Community Engagement Plan

Staff Lead: Emma Pachuta

Department or Division: Strategic Planning

Project Name: Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan

Engagement Level: Consult, Involve, or Partner (See Engagement Assessment attached)

This plan serves as a guide for the community engagement process for the Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan (Cedar-Isles), located within the Chain of Lakes Regional Park. The plan may be modified as circumstance warrants during project duration. Substantial modifications are to be communicated to stakeholders and the MPRB Board of Commissioners.

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

Key Stakeholders should be engaged in the creation of this plan. This is to be filled out before the CE Plan is submitted to the Board as a P+C. Please explain how they were engaged: Both local and regional partners were invited to share feedback on the plan, including:

- Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association
- Kenwood Neighborhood Organization
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association
- East Isles Residents Association
- Cedar Lake Park Association
- The Loppet Foundation
- Met Council
- Parks and Power
- City of Saint Louis Park
1. **Project Description**

1a. **Project Overview:**

Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles are part of Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, connecting to Bde Maka Ska on the southern border and Brownie Lake and Theodore Wirth Regional Park to the north. Visitors enjoy a multitude of year-round activities that include walking, biking, swimming, fishing, canoe/kayaking, cross-country skiing, and ice skating. The other three lakes in the Chain have been previously master planned: Bde Maka Ska and Harriet in 2017 and Brownie in 2012.

The Regional Park as a whole sees more than 7 million annual visits. It is the most visited park site in the state.

Master Plans play a critical role in the park board’s mission. Characteristics of a park master plan include the following:

- Set a vision to guide long-term development and improvements to a park or group of parks,
- Guide stewardship and help ensure that park features and amenities reflect the needs of the communities they serve,
- Help ensure long-term financial and ecological sustainability,
- Involve extensive engagement with individual and group stakeholders, other community partners and governmental entities, and
- Subject to review and comment by the public, as well as public hearings and approval by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners.

The Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan includes Cedar Lake and the surrounding park land, Lake of the Isles and surrounding park land, the Kenilworth Channel, and a portion of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the west of Cedar Lake. The completed master plan will direct policy and design implementation for the park land around both lakes for the next 20+ years.

1b. **MPRB Outcomes** *(What goals, strategies, or values in the MPRB Comprehensive Plan does this project, program, or initiative relate to? What goal in the Racial Equity Action Plan does this relate to?)*:

**Comprehensive Plan**
Vision Theme #1: Urban forests, natural areas, and waters that endure and captivate

Vision Theme #2: Recreation that inspires personal growth, healthy lifestyles, and a sense of community

Vision Theme #3: Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs

Vision Theme #4: A safe place to play, celebrate, contemplate, and recreate

Racial Equity Action Plan Goals

Goal #2: Minneapolis residents view the MPRB as an effective and inclusive governmental organization that engages all communities.

Goal #5: MPRB provides programs and services that are responsive and reflective of community needs

1c. Project Timeline:


Spring 2020-Fall 2020: Discovery and Assessment: work closely with the project team, advisory committees, and community groups to research, assess, map, and begin to understand physical conditions and park and recreation needs for the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Engage community about the vision for Cedar/Isles.

Fall 2020–Fall 2021: Park Master Planning: Initiate master planning for the regional park as a whole. This phase will feature community events and will significantly engage the appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Staff will rely heavily on input from the general public, as well as engage significantly with established neighborhood organizations and service and outreach providers that work with diverse populations.

Master Plan Approval: Fall 2021-Winter 2021: MPRB staff will work with all advisory groups, consultants, and plan partners to finalize the master plan. This will include a public comment period and final approval by the board of directors.

1d. Project Funding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Sources</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Expiration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Trails Legacy</td>
<td>$470,000</td>
<td>none</td>
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</table>
2. **Project Data:**

2a. **What are the boundaries of the community engagement area?** *(For regional facilities include neighborhoods adjacent to the park and city/regional boundaries)*

The adjacent neighborhoods to Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles park boundaries include the: Bryn Mawr, East Isles, Lowry Hill, Cedar Isles Dean, and Kenwood neighborhoods.

