

April 2009

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board |



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## I. RECOMMENDATIONS

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For the past seven months, GreenMark has reviewed the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) efforts in sustainability. Our analysis has culminated in the following sustainability report, intended to serve as 1) a review of the challenges and opportunities with existing resources and personnel; and 2) a strategic blueprint for the MPRB to realize and sustain its core mission to parks and recreational services.

The MPRB already has key assets in place to address sustainability more intentionally: a core team that has previously given thought to how to apply sustainability to the park system; an energy audit of select buildings to improve their efficiency is underway; a sample purchasing policy to inform the creation of one that is more specific to the MPRB, to name a few. However, staff members are not well-informed of the MPRB's current efforts in sustainability and there is no consensus about how to move sustainability efforts forward. Moreover, while the Sustainability Team previously recommended the hiring of a full-time sustainability coordinator, we recommend pursuing a model whereby sustainability is a responsibility to be shared among all personnel, in part, so staffing costs can be minimized and funds allocated to off-set direct "first costs" associated with greener operations and programs.

An economic model that focuses on operational savings and new revenue should be applied to all sustainability efforts, always aiming to innovate in ways that improve the environment without long-term operational and capital outlays that harm the viability of other MPRB programs.

Through a coordinated series of efforts to create economic, environmental and equity advantage for the MPRB, we provide "**Sustainability 2013**" a strategic outline for 1) **creating** the foundation to clearly articulate what sustainability means for the MPRB; 2) **activating** the MPRB's existing assets in addressing issues of sustainability; 3) **innovating** signature projects and relationships that will help to leverage new assets, deliver higher quality services to customers and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Minneapolis; and 4) **communicating** the MPRB's initiatives to cement relationships with key audiences, attract public buy-in, and bring other jurisdictions to the table. Implemented in concert, these efforts will help the MPRB become *the* park and recreation system of the future.

### Create

The MPRB's commitment to sustainability is guided by its vision to be the "premier destination that welcomes and captivates residents and visitors," and to inspire residents to be stewards of the park system. In order to achieve the greatest impact, the

MPRB should **create** a framework, within which it will address environmental, economic and equity concerns. The first step is to define what it means to implement sustainability as a core value in the next five years.

### **Sustainability Statement and Goals**

It is recommended that the Board first draft and adopt a Sustainability Statement or some enduring proclamation of what sustainability means for the MPRB and its constituents. This is important as a signal to the entire organization that the MPRB is serious about embracing sustainability as a core organizational characteristic and should inaugurate the series of efforts to be undertaken. Five-year goals will serve as a critical internal and external guidepost and will establish specific criteria against which the MPRB will measure and communicate its progress.

### **Organizational Structure**

Precisely because sustainability is a core organizational value, the MPRB should make sustainability a new responsibility for people in their existing positions rather than creating new jobs or building a separate sustainability-related department. The Board has created a line item for a Sustainability Coordinator position in the 2008 and 2009 Budgets. This is one of several positions currently held vacant to address budget constraints. Research for this report suggests either approach--a full-time Director, or deploy sustainability deliverables at the department level--might be effective. However, internalizing green practices at the department level will eliminate the need for new permanent staff positions, and integrate and evolve sustainability as an integral part of the way work is performed throughout the system. A more detailed model for integrating sustainability was delivered to the MPRB (dated February 2009). (See Appendix A)

## **Activate**

The MPRB must **activate** its leadership in sustainability by seizing new opportunities currently within its grasp. We recommend the following actions that will move the MPRB past the critical step of “knowing” to “showing” it is doing good work in this area.

### **Action Step: Make buildings energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions.**

Addressing energy consumption and reducing carbon emissions are the foundation to a sound approach to sustainability. We recommend an aggressive approach that will lead to all of the MPRB’s electrical use being off the grid. In the short term, we recommend maximizing the results and opportunities of the McKinstry Audit to improve energy efficiency of buildings and engaging with Xcel Energy to discuss a contractual agreement to provide WindSource® power. Over the long-term, we recommend the MPRB take steps to generate energy through solar or wind at levels that off-set its total energy use.

**Action Step: Broaden the strategic application of the Urban Forest to include multiple benefits.**

The urban forest is one of the most visible and critical functions of the MPRB. The MPRB has a critical role in protecting and enhancing the precious canopy of trees that line our boulevards, dot the parks, shade our yards, cool our homes, provide habitat for animals, absorb pollution, create clean air and enhance our urban tax base. The MPRB needs to continue to take a strong position of protecting the urban forest. Current MPRB work plans call for the increase in tree plantings by 10% per year. In addition to this type of measure, the MPRB needs to communicate more broadly and strategically the benefits provided to the city as a whole through maintaining the urban forest. Finally, special Board and staff discussion should focus on “trees” as an economic and sustainability driver in all MPRB enterprises.

**Action Step: Use purchasing power to demonstrate the value of sustainability.**

Utilizing the City of Minneapolis Sustainable Purchasing Policy is a strong first step toward using purchasing power to support sustainability. The MPRB needs to consolidate purchasing practices across department lines to allow for bulk purchasing of green products and services and to reduce the net cost of those needs. Coordination or integrations of purchasing decisions will allow for the park system to green its operations faster and with fewer costs.

**Action Step: Re-organize waste management strategies.**

The MPRB is vulnerable to criticism regarding the way it handles waste management. Not only are there inadequate, though improving, waste management practices internally at the MPRB; but the public face of the MPRB’s waste collection and disposal is sub-standard. It is recommended the MPRB institute near-term improvements in waste collection and disposal, including addressing the adequacy and attractiveness of waste containers in regional and neighborhood parks, waste removal schedules, waste re-use and recycling, and goals to attain a zero net waste standard for the long term. Serious consideration should be given to other “value added” strategies to create a signature waste management program.

**Action Step: Events go green.**

In 2007 an estimated 715,100 regional park visits were attributed to events within the park system. The visibility of these events is breathtaking and provides an excellent opportunity to educate and showcase the MRPB’s commitment to a uniform standard of sustainability. The MPRB should adopt event guidelines that would specify cost-effective practices required as a condition of receiving park permits for the requested event. The park system should further establish an MPRB’s events protocol as the gold standard of green, and brand the manual as a state-of-the-art protocol that could be used by other government entities.

