

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHAPTER 3

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3.1 OVERVIEW AND PROCESS

Community engagement for the Cedar-Isles Plan began in the Winter of 2019 and will continue through the 45-day comment period starting in January 2023. Throughout the process, MPRB aimed to engage as many stakeholder groups as possible to ensure the plan reflected voices from all walks of life. The project team worked directly with stakeholders to ensure their perspectives were consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project decisions.

The project process involved implementing a wide variety of strategies to gather community input. This chapter will go into detail about identified stakeholders, means of engagement, engagement strategies, and how feedback was incorporated into developing this plan. The Met Council’s Equity Analysis requirement has been embedded throughout this chapter as its requirements closely overlap with this reporting.

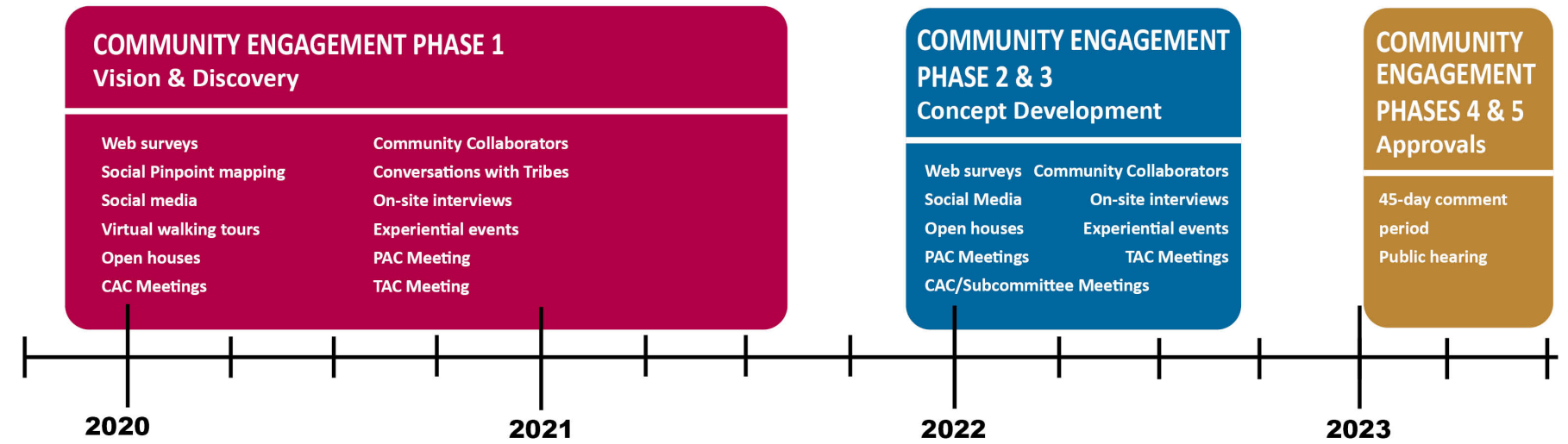


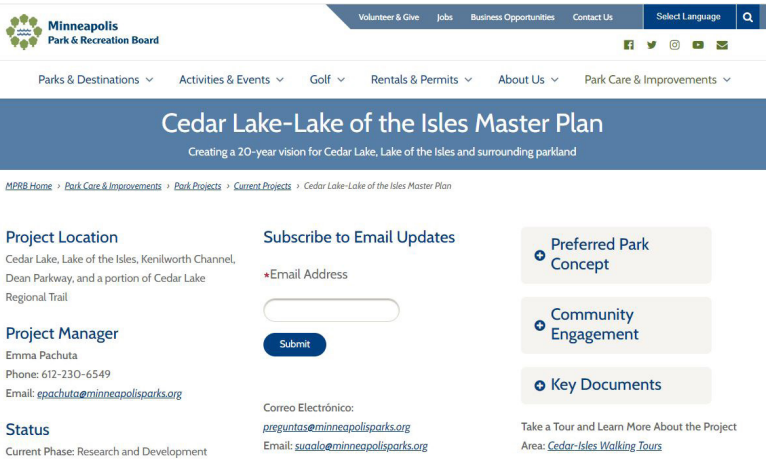
Figure 3.1: Community Engagement Timeline. MPRB

3.2 ONGOING PROJECT COMMUNICATION

PROJECT PAGE

The Cedar-Isles project page, located on the MPRB website, was the primary location for information related to the project. The page included contact information, an email subscription, links to meeting summaries, public meeting information, draft designs, and ways to provide input. A link to the project page was shared through flyers, postcards, presentations, and word of mouth.