The regional parks are funded in large part by the State of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council. They are considered the state parks of the metropolitan region, and as such are meant to be enjoyed by everyone: people that live in the adjacent neighborhoods, people who live in Minneapolis and adjacent cities, and people visiting from outside of the region. For the purposes of community engagement, the project will focus on engaging residents who live in Minneapolis as well as some additional engagement with residents in the adjacent cities to the park: Golden Valley and Saint Louis Park.

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

Regional race and ethnicity (Met Council 2016):
- White 81.3%
- Pacific Islander or Asian 4.4%
- Black or African American 7.7%
- American Indian .1%
- Hispanic or Latino 4.1%

Regionally, almost 25% of the population is under 18 years old. Additionally, 13% of the population is over 65.

Projections tell us that communities of color, youth, and seniors will double in current demographic percentages by 2040 (Thrive MSP 2040), confirming how integral it is for MPRB to include diverse voices within the master planning process.

According to the Met Councils’ 2016 Regional Parks Visitor Census Data, seniors and people of color are underrepresented among those who currently visit the regional park system.

2c. **List any key findings or excerpts from relevant plans or policies that are informing this project, program or initiative, especially if community was engaged in the policy or plan:**
Past concept plans were created in the 1990s to master plan portions of the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. They include:

- the Concept Master Plan for Cedar Lake Park, completed by the Cedar Lake Park Association in partnership with MPRB in 1997,
- Chain of Lakes Comprehensive Plan: With the Future of Water Quality in Mind, completed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associations, Inc. for MPRB in 1997,

Many elements of the plans have been implemented by MPRB and partners over the years. Local groups, such as the neighboring neighborhood associations and the Cedar Lake Park Association, have been involved with past MPRB decision-making and project implementation.

A few project examples where MPRB have partnered and/or engaged with local stakeholders and residents in the area include Cedar Lake South Beach Improvements, the Dean and Cedar Lake Parkway Trail Improvements, and most recently, neighborhood park planning for the Southwest Service Area Master Plan. We will reference the history of the area, past projects, and past engagement as it relates to conversations over the course of this project.

We will also reference citywide MPRB plans and documents as applicable, such as the MPRB Comprehensive Plan, MPRB’s Racial Equity Plan, and the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission 2019 Annual Report.

We will refer to other city and national trends and data as is relevant.

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

Historically, the Chain of Lakes were important to the Dakota people, the original inhabitants of Minnesota. The history of the site for the Dakota people was brought into the development of the Bde Maka Ska/Harriet Master Plan and it will be important to incorporate the Dakota people’s voice into this plan, as well.

Though we know how many people visit the overall regional park annually, we don’t know the demographics of the people that visit Cedar-Isles. There is also a gap in understanding what people in the region (beyond Minneapolis) envision for Cedar-Isles.

There will be projects underway in the area during the master planning process for Cedar-Isles, most notably the construction of the southwest light rail line along the western board of the Cedar Lake park land. We will stay informed about internal and external project timelines and whether they will impact our master planning process.