**Action Step: Incremental income from green sponsorships.**

The MPRB should examine the idea of creating green “sponsorable assets” in its operations and facilities, as a means to create public/private partnerships, educate the public and drive incremental revenue. While sponsorship should be approached with care and restraint, the MPRB should consider the benefits of securing corporate relationships in an age of dwindling resources and public/private enterprise.

**Action Step: Educate residents and staff on current sustainability practices.**

Interviews of staff revealed that many sustainability practices are already being exercised within the park system. Interviews also revealed a general lack of knowledge of this work across the organization. To bridge this internal knowledge gap the MPRB should incorporate sustainable messaging within its existing communications programs to educate, inform and drive behavior of MPRB staff. In addition, the Board should build an external communications program that is informational to a public that seems eager to embrace common sense environmental initiatives by government and industry.

**Innovate****Innovation #1: “Minneapolis is a Park”**

Declaring Minneapolis a park should serve as the heart of the MPRB strategy to position itself as the leading park and recreation system that out-imagines, out-behaves, out-performs and out-greens all others. From the standpoints of industry trends and social change, making such a proclamation accomplishes two functions:

- Engages stakeholders in a mind shift – a new way of thinking about participation, accountability and productivity, from individual, organizational and governmental standpoints; and
- Reframes the concept of infrastructure to spur greater sensitivity to asset deterioration, quality of living, issues of access and allocation of resources.

**Declaration of Minneapolis as a Park**

The MPRB should draft, adopt and publicize a resolution that makes a declaration that the City is a park. In addition it should set forth a vivid image of “being the park.” This image should drive public awareness of the MPRB’s declaration and reinforce the many means by which parks and recreation enhance their lives.

**Inspirational Narrative – Be the Park!**

The MPRB should endorse a creative narrative about the park system that seeks to become a replicable statement to be utilized in several branding and promotional communications initiatives. The inspirational narrative reads:

**“Create a collective, open-air living room.** Fight blight. Relish green space. Inspire green practices through a window gaze. **Flourish where we live.** Make every space a place. Revitalize our communal backyard. Converse over fences. Want to play. Exemplify local, organic commerce. **Seek bliss.** Re-imagine productivity and satisfaction. Thrive with optimism and health. Live our sustainable values. **Reinforce our global connectedness.** Link the built and natural environments to create a stronger sense of place. Welcome and embrace visitors with fresh air and sparkling waters. Create a sanctuary for wildlife. Restore endangered ecosystems. **Establish a new hierarchy of needs.** Redefine useful. Do good work. Get outside. Invite friends to join us. Nurture our health, our homes, our neighbors, our planet. Bring a fresh distinction to our hometown. Become the first city to live in a park. **Be the park.”**

### **Innovation #2: “Close the Loop”**

The Missing Link of the Grand Rounds is an important priority for the MPRB. Expanding on that vision to include strategies that might expedite action to complete the Grand Rounds is a creative strategy that merits pursuing. The Missing Link project area includes land that might hasten the creation of an Eco-Business Park. There is great vision in considering an ancillary MPRB development to include a green job incubator, in part because of its innovative revenue opportunities, brand asset value and future development revenue potential.

The MPRB should take interest in several Minneapolis green jobs and eco-park initiatives, including that of the Blue Green Alliance, a national organization founded in Minneapolis by the United Steel Workers and the Sierra Club, aiming to establish a green manufacturing district in the Twin Cities. The MPRB should engage in a mid-2009 discussion with the BGA to site a green manufacturing project near the Missing Link to increase the “scale” of the effort to complete the Grand Rounds; to enlist allies committed to the multiple goal of completing the Grand Rounds and building community, green spaces and added tax base; to create green jobs in the “Missing Link” corridor; and to identify potential revenue creating opportunities for the MPRB to exploit.

In addition to engaging BGA, the MPRB should consider other discussions taking place to establish “eco-park” projects in Minneapolis, including the Harrison neighborhood, North Loop neighborhood and other possible sites for a joint venture aimed at preserving the City’s natural resources and creating innovative revenue streams for the MPRB.

### **Innovation #3: “We Are Naturally Energized”**

Becoming energy independent should be a benchmark deliverable for the MPRB. Getting all electrical energy use off the grid is both feasible and important. To accomplish this, the MPRB should orchestrate a substantive renewable energy project to augment other strategies to get MPRB service areas off the grid. One

possibility includes a major solar project on a single sight or smaller installations at multiple sites around the district.

Several locations in the park system are candidate sites for a major solar installation, provided a corporate partner can be found to assume a portion of the cost. The MPRB should direct staff to investigate the merits, assets and obstacles to making such a project a reality. The two most important funding innovations are the ability to tap into stimulus funding for renewable energy projects, as well as corporate sponsor relationships to “brand” a large scale renewable effort. Further, staff should be directed to look into other renewable and alternative energy strategies to off-set the use of conventional energy to power MPRB buildings and recreational operations. Finally, MPRB should engage Xcel Energy to discuss a contractual arrangement to provide WindSource® power to absorb the remaining energy needs without tapping into conventional energy sources.

## Communicate

The MPRB will achieve lasting brand value of its initiatives by communicating them to key audiences in ways that educate, inspire and empower stakeholders to take ownership of their role in creating and sustaining the leading park and recreation system of the future.