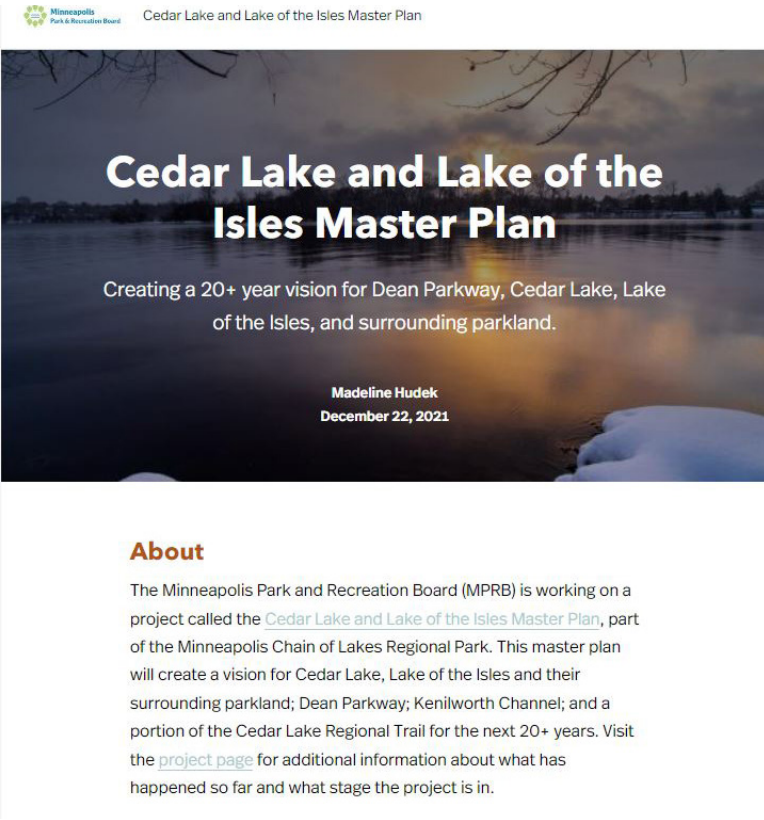
Project page: www.minneapolisparcs.org/cedar-isles



Screenshot of Project Page. MPRB

STORYMAP

The online “StoryMap” for the project was used as an additional place to gather, highlight, and share community engagement feedback. Engagement materials, such as fliers and lawn signs, directed people to this landing page.



Screenshot of StoryMap Page. MPRB

EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The project team employed GovDelivery emails as a primary means of information distribution throughout the planning process. Content of the emails included information about events, meetings, ways to give input, and project updates. Over the course of the project, 64 emails were sent during Phases 1 through 3 using the Gov Delivery platform, with approximately 1,367 email subscribers for this project.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

Throughout the project process, project staff received numerous emails and phones calls with questions, concerns, ideas, and general feedback. These inquiries were incorporated into community engagement for the project.

LAWN SIGNS

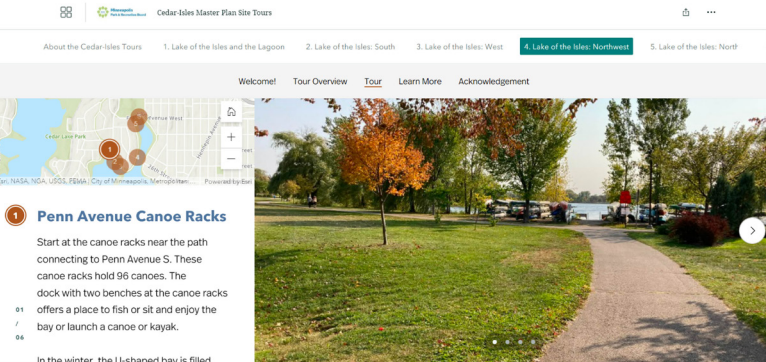
Signs were created for both local and regional audiences and were put up within and outside the project area directing people to learn more about the project. .

VIRTUAL WALKING TOURS

MPRB staff worked with interested Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members to create a series of virtual walking tours that were available to the CAC and general public. The goal of the tours was to help community members experience the project area on their own or by viewing them online. This was especially important during COVID-19 when group tours were not available. The online tours were available starting in January 2021 and were up for the remainder of the project.