3. Community Engagement:
The MPRB supports the use of a variety of techniques to interact with and obtain information from stakeholders. Outreach and research tools and methods can be applied for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Evaluate success and measure community impact of existing programs, services or facilities.
- Gain stakeholder insight and perspective regarding development of a new program, service or facility.
- Proactively identify or explore park and recreation trends or ideas.
- Determine essential services to be provided for a community or park area.
- Query stakeholders when proposing or revising policy.
- Resolve persistent conflicts or problems.
- Educate or inform the public on proposed changes, initiatives and projects.
- Reflect on projects, programs and initiatives after adoption by the Board or report on how community input has been integrated.
- Learn the history of local context and community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Stakeholder (students, ethnic communities, neighborhood groups, community leaders)</th>
<th>Outreach: How will you reach out to the stakeholder? (i.e. go to parks, neighborhood listserv, engage with cultural media)</th>
<th>Engagement: How will they participate? (i.e. online survey, focus group, community open house, intercept survey)</th>
<th>Reflecting Back: How will stakeholder groups be reflected back to about the project progress or outcomes? (Posted on project website, ribbon cutting, e-blast, site visit, celebration)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local organizations in the adjacent areas, that could include but are not limited to: -Adjacent neighborhood organizations, committees, and residents of: CIDNA, KNO, East Isles, Lowry Hill, Bryn Mawr -Jones-Harrison Residence -All Stewardship Agreements Holders operating in the Project Area</td>
<td>Attend community events, present to neighborhood associations, recommend CAC appointees, neighborhood listservs</td>
<td>Online survey, possible community open house, neighborhood organizations will be asked to help select the recommended CAC slate and to engage their community in all public meetings.</td>
<td>Website, direct email, GovDeliveries, news articles, flyers at community nodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - St. Stephen’s Services  
- Kenwood Elementary School  
- Cedar Lake Park Association | Citywide neighborhood organizations and community groups | Attend community events, recommend CAC appointees, neighborhood listservs | Online survey, possible community open house, neighborhood organizations will be asked to help select the recommended CAC slate and to engage their community in all public meetings. | Website, direct email, GovDeliveries, news articles |
| MPRB staff who engage audiences at Cedar Lake, Lake of Isles | MPRB staff who engage audiences at Cedar Lake, Lake of Isles | Connect with Service Area Manager to identify best process | Focus group | Direct email |
| Park Users | Park Users | Go to parks/park events, MPRB listservs, social media | Online survey, in person survey at park events | Website, Gov deliveries, news articles |
| Non-park users | Non-park users | Connect with neighborhood groups to share through their networks | Focus group, online survey, | Website, Gov deliveries, news articles |
| Cultural communities | Cultural communities | Community partners with focused constituents | Experiential event/conversation(s) at Cedar-Isles, online survey | Direct communication with partners |
| Seniors/elders and disability community | Seniors/elders and disability community | Community partners with focused constituents | Experiential event/conversation(s) at Cedar-Isles, online survey | Direct communication with partners |
| Renters | Renters | Community partners with focused constituents | Experiential event/conversation(s) at Cedar-Isles, online survey | Direct communication with partners |
| Youth Park-based youth programming | Experiential event/conversation(s) at Cedar-Isles, online survey | Share out with youth programming staff to share with groups |

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

3a. Advisory Committees:

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

- City of Minneapolis
- Hennepin County
- MN Department of Natural Resources
- MN Historical Society
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
- City of Saint Louis Park
- Cedar Lake Park Association
- Audubon Society

Additional to inviting entities to formally sit on the Technical Advisory Committee, we to present and obtain guidance from other existing TACs. A few that have already been identified include but are not limited to:

- Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee
- Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee

**Project Advisory Committee:** This roster is a list of MPRB departments and divisions that are on the PAC

- Community Outreach
- Strategic Planning
- Design and Project Management
- Forestry
- Environmental Management
- Recreation
- Asset Management
- Customer Service
- Communications
- Public Safety
3b. Will a Community Advisory Committee be required for this project, program, or initiative? 
Y/N YES

If yes, complete the following section.

CAC Charge

The Cedar-Isles Community Advisory Committee shall:

- become knowledgeable about the MPRB master planning process,
- understand the history of the park land areas,
- understand and balance programming and recreation needs with natural space and preservation needs,
- understand the values and needs for the Minneapolis regional park system and regional community and the values and needs of the local community,
- to inform and listen to community about the project,
- help identify communities, organizations, user groups, populations and others that should be consulted in the engagement process,
- report back to appointers or appointing bodies, as requested, on the plan process, information presented, and possible recommendations,
- engage in working groups and subcommittees as needed,
- provide feedback on a draft plan,
- make recommendations about the project to the MPRB Board of Commissioners, and
- to abide by the CE Policy.