### Strategic Communications Plan

The MPRB should develop a comprehensive communications plan to deliver compelling and consistent messaging, and drive public and internal communications in ways that influence policy, educate key audiences and bring attention to the MPRB’s vision to be the “premier destination that welcomes and captivates residents and visitors.” Assuming a thought leader position on sustainability supports the core mission of parks and galvanizes public support as a jurisdiction that “executes” state and local policies aimed at smart policy. To aid in this process, GreenMark has prepared an introductory series of recommendations to help the MPRB establish and deliver system-wide sustainability standards – its interpretation of sustainability, and its current, planned and desired sustainability initiatives – to both internal and external audiences. (See Appendix B)

### 2010 National Recreation and Park Association Congress

The 2010 National Recreation and Park Association Congress (“National Congress”), to be held in Minneapolis, is an ideal platform for communicating new strategies and approaches for the future that will build greater brand equity for the Minneapolis system. Chief among them should be a media plan for convincing municipal parks to contribute to clean air by getting their operations off the grid, using the commitment of the MPRB as an example. In addition, green operations protocols are largely absent in local park operations around the nation; events greening

activities are unevenly implemented; and purchasing programs are often decentralized, to virtually eliminate opportunities for a national adoption of clean and green supply chain networks. The MPRB could make a lasting impact on the forthcoming National Congress by publicizing its efforts in these areas.

The MPRB should leverage its sustainability aspirations in ways that deliver clear communications at the National Congress to establish the Minneapolis approach as an innovative and progressive approach to improving our municipal park systems without depleting one of our most cherished resources—our funding.

## II. ASSIGNMENT

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GreenMark was hired by the MPRB to examine current efforts in sustainability and make recommendations for system-wide integration. Prior to working with GreenMark, the MPRB identified sustainability as a core organizational value for the organization in late 2007 (as articulated in the “2020 Comprehensive Plan”).

The MPRB has recently undertaken system-wide efforts to integrate sustainability, including formation of a “Sustainability Team” in 2006 (in anticipation of the desires of the Commissioners and the “2020 Comprehensive Plan”) to evaluate the sustainability stewardship of the MPRB’s facilities, operational and communications practices.

The Sustainability Team was charged with the following:

- Defining sustainability for the MPRB
- Reviewing the best practices of other communities and companies in integrating sustainability into their work
- Undertaking an initial assessment of the MPRB to determine where sustainability is or is not being effectively integrated into the system
- Defining areas to target for sustainability initiatives / improvements
- Developing a Sustainability Strategy for the entire MPRB
- Creating the “Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Comprehensive Plan 2007: Sustainability Strategy,” a comprehensive planning document that addresses methods, processes, findings and recommendations for integrating sustainability into the MPRB, including work plans, collaboration and partnerships, employee training and recruitment, and communication, to name a few. This document is a foundation for the MPRB’s efforts in sustainability

The Sustainability Team made significant strides in assessing the ways in which the MPRB carries out sustainability. To build on the Sustainability Team’s accomplishments, the MPRB engaged GreenMark to both assess and enhance their efforts, with particular focus on sustainability- and communications-based recommendations.

GreenMark's responsibilities included:

- Review existing resources to identify established measurement tools
- Interview select stakeholders from all departments/divisions to identify:
  - Obstacles for implementation of sustainability strategies and programs
  - Effectiveness /usage of existing assessment metrics to measure the sustainability of MPRB programs, services and facilities (e.g., energy efficiency, waste reduction, building materials, water conservation, concessions)
  - Priority areas for improvement
  - Communication challenges (internal and external)
- Review need for and job description of position of MPRB Sustainability Director/Coordinator; make recommendations for how sustainability should be staffed
- Recommend next steps for system-wide integration of sustainability. The MPRB also asked GreenMark to consider strategic planning for public-private initiatives, communications development and engaging the community in MPRB sustainability initiatives.

### III. ASSESSMENT

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During the first two months of GreenMark's engagement with the MPRB, a high-level assessment of the MPRB's sustainability programs and operations was performed. Information was gathered in a comprehensive, system-wide approach from existing resources, personnel (a 20-person sample composed of field staff, office positions and Commissioners) and like-minded organizations with an existing Sustainability Director/Coordinator position.

#### Resources

The following documents were reviewed:

- *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Comprehensive Plan 2007–2020*
  - This plan represents how the MPRB will proceed to address the leading park and recreation needs of Minneapolis residents.
- *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Comprehensive Plan 2007: Sustainability Strategy*, as noted above
  - This document outlined the charge of the Sustainability Team and the actions that had been taken. Review of this document was imperative for GreenMark to understand what had been completed and the findings of that work.
- *Community Service Area (CSA) Framework for MPRB Employees*
  - The new CSA framework changes the way work will be done by the MPRB.

GreenMark reviewed this document to better understand the integration of departments and service areas and how they might relate to sustainability practices and procedures.

- *City of Minneapolis Sustainable Purchasing Policy*
  - The environmental purchasing policy specifies the standards for identifying environmentally preferable products and services (based on the way they are made, transported, stored, packages, used and disposed of). In addition, it delineates roles and responsibilities for administering the policy that includes general conditions for the following: source reduction, recycled content products, forest conservation, toxics and pollution, energy and water savings, green building, waste minimization, landscaping, bio-based products, producer responsibility, and renewable energy and greenhouse gas reductions.
- *Integrated Pest Management Procedures (Policy IX-B-9)*
  - This document identifies the pest management strategies for long-term prevention or suppression of pest problems for humans, the environment and other organisms in a range of areas: golf courses, gardens, parks and parkways, and athletic fields.
- *MPRB/McKinstry Energy Audit Study*
  - This document provided an overview of the McKinstry Company project that identified whether sufficient energy conservation measures can be taken to reduce the MPRB's long-term energy consumption, utility expenditures and overall greenhouse emissions at select facilities.
- Sustainability Assessment Matrices (e.g., Design and Construction Practices Matrix, Programs Sustainability Matrix, Ice Rink Sustainability Matrix, and others)
  - This series of documents provided a snapshot view of potential sustainability initiatives in a range of work groups, and specified the necessary success indicators, implementation plans and tools to measure the impact for each initiative.
- Additional materials provided by the MPRB staff
  - GreenMark reviewed additional information, including the Web site, for sustainability content, as well as to better understand the modes of communication used for both internal and external audiences.

## Stakeholder Interviews

### Personnel

Key staff from various departments, as well as three MPRB Commissioners (20 interview subjects in total), were interviewed regarding system-wide sustainability efforts that are underway, as well as opportunities for expansion.