Project lawn sign. MPRB



Screenshot of virtual walking tour page. MPRB

3.3 ADVISORY COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Community Advisory Committees (CAC) are made up of 17 community members, nine appointed by MPRB Commissioners and eight appointed by a selection committee. CAC members are meant to represent a wide variety of perspectives and are geographically distributed within the local and broader regional area. Participation from this stakeholder group on the Met Council’s IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation ranged from Involve to Collaborate.

The Cedar-Isles CAC was charged with:

- Becoming knowledgeable about the MPRB park planning process;
- Understanding the history of the park land and how it may inform future design and policy decisions;
- Understanding and balancing the complexities between programming and recreation needs with natural space and preservation needs;
- Understanding the values and needs for the Minneapolis regional park system and its community and the values and needs of the local community;
- Informing and listening to community about the project;
- Helping to identify communities, organizations, user groups, populations and others that should be consulted in the engagement process;
- Reporting back to appointers or appointing bodies, as requested, on the plan process, information presented, and possible recommendations;
- Engaging in working groups and subcommittees as needed;

- Providing feedback on a draft plan;
- Making recommendations about the project to the MPRB board of commissioners; and
- Abide by the MPRB community engagement policy.



CAC walking tour at Lake of the Isles. MPRB



CAC boat tour on Cedar Lake. MPRB

The Cedar-Isles CAC worked with project staff throughout the different stages of community engagement to provide final recommendations for the master plan. CAC meetings were hosted virtually and towards the end of the process, in person. All meetings were open to the public with meeting materials shared on the project webpage.

In addition to full CAC meetings, there were two CAC subcommittees that formed during the initial and preferred park concept phases. Each was focused on a topic that a subset of the CAC asked to discuss in further detail. The result of these subcommittees were recommendations that were brought back to the full CAC for discussion and approval. More detail on each subcommittee is below.

WATER QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

The Water Quality Subcommittee was formed following the water quality discussion at CAC Meeting #7. The CAC requested additional data to be able to make comprehensive recommendations for the plan on this foundational topic. The purpose of the subcommittee was to learn about water quality in greater detail and develop goals and subsequent strategies to address water quality improvements within the plan. Eight CAC members participated in five subcommittee meetings during the initial and preferred park concept phases.

CIRCULATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Circulation Subcommittee developed following a discussion of circulation topics at CAC meeting #12. The CAC determined they needed more time to work towards final recommendations. Thirteen CAC members participated in two subcommittee meetings during the preferred park concept phase. The goals of the subcommittee were to:

- Align circulation infrastructure and amenities with the plan’s vision and guiding principles;
- Improve circulation and access for park visitors while protecting water quality and wildlife habitat and prioritizing visitor safety in this order: pedestrians, bicycles/roller skaters/skateboarders, electric micro-mobility (ex: scooters, bikers, hover boards), motorized vehicles;
- Clarify circulation networks and links among people, wildlife, and natural resources with low-impact signage and other tools.

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was made up of MPRB staff representatives from departments across the organization. The PAC provided insight and expertise about existing conditions, maintenance, and programming within the the project area and shared feedback on draft materials. PAC members were a resource answer community questions during community engagement and distribute information with other staff.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was made up of staff from different agencies and organizations that have a connection to the project area. Most representatives on the TAC worked for agencies that have a city, region, or state-wide focus. TAC members provided feedback on the proposed design ideas and shared how their respective agency processes may overlap with the design. The TAC also provided information about work their agencies were doing which may overlap or require future coordination.