CAC Composition

Goals:
Appointers and the CAC Selection Committee should appoint individuals that represent one or more of the identities/perspectives listed below to ensure diversity on the CAC. This is not an exhaustive or conclusive list, and categories should be based on self-identification, and not assumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generational Diversity</td>
<td>Youth and seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Diversity</td>
<td>Renters, below the poverty line, people experiencing homelessness, or individuals/organizations that assist people experiencing homelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistic Diversity</td>
<td>ASL, people that speak a language other than English at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity of interests</td>
<td>Recreation, youth programming, climate resilience, safety and security, active transportation, food systems, geographical diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>People with mental, emotion, physical disabilities or individuals/organizations that assist people with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender diversity</td>
<td>Diversity of gender identities</td>
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</table>
Geographic diversity
Under the Community Engagement Policy, regional park CACs must be composed such that 50% of people live outside of neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the regional park area being planned. Seek people from across the city and outside Minneapolis.

Political Experience Diversity
A balance of new voices and participants that have experience serving on boards, commissions, CACs, and committees.

**CAC Selection Committee Roster:** *This roster of groups and individuals that are participating in the CAC appointment process for the project, program, or initiative*

Open call to neighborhood organizations to select and send one representative for the organization.
Select up to five MPRB Project Advisory Team Subcommittee members
Open call to cultural/community organizations within the region

MPRB staff will aim to have members on the committee that represent both the local community and the greater regional area. The selection committee will meet after the deadline for commissioners to appoint to the CAC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Advisory Committee:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committee Recommended Slate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Braun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela A. West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Kinkead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nan Dreher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Shaffar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilia Theisen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Gangl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Romlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Stensrud **local alternate #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Reid **local alternate #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constance Pepin **regional alternate #1</td>
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**Board Individually Appointed CAC Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commissioner</th>
<th>Appointee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forney (at large)</td>
<td>Linda Mack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowgill (district 4)</td>
<td>Win Rockwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musich (district 5)</td>
<td>Anna Eleria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer (district 1)</td>
<td>Rebecca Cohen-Rencontre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourn (district 6)</td>
<td>Ben Surma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vetaw (at large)</td>
<td>Alice Lehman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severson (district 2)</td>
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Request for Board Commissioners to appoint their selected CAC member by Friday, February 14th, 2020.

4. **Analysis:**

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

What is your vision for the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles and the surrounding park land?

What is your vision for:
- Recreation?
- Programming?
- The trail system?
- Environmental sustainability/invasive species management?
- Watershed management/water quality?

What are the current strengths of Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles?

What are the opportunities for improvement at Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles?

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

Ensuring that we are being inclusive with the voices that are represented throughout the process will help the Park Board develop a master plan that takes everyone’s needs and interests into consideration.

5. **Evaluation Summary:**

5a. **Identify one or more key project milestones when project evaluation will be performed** (i.e. Draft design review, draft policy review, project mid-point)

**Milestone #1:** Establish Community Advisory Committee (Spring 2020)

**Milestone #2:** Conclusion of Discovery & Assessment (Fall 2020)

**Milestone #3:** Community Engagement before Final CAC Recommendation (Summer 2021)
The rest be completed at one or more project milestones, and at the completion of the project, program, or initiative.

Project Milestone 1 – Establishment of Community Advisory Committee (Spring 2020)

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

There were numerous strategies that we implemented to get the word out about CAC applications, including:

- Sending several emails out to local and citywide Gov Delivery listservs
- Emails to neighborhood organizations to share with their networks
- Personal emails to local organizations and community groups
- Presentations to city and neighborhood groups
- Flyers in all rec centers around the city
- Flyers at local community nodes
- Creation of a video to market it on social media
- Shareout information on social media
- Posting on fb groups whose audiences engage diverse communities
- Presentations to city staff, city and MPRB committees

Outcome

52 applications were submitted by residents to sit on the CAC, 35 applications were from the five adjacent neighborhoods, and seventeen were from applicants outside of the adjacent neighborhoods within other areas of Minneapolis and the region. We also had a strong pool of candidates with diversity in age, gender identities, and interests. Very few candidates of color applied.