MPRB staff identified specific personnel to be interviewed for this project. The following positions were interviewed:

- Environmental Education

Coordinator

- Center Director
- Community Forestry Coordinator
- District Foreman
- Public Information Manager
- Manager of Environmental Operations
- Director of Environment and Field Services
- Director of Citywide Planning and Project Management
- Park Police
- Special Services
- Manager of Athletic Programs and Facilities
- Director of Administrative Service
- Manager of Golf Operations
- Manager of Human Resources
- District Recreation Supervisor
- General Manager
- Superintendent
- Commissioner

### **Process**

The interviews were conducted in person at multiple MPRB offices. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and addressed specific questions regarding the MPRB's current sustainability initiatives of which they were aware (e.g., whether they thought these efforts were sufficient; and if there was room for improvement).

Staff was asked about the challenges that exist to implementing successful sustainability programs that result in cost savings, social equality and environmental benefits across the system.

### **Findings**

The interviews yielded several important findings. Foremost among them is that MPRB employees believe in what they are doing, have a genuine interest in advancing the MPRB's mission, and want their work to encourage people to get out and enjoy the parks. Regardless of environmental beliefs and commitments, the MPRB staff has a vested interest in conserving natural resources and preserving green space for future generations.

In addition, MPRB staff almost always recited the "Three Es" – Environment, Equity and Economics – when speaking about sustainability and the park system. The "Three Es" are the basis for the MPRB's vision to have sustainability integrated throughout the system, according to the "2020 Comprehensive Plan."

### **Challenges**

Interviewees identified the following challenges to implementing and maintaining sustainability initiatives:

#### *Resources*

- Budget: Allocating resources to sustain versus expand current programs and services; balancing environmental, economic and equity concerns

- Staffing concerns: Understaffed at the ground level, overstretched; internal dissension about hiring practices at upper management levels
- Outdated technology/equipment is not as efficient (e.g., obsolete computers, archaic software, old heating systems)
- Balancing quality of services and innovative technologies that either have not been proven or do not perform as well: Core municipal functions that have specific needs, such as transportation (need for speed and idling for police cars); operating large machinery/equipment; water usage for golf courses

#### *Shared Understanding*

- No unified definition of sustainability as it applies to the MPRB and its operations
- Different knowledge levels about what the MPRB is doing in regard to sustainability across the system
- Many of the MPRB staff operate autonomously and have disparate motivators for sustainability initiatives
- MPRB purchasing system is decentralized; no purchasing standards for sustainability: Staff do not have the time to do research on every product they purchase and thus, buy what they know
- Sustainability actions are guided by each supervisor's sense of what sustainability is and its importance: There are no overall, top level sustainability directives
- Lack of organized system or standard for sustainability training and education across all departments

#### *Communication*

- Lack of clearly articulated sustainability goals and standards
- No concise way to describe initiatives that are currently underway
- Internal communications challenges: Staff at headquarters know more about sustainability than field staff; there are few consistent vehicles for communication to reach all levels of the organization

#### **Opportunities**

In addition to challenges, interviewees also identified several areas of opportunity for the MPRB to both maintain and enhance sustainability initiatives throughout the system. Listed below are significant, feasible opportunities for MPRB personnel:

#### *Resources*

- Accountability: Staff take personal and professional accountability of sustainability
- Consistency Among Current Sustainability Initiatives: Improvements in key areas, such as recycling and other low-cost programming, to bring an increased return on investment

#### *Shared Understanding*

- Define and Set Goals: Define sustainability and set goals for the organization
- Leading By Example: Re-launch MPRB brand and launch sustainability initiatives to establish their importance to internal staff and the MPRB Board of Commissioners, as well as the broader community
- System-Wide Integration: Staff incorporate sustainability into each department's work plan, beginning with the Superintendent's Plan; focus on innovation to minimize costs and introduce new revenue opportunities
- Leadership: Select personnel take ownership of leadership position to minimize lack of information and comprehension

### *Communication*

- MPRB Vision: Articulation of the MPRB's vision; staff engagement in support of the comprehensive plan
- External Communications: Communication of the MPRB's sustainability objectives and standards to the community; clarity in talking about sustainability; spotlighting examples; educating citizens about MPRB's efforts
- Relationship Building: Staff bring increased awareness to efforts by celebrating sustainability successes

Information gathered throughout the interview process was invaluable for GreenMark to create this report. A summary of all interviews was delivered to the MPRB; in addition, emerging trends from these interviews can be seen in the "Sustainability Audit – Emerging Themes" Memorandum (dated October 28, 2008) submitted to the MPRB. (See Appendix C)

## **Sustainability Director/Coordinator Position**

### **Need**

The "Comprehensive Plan 2007: Sustainability Strategy" document created by the Sustainability Team identified a need to hire a Sustainability Director. The Sustainability Team recommended hiring a new, full-time staff person to oversee the implementation of the sustainability plan. They felt that this should not be added into the job responsibilities of an existing position but, rather, sustainability needs to be the sole focus of a new job position within the MPRB. In the eyes of the Sustainability Team, the creation of a Sustainability Director or Coordinator position would demonstrate the MPRB's commitment to sustainability and help to ensure long-term success. In 2008 and 2009 Board created a line item for a Sustainability Coordinator position in the budget. This is one of several positions currently held vacant to address budget constraints.

### **Findings**

Interviews did not present a common theme of need, nor a preference in a particular staffing arrangement. Suggestions for how to staff a position arose from the interviews and included:

- A full-time position, hired from within the MPRB
- A part-time position, hired from within the MPRB
- A two-year contract consultant hired from external sources to spur change as needed
- No new position created, but rather incorporate these duties into a current position(s)

### **Responsibilities**

To better understand the nature of the role being discussed, GreenMark researched other Sustainability Director/Coordinator positions from throughout the country, including municipalities, educational institutions and corporations, primarily gathering information from “current opening” postings, and compiled findings to speak to the structure, salary range and scope of work of such a position.

GreenMark was unable to locate a “perfectly relevant,” active job opening for a Sustainability Director/Coordinator at a large, municipal park system. Nevertheless, findings included several municipalities seeking similar positions that are analogous to what the MPRB should consider when contemplating the need for an internal position.

