with understanding of organizational processes and capabilities as they relate to the plan, and will then assist with acceptance and institutionalization of the plan. The TAC will include representatives from the following agencies:

- Minneapolis Public Schools
- City of Minneapolis
- Youth Coordinating Board
- Hennepin County Library Board

Project Schedule

The attached Engagement Tools and Targets matrix lists populations identified as engagement targets; provides a description of each target; contains a preliminary list of existing organizations or groups correlated with that segment (as identified by MPRB staff); and identifies potential tools effective at reaching that target or segment. Note that if a group or organization correlates with more than one segment, it will appear more than once in the matrix. This matrix will continue to evolve as additional organizations and groups are identified for outreach and engagement.

Different groups will be engaged at different levels through all three phases of the project. Below is an overview of several primary engagement methods tied to key outcomes for each phase.

Outreach methods and tools (e.g., information posters, social media campaign, website information updates, press releases) should be developed/distributed at the onset of public outreach, with regular updates in the course of the project.

**Phase 1: What is.** From November 2014 -August 2015

- Phase 1 involves broad-based outreach to introduce residents to RecQuest, gather information on the current facility use, programs, and partnerships, and identify community recreation needs. The following methods are anticipated to be used (additional methods may be added, as needed):
  - Listening Sessions
  - Neighborhood Organization Roundtables
  - Intercept Events – these may be tied to citywide meetings for Closing the Gap, RecQuest, Service Area Master Planning
- The information will be shared and reviewed at a Community Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting toward the end of the phase. The CAC will share their knowledge about park and recreation needs of residents for recreation center and programs, ensure project stakeholders are well represented in the process, recommend approaches to reaching stakeholders if they have been missed, and review common themes of engagement and data collected on facilities.

**Phase 2: What can be.** From August 2015- December 2015

- To determine a vision and possible scenarios for the next generation of recreation centers and programs, the following methods will be used (additional methods may be added, as needed)::
  - Questionnaire (online and paper)
  - Stakeholder Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - Community Workshops
- The information collected and compiled from these engagement methods will be shared and reviewed at a Community Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting toward the end of the phase. The CAC and TAC will recommend a vision and possible scenarios for recreation centers and programs based on feedback received throughout phase 2.

**Phase 3: What will be.** From January 2016-March 2016

- To determine a preferred scenario for enhancing recreation centers, the following methods will be used (additional methods may be added, as needed):
  - Focus Groups
  - Community Workshop
  - Workshop Kits
- The information collected and compiled from these engagement methods will be shared and reviewed at a Community Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting toward the end of the phase. The CAC and TAC will recommend a preferred scenario for recreation centers and programs.

**Final Approval:** Public Hearing, April 2016

## **Community Engagement Plan**

RecQuest

Page 11

### Resources

A portion of the funding dedicated to staff time and consultant fees will be utilized for public engagement. In addition, the project budget includes costs of mailings and other notifications.

### Evaluation Summary

Following project completion, the project manager will analyze the effectiveness of the engagement process from both stakeholder and organization points of view and will provide a brief summary statement. The summary statement will indicate how the process advances policy goals, and will assist the Board and staff in evaluating and informing an ongoing community engagement process.

**Summary Statement:** *Statement pending plan completion.*