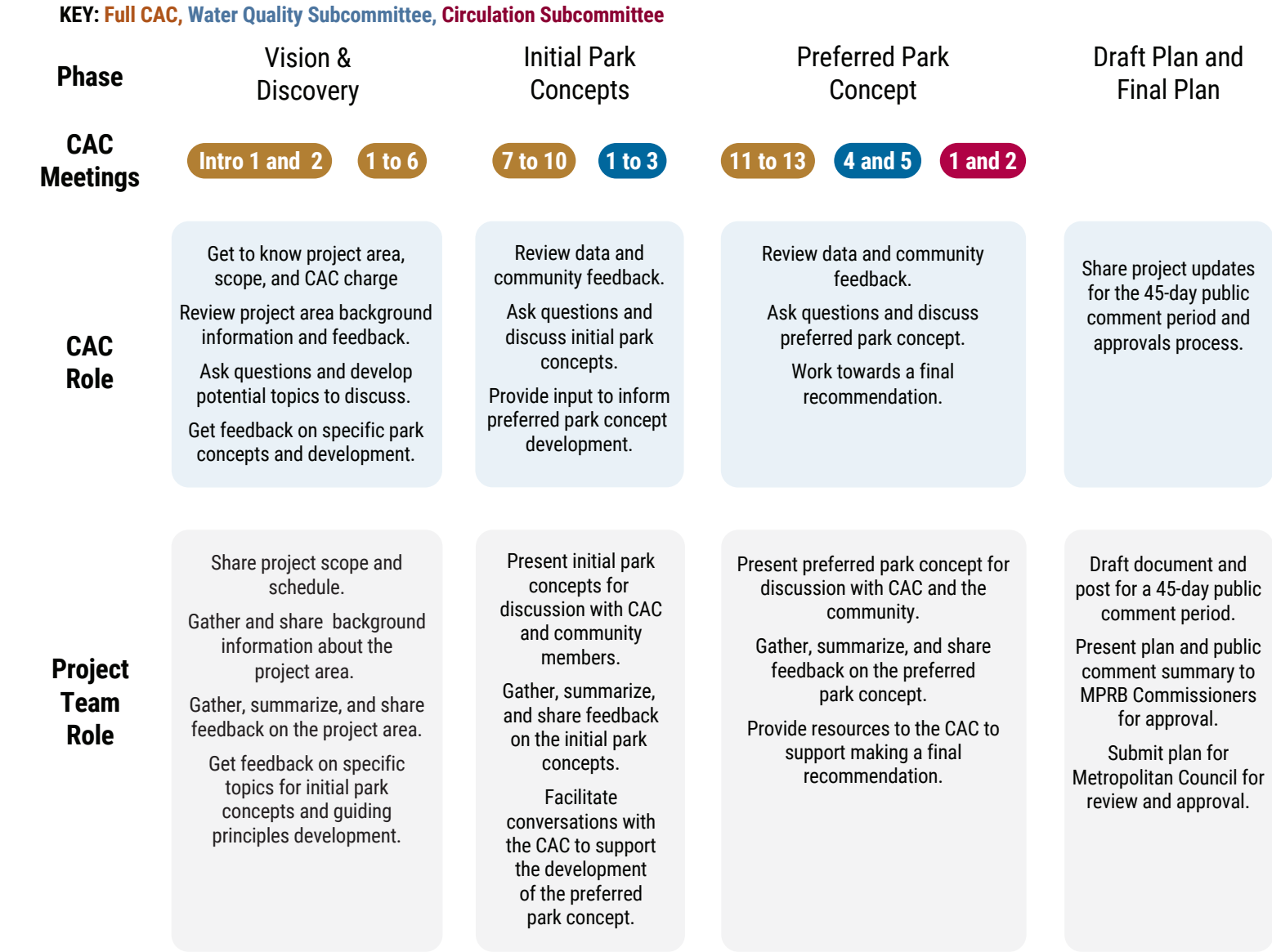


Figure 3.2: Community Advisory Committee and Subcommittee Meetings. MPRB

3.4 PROJECT DATA

WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

Engagement for the project included “local” neighborhoods, defined as those immediately next to the park, along with people from all over the region. The local neighborhoods included: Bryn Mawr, Cedar-Isles-Dean, East Isles, Kenwood, and Lowry Hill. Everywhere outside of these five neighborhoods was defined as “regional”. To understand MPRB engagement goals, demographics were assessed for the adjacent neighborhood, the City of Minneapolis, and Hennepin County.

The population of people color residing in the area around Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles is about 10.96% compared to 37.15% for Minneapolis and 29.39% for Hennepin County. Additionally, for people who identified as Hispanic, residents in the area around the lakes make up about 4.01% of the population compared to 9.62% in Minneapolis and 6.95% in Hennepin County.

According to the Metropolitan Council’s 2021 Regional forecast, the metropolitan population will be larger, more diverse, and older by 2050. In 2010, the regional population was 2,850,000 and by 2050 it is forecasted to grow to 4,001,000. In this same time frame, the population of people 65 and older will go from 11% to 22% and of people of color will go from making up 24% to 44% of the population.¹

MPRB outlined several target audiences who