Overall, many institutions, public agencies and private companies are beginning to incorporate Sustainability Director/Coordinator positions into their staffing. There is a heavy trend on behalf of these organizations to maintain and increase efficiencies, resulting in more sustainable operations.

### *Desirable Characteristics and Experience*

Many of the job descriptions had the Sustainability Director/Coordinator reporting to a Sustainability Committee or Green Team that represents all key stakeholder groups.

Other themes include the need for the position to lead the development of a sustainability plan that identifies clear goals and objectively measurable indicators for all aspects of sustainable operations and growth.

Additional sought-after qualities and experience include the following:

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to understanding and valuing individual differences
- Facilitation, change management and group process skills
- Knowledge of technical issues and practices in multiple areas including, but not limited to: green purchasing, energy conservation, performance measurement, environmental management systems implementation, resource and water conservation, green building, pollution prevention and renewable resources
- Understanding of cost-benefit analysis in selection of sustainable strategies

- Bachelor or Master degree in environmental studies, sustainability or environmental policy often desired

More detail about qualities and experiences, as well as sample job descriptions and qualitative considerations, can be found in the “Sustainability Director Position” Memorandum (dated October 27, 2008) submitted to the MPRB. (See Appendix D)

## VI. APPENDICES

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### APPENDIX A

#### Memorandum

DATE: February 2009

TO: Jennifer Ringold  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

FROM: Meghan Krause

RE: Organizational Structure – Integrating Sustainability

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#### Organizational Structure

Sustainability isn't something one does in addition to a job – it is way (a *new way*) of approaching one's job, especially for the MPRB. MPRB personnel are absolutely stretched thin, but there is incredible power that comes from making sustainability a vital part of one's day-to-day practices. While there is support among the Sustainability Team to hire a Sustainability Director, there is no clear consensus regarding the creation of a full-time sustainability position within the MPRB. With this in mind, we recommend the MPRB instead empower department managers with deliverables that advance green awareness among staff and practices in daily operations. There may be interest in creating sustainability "crews," or work groups, to drive environmental, equity and economic improvements in specific categories based on the **Sustainability 2013** goals, with the periodic involvement of one or more external consultants.

In this model, no MPRB employees would be assigned to work on sustainability on a full-time basis; rather, the sustainability crews would have an executive "sponsor," as well as a "captain" from senior level management. Overall direction and specific directives are to be expressed by the Superintendent and Commissioners; however, each captain would be responsible for leading a cross-functional and cross-geographical crew of MPRB staff that would focus on driving sustainability in different parts of the organization through sub-projects that span the districts. Captains would spearhead the sub-projects and meet with their sponsors on a monthly basis to evaluate status, progress, goals, hurdles and needs. The Sustainability Team has already established initial evaluative criteria for select crews; this process would need to be elevated and replicated throughout the MPRB. Further discussion and analysis would need to be provided before a final decision is made about the exact structure of the "crews." But there is ample reason to avoid creating expensive, segregated sustainability slots and instead leave it to select leaders to organically infuse

operations with green practices and programs.

One of the most pressing concerns among those who participated in the Sustainability Audit is the belief that many people within the MPRB do not have a firm grasp of sustainability and how it informs their daily work. A decentralized approach addresses those information gaps by arming all staff with the knowledge, responsibility and tools to advance sustainability within their respective jobs and departments. Moreover, it establishes a foundation for continuous improvement as all employees are empowered to identify and pursue opportunities on an ongoing basis.

## APPENDIX B

### Memorandum

DATE: February 2009

TO: Jennifer Ringold  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

FROM: Meghan Krause

RE: Communication Strategies and Tactics

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### Communication Strategies and Tactics

The MPRB's sustainability initiatives will only be as successful as the communications efforts to support them. Undertakings of this magnitude deserve considerable resources to maximize their power and promise. We recommend the MPRB devise and implement a strategic communications plan and, in the interest of moving in this direction, have devised a preliminary list of communications strategies and tactics. We welcome the opportunity to play a more integral role in the development of this plan.

#### *Key Messages*

MPRB staff and Commissioners who were interviewed were unfamiliar with the sustainability programs and initiatives currently underway throughout the MPRB system. One way to improve understanding and accurate recall is through the repeated use of Key Messages, or critical pieces of information, with target audiences (both internal and external) through multiple mediums (i.e., brochures, e-mails and Web site).

Key Messages serve the purpose of bridging the gap between what the MPRB's audiences know and where it is trying to take them. We have created the following Key Messages as clear, concise talking points to communicate what the MPRB is trying to accomplish:

- As a governing authority, the *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* has a responsibility to contribute to a high standard of living in Minneapolis by restoring and protecting green space, water and land; reducing pollution, waste and energy use; and creating vibrant and healthy communities.
- The *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* oversees a diverse system of more than 180 local and regional parks, gardens, golf courses, nature sanctuaries, cultural and historic amenities, and a 55-mile parkway system.
- A foremost principle of the *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* is meeting current park and recreation needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – by balancing environmental, economic and

equity concerns.

- Sustainability is a core value of the *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* that serves as a standard for setting goals and devising strategies to accomplish our mission.
- The *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* approaches sustainability as an evolving process that aims to achieve closed-loop methods of operation.
- The *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* cultivates relationships between people and nature, and promotes a culture of active stewardship by integrating education and action to sustain parks and recreation for future generations.
- With sustainability as a guiding value, the *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* utilizes innovative relationships that call on our partners, residents, park visitors and co-workers to work together to uphold the far-reaching benefits of our natural environment.
- The *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board* has launched **Sustainability 2013**, a five-year campaign to influence the behavior of the Minneapolis citizenry to work together to create the park and recreation system of the future.
- **Sustainability 2013** is composed of select pilot projects that help the MPRB achieve our specific sustainability goals, while putting us on the map as a national leader through unique partnerships.