As defined by the Community Engagement Policy, nine of the seventeen committee members are appointed by our nine commissioners (one per commissioner) and eight are selected through a Selection Committee. The policy also states that “Commissioners and the Selection Committee will consider geographic, language, age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, gender identity, and interest diversity as they select the group. For regional parks, no more than fifty percent (50%) of the CAC shall be representatives drawn from neighborhoods adjacent to the park.” Staff gave commissioners a deadline to appoint of Friday, February 14th, 2020. As of April 21st, seven commissioners have appointed committee members; there are still two commissioner-appointed CAC openings.
There was an open call out for community organizations to attend the Selection Committee meeting in February, 2020. Outreach included:

- Emails through local and regional Gov Delivery listservs
- Personal emails to both local and citywide organizations
- Presentations to local and citywide groups

The Selection Committee met on February 27, 2020 for a little over two hours. Organizations, committees, and groups represented at the Selection Committee included:

- Audubon Society
- Cedar Lake Park Association
- Kenwood Neighborhood Organization
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
- The Loppet Foundation
- East Isles Resident Association
- Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association
- Citizens Acting for Rail Safety – Twin Cities
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

MPRB staff facilitated the conversation.

The Selection Committee considered the whole composition of the CAC in making their decision to ensure equitable representation on the CAC based on the composition goals listed under section 3b. The Committee also selected local and regional alternates, should replacement become necessary under the Community Engagement Policy or should a Commissioner appoint from within the proposed slate.

The CAC Slate resolution was adopted on April 1, 2020. 5b. How did the engagement inform the project outcome? (i.e. public tabulation and amendments following a public comment period)

Engagement helped to broaden the pool of applicants who applied to be on the CAC as well as the organizations represented on the Selection Committee.

5c. How did the project and engagement fulfill a goal or strategy in the MPRB Comprehensive Plan?

VISION THEME 3 Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs. Goal to bring in broad perspectives and voices to shape decision-making
5d. Please describe any new or innovative engagement methods used during the process:

None of the engagement methods we used were new, but a broad number of methods were used with a goal of diversifying the interests and demographics of applicants who applied.

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

During engagement with different communities and audiences, reservations were shared about recruiting community members from underrepresented audiences to apply based on past tensions observed in CAC meetings. There was concern that MPRB staff would not create a safe space for everyone to participate. Though we ultimately selected a strong pool of candidates to sit on the CAC, I believe this perception (either real and/or perceived) hindered the diversity of candidates who could have applied. Recommendation for MPRB planning to staff to continue to work on creating safe space and mediation during CAC meetings to ensure all people feel comfortable in the meeting space, especially for folks from underrepresented communities.

5f. What, if any, were the unintended outcomes of your CE Plan? I don’t believe there were any unintended outcomes from the CE Plan during Milestone 1.

5g. Were there any barriers to successful implementation of your CE Plan? It felt challenging to encourage folks who did not live near the area and folks from different cultural communities to want to put 40-50 hours of volunteer work into a park that they don’t interact with or visit on a regular basis. This means that we do not have a representative voice on the CAC of someone who is not a regular visitor and may not be able to speak from a lived experience about why community members may not choose to visit this area of our park system.

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

5i. If applicable, how can this project, program, or initiative, or MPRB continue to partner and deepen relationships with underrepresented communities? From my observations, MPRB planning staff have begun working to build relationships within underrepresented communities and should continue to prioritize and focus energy on these relationships to strengthen them in the future.

**Project Milestone 2 – Conclusion of Discovery and Assessment (Fall 2020)**

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

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

5c. How did the project and engagement fulfill a goal or strategy in the MPRB Comprehensive Plan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Project Milestone 3 – Community Engagement before Final CAC Recommendation Summer 2021

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

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

5c. How did the project and engagement fulfill a goal or strategy in the MPRB Comprehensive Plan? 5d. Please describe any new or innovative engagement methods used during the process: 5e. What recommendations do you have for future engagement around this topic, park, or area?5f. What, if any, were the unintended outcomes of your CE Plan?5g. Were there any barriers to successful implementation of your CE Plan? 5h. Were you adequately resourced, including staff support, expertise, and funding? 5i. If applicable, how can this project, program, or initiative, or MPRB continue to partner and deepen relationships with underrepresented communities?