#### *Positioning*

- Develop a MPRB Positioning Statement
- Create formal adoption of Positioning Statement by the Commissioners

#### *Campaign Identity*

- Create a clear and memorable brand (logo, visual palette) for **Sustainability 2013**
- Leverage **Sustainability 2013** to reinforce the MPRB's brand and leadership

#### *Media Relations*

- In advance of the launch of **Sustainability 2013**, assert and reinforce the MPRB's thought leadership and commitment to sustainability
  - Draft an Opinion-Editorial column or a Letter to the Editor that reinforces importance of select environmental issues that resonate with one or more of the pilot projects (i.e., the need for a bigger eco-industry in Minneapolis)
  - Create a Media Kit to describe **Sustainability 2013**
- Develop a core press release program at key benchmarks during **Sustainability 2013**
- Identify and secure media partners to follow and spotlight the MPRB's progress and ongoing events
- Develop an earned media plan for select trade publications

### *Online Communications*

- Give **Sustainability 2013** its own URL address that automatically connects to the MPRB's Web site
- Place the **Sustainability 2013** logo with link on the MPRB's Web site
- Create **Sustainability 2013** page on Facebook
- Devise and execute guerilla marketing and grassroots tactics throughout the five-year campaign to maintain enthusiasm and support for **Sustainability 2013**
  - Produce MPRB-branded mash-up video to detail **Sustainability 2013** and distribute virally
  - Spotlight action stories on YouTube, Facebook and MPRB Web sites
- Secure **Sustainability 2013** feature and/or link to it on partner Web site(s) (i.e., sponsors and community organizations)
- Work with Visible Strategies to create Web-hosted strategy mapping and reporting framework
  - Build clear and consistent, fact-based information dissemination structure
  - Create a stakeholder investment/involvement (participatory democracy) in the process and progress of **Sustainability 2013**
  - Scale utility of framework to the MPRB's preferences for clarity and precision in internal and external communications

### *Events*

- Host Press Conference to announce **Sustainability 2013** in partnership with sponsors and project partners
  - Endorsement of **Sustainability 2013** from national governing organizations (e.g., EPA), project partners, Minneapolis Mayor
- Hold annual "State of the Parks Address" to demonstrate the MPRB's commitment to leadership; include sustainability as part of a larger message; celebrate the current initiatives of **Sustainability 2013**; mark progress against goals
- Host On-site Meetings for the Superintendent to visit each division to communicate **Sustainability 2013** and share what is expected of each everyone to achieve organizational goals

### *Collateral*

- Create a **Sustainability 2013** Fact Sheet to be used as a flyer and/or posted on the MPRB's Web site for preliminary internal and external use
- Distribute "From the Desk of the Superintendent" – a memo that celebrates current sustainability initiatives, rolls out **Sustainability 2013** and challenges staff to take additional actions in their personal and professional lives to both maintain and improve the quality of the MPRB
- Spotlight **Sustainability 2013** and the MPRB's commitment to thought leadership through open-air, multimedia displays (i.e., mash-up video, photography, interactive screens) throughout the park system that convey factual and anecdotal information (consider artist installation and/or commissioned technology and

experiential display via Sustainable Waves)

*Public Affairs*

- Cultivate relationships with key government officials and policy makers to expand public awareness of **Sustainability 2013**
- Collaborate with state and national government officials and historical societies to showcase the historical significance of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (a “restoration” message)
- Create public-private partnerships with industry and environmental groups to execute the pilot projects of **Sustainability 2013**

## APPENDIX C

### Memorandum

DATE: October 28, 2008

TO: Jennifer Ringold  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

FROM: Snezhana Bessonov  
Eliza Clark  
Megan Dobratz

RE: Sustainability Audit – Emerging Themes

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During the last six weeks, GreenMark performed a high-level sustainability audit of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. We met with staff from various departments across the park system.

We found that MPRB employees believe in what they are doing, have a genuine interest in advancing the MPRB's mission, and want their work to drive people to get out and enjoy the parks. No matter if they believe in global warming or not, MPRB staff has is interested in conserving natural resources and preserving green space.

The collective belief in their work should be harnessed and used to build a sustainability platform.

Below is an overview of challenges and opportunities that emerged from the interviews:

#### Challenges

- a. Budget
  - i. Allocating resources to sustain current programs and services versus continuing to expand
  - ii. Balancing environmental, economic and equity sustainability
- b. No unified definition of sustainability as it applies to the MPRB and its operations
- c. Lack of clearly articulated sustainability standards and goals
- d. Different knowledge levels about what the MPRB is doing in regard to sustainability;
- e. No concise way to describe initiatives
- f. Staffing concerns
  - i. Understaffed at the ground level; overstretched

- ii. Internal dissention about hiring practices at upper management levels
- g. Many of the MPRB staff operate autonomously and have disparate motivators
- h. Purchasing system is decentralized; no purchasing standards for sustainability
- i. Outdated technology
- j. Sustainability actions are guided by each supervisor's sense of what sustainability and its importance
- k. Lack of organized standard for sustainability training for educating all departments
- l. Balancing quality of services and innovative technologies that either have not been proven or do not perform as well
  - i. Core municipal functions that have specific needs, such as transportation (need for speed and idling for police cars); operating large machinery/equipment; water usage for golf courses
- m. Internal communications challenges
  - i. Staff at headquarters know more about sustainability than field staff
  - ii. Consistent vehicles for communication

### **Opportunities**

- a. Lead by example; re-launch MPRB to establish its importance
- b. Articulate the MPRB vision and rally staff behind it
- c. Integrate sustainability into each department's work plan and the MPRB's overall business plan
- d. Take ownership of leadership
- e. External communications
  - i. MPRB's sustainability objectives and standards
  - ii. Develop a clear and concise way to talk about sustainability and showcase examples
  - iii. Educate citizens about what the MPRB is doing
- f. Engage staff to take personal and professional accountability of sustainability
- g. Improve and bring consistency to current sustainability initiatives, such as recycling and other low-cost programming that will bring an increased return on investment
- h. Rebuild relationships with staff by celebrating sustainability successes

## APPENDIX D

### Memorandum

DATE: October 27, 2008

TO: Jennifer Ringold  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

FROM: Eliza Clark  
Snezhana Bessonov

RE: Sustainability Director Position

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Per your request, GreenMark conducted an initial examination of job descriptions of Sustainability Directors/Coordinators across the country.

Many organizations, particularly corporations, government units and postsecondary institutions, are beginning to incorporate a Sustainability Director position.

This memorandum outlines the typical qualities and job experience that most organizations are seeking in candidates. This information will also be included in our final report and recommendations to the MPRB.

#### **A. Desirable Characteristics and Experience**

Many of the job descriptions we reviewed had the Sustainability Coordinator reporting to a Sustainability Committee (or Green Team) representing all key stakeholder groups in an organization.

Other themes include the need for that individual to lead the development of a sustainability plan that identifies clear goals and objectively measurable indicators for all aspects of sustainable operation and growth.

Additional sought-after qualities and experience included the following:

#### *Personal Attributes*

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Superb presentation skills: verbal and written
- Prior experience in coordinating, organizing and implementing programs and events
- Commitment to understanding and valuing individual differences
- Ability to foster an environment of acceptance, fairness and mutual respect
- Facilitation, change management and group process skills

- Knowledge of organizational psychology or organizational change
- Comfortable with training and education
- Ability to analyze data, evaluate outcomes and recommend actions
- Organizational skills: time management, self-motivation, project management, priority setting
- Ability to function independently with minimal supervision
- Ability to utilize a network of sustainable business resources
- Energy and enthusiasm
- Positive attitude
- Outgoing, professional demeanor
- Personal commitment to sustainability

#### *Desired Experience*

- Knowledge of technical issues and practices in multiple areas including, but not limited to: green purchasing, energy conservation, performance measurement, environmental management systems implementation, solid waste recycling, resource and water conservation, green building, low-impact development, pollution prevention, greenhouse gas reduction, climate change, renewable resources and the legislative process
- Demonstrated ability to work on problem solving as a process issue, not a personality issue
- Familiarity with the structure and operations of the organization
- Extensive knowledge of local, regional and national emerging sustainable business strategies, life cycle assessment (LCA), ROI analysis and other key sustainability tools and techniques
- Understanding of cost-benefit analysis in selection of sustainable business strategies
- Knowledge of financial planning including budget development, consultant contract review and project budgeting
- Experience in developing and presenting sustainable business concepts, training and burgeoning technologies
- Understanding of Safety, Lean Management, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards, , and basic environmental compliance
- Bachelor or masters degree in environmental studies, sustainability or environmental policy often desired (but liberal arts degree is also acceptable)
- Strong computer skills: Word, Excel and PowerPoint (database familiarity also desired)

Unlike many other job descriptions for leadership positions, many Sustainability Director job postings do not specify a required or desired number of years of experience. We speculate that omission is due to the fact that "sustainability" is a burgeoning field; many Sustainability Directors come from other industries or focus areas.

### **B. Sample Job Descriptions**

We were not able to locate a “perfectly relevant,” active job opening for a Sustainability Coordinator at a large, municipal park system. Nonetheless, we did find several municipalities that are seeking a similar position that are analogous to what the MPRB could consider.

What follows is an actual job description for a Sustainability Coordinator in West Des Moines, Iowa. This posting encompasses a wide range of desired skills and experience, and comprehensively describes the Sustainability Director’s responsibilities.

#### **West Des Moines Sustainability Director Job Posting**

- Provide leadership for sustainable practice efforts throughout the City of West Des Moines organization in conjunction with an employee committee
- Help determine the goals and objectives of the City in relation to sustainability and develop, implement, and coordinate sustainable practices with the help of an employee committee
- The consultant-based position will provide a key new role in working with all departments in the City, as well as with community members and organizations to establish a city-wide sustainability program
- The program will focus on identifying, planning for, implementing and evaluating policies, practices and programs that balance our shared objectives for a healthy environment, quality of life, and economic vitality
- The consultant will focus on coordinating internal and external efforts related to efficient use of resources (including water, energy, and land), green building, reduction of waste, prevention of pollution, reduction of green house gases, participation in climate change initiatives and utilization of renewable resources
- In addition to responsibilities for researching, recommending and implementing this new program, the individual will be expected to coordinate and communicate clearly with individuals at all levels in the City’s organization
- Potential program structure:
  - The Sustainability Coordinator reports to the City Manager’s Office and works with representatives of all city departments through a Sustainability Committee
  - The Sustainability Coordinator is the chief contact with the external community about issues and advances in sustainable practices at the City, providing a connection between the city organization and external efforts
  - The Sustainability Coordinator and committee will receive training from the City’s Certified Quality Facilitators and will operate within that framework
- Initial Responsibilities include:
  - Research and articulate a vision, mission, objectives and structural framework for a new city-wide sustainability program suited to the City’s

- unique character and direction using models available from other public organizations that have undertaken similar efforts
- Create, coordinate and lead an interdepartmental Sustainability Committee in developing a sustainability (or environmental) management system that provides a clear strategy and long-term plan for implementing the program and that provides for regular data collection/analysis and performance measures tracking progress
  - Coordinate information sharing and research needs among city departments and identify and help acquire incentives and tools for implementing projects including identifying and supporting applications for government and non-government grants to support sustainable approaches to accomplishing critical municipal functions where appropriate
  - Provide training and guidance to City employees and serve as a central information source about sustainability issues
  - Oversee and develop programs to educate employees about sustainability efforts and the benefits of sustainable practices
  - Establish citywide targets and work with departments to establish and then accomplish their own appropriate targets that may address:
    - Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change effects
    - Pollution prevention and waste reduction
    - Conservation of energy, water, land and other natural resources
    - Utilization of renewable energy and other renewable resources
    - Environmentally preferable purchasing policies for goods and services where feasible
    - Green building as well as facility O & M practices; and
    - Implementation of sustainable infrastructures and systems
  - Long-term goals include:
    - Coordinate with businesses in the community and with other public agencies in our region that are involved in sustainability initiatives to explore opportunities for synergism (?) and partnerships
    - Identify cost-saving, life-cycle and/or short to medium term pay-back approaches that provide an economic rationale for implementing sustainability efforts
    - Work with the Sustainability Committee to host internal events to inform or encourage co-workers on related issues
    - Coordinate or support committee participation in local events related to sustainability
    - Document and report on all efforts and long-term plans
    - Assist in developing a public outreach campaign including but not limited to web content, magazine articles and cable channel presentations
  - Job description also notes that, “All strategies, plans and policies developed as well as any recommendations with financial implications, are

subject to approval by the West Des Moines City Council and Citywide Quality Team”

### **Healthcare Sustainability Director**

Following is another sample job description for a Sustainability Coordinator at a healthcare organization. This job description is meant to be customized by an organization, and is more general as a result. It is less applicable for the MPRB, but still provides some good language and a helpful job overview.

#### *Position Summary:*

This position will develop and lead a comprehensive sustainability program at []. This includes general environmental, sustainable product procurement, waste elimination, toxicity reduction, energy and water improvement, and environmental health and quality improvement for NAME OF FACILITY. This position will be responsible for tracking and benchmarking all environmental programs, coordination of environmental programs between departments and represents the organization’s environmental initiatives with both internal and external stakeholders.

#### *Administrative*

- Chairs Main Campus Green Team
- Researches, directs analysis of, reviews data and advises Green Team relative to long- and short-range sustainability goals and projects
- Provide quarterly reports to Executive Team (or Environmental Leadership Committee) on Green Team activities and goals
- Serve as liaison between local sustainability groups or projects and administration and professional staff
- Appropriately involves Media Relations, Government Relations and community outreach in external group interactions
- Works with Media Relations to develop a strategy for communicating the organization’s commitment and progress toward sustainability to local community and nationally
- Attends operations, construction, marketing meetings and other inter- and intra-department committees as the sustainability representative
- Ensures collaboration and communication on intra- and inter-departmental sustainability initiatives and reports compliance with sustainability goals to Executive Team
- Reviews, revises, recommends and implements sustainable practices as appropriate for each site
- Establishes means of communicating best practices throughout the system through reports, meetings, education events and website
- Develops department website content, educational materials and a sustainability annual outcomes book and/or associated reports

- Coordinates on-going communication of sustainability initiatives within [INSERT FACILITY OR HEALTH SYSTEM NAME] including through staff meetings, continuing education and other departmental initiatives
- Consistently evaluates particular areas to strengthen partnerships, protocols, research, education and marketing
- Addresses ongoing sustainability needs
- May be accountable for direction and evaluation of subordinate sustainability staff
- Collaborates with [INSERT NAME OF FUNDRAISING ARM HERE] to develop grant applications and other funding opportunities
- Evaluates, recommends, engages and supervises consultants to assist in project development or implementation

#### *Technical*

- Researches and recommends current sustainable business choices and develop plans for evaluation and implementation
- Communicate effectively through verbal and written assessments
- Analyzes and assesses current operating procedures, materials, and methods; anticipates and implements changes or modifications based on sustainability goals
- Performs life-cycles assessments and cost analyses of proposed modifications
- Initiates and researches special studies and projects to enhance the long-term viability of sustainability initiatives within different departments
- Develops, oversees and approves marketing messages and outreach programs connected with sustainability
- Monitors current evidence-based research on the environment and recommends design process changes to ensure patients' comfort
- Recommends and describes design measures to become [INSERT FACILITY OR HEALTH SYSTEM NAME] standard practice as new science is available
- Oversees the creation and maintenance of a library of healthcare construction products and practices that meet sustainability guidelines including life-cycle cost information
- Is responsible for start-up and implementation of new sustainability initiatives
- Is responsible for marketing and branding of new sustainability programs
- Works closely with [INSERT FACILITY OF HEALTH SYSTEM NAME]'s marketing staff and Executive Team to assure a consistent message and maximum positive brand exposure
- Requires travel to affiliate sites and/or national conferences on an as-needed basis – which may require out-of-state travel
- Must be LEED Accredited Professional and have significant familiarity with hospital operations

#### **C. Qualitative Considerations**

In addition to the job descriptions that we located in our research, we also located a

“roundtable-style” journal article discussing the core qualifications for sustainability professionals.\*

We included some of the most thought-provoking quotes from the article – which will be helpful when making a subjective assessment of a candidate’s ability to succeed:

- “They have to be incredibly good communicators. They have to be the kind of person that exudes trust because they’re building relationships all the time, so they have to have a personality that nurtures that. They have to be inquisitive. It would be helpful if they were fun and able to see connections in some way and to be able to voice those in an articulate way to the other players, and to be able to throw out good, provocative questions to help people think through the complexities that are staring them in the face.”
- “Having great oral and written communication skills is essential. You need to be able to make the business case, so you need those quantitative and financial analysis skills. You need to be able to persuade people. It’s really important to be familiar with a wide, wide range of subject areas – not an in-depth expert, necessarily, but knowledgeable about the vocabulary and the issues that are important to people working in particular subject areas.”
- “At some point, the sustainability folks are facilitators. As the information changes about what our sustainability-preferred options are for materials or transportation, organizations will always need someone to play that role and to be kind of the gut check on does this really constitute sustainability or is this a greenwashing activity”
- “It’s interesting that many people’s background is a liberal arts background, not necessarily a technical background for the job. Probably the ideal background is one that’s broadly liberal-arts based. The skills needed for the job are communications, social marketing, and being a change agent and encouraging others to do the same, building alliances and spreading awareness, and catalyzing programs. Those are not necessarily the technical skills that some people envision as primary in a sustainability professional’s job.”
- “They’re a broker of ideas and of networks.”
- “Lastly, you need to be a good systems thinker, because sustainability is a complex systemic issue and understanding how it plays out into all aspects of an organization takes a particular systems perspective.”

\*Source: “Roundtable: Core Competencies for Sustainability Professionals: What Educational Background and Job Skills Do They Really Need?” – *Sustainability: The Journal of Record*, Vol. 1, No. 4, August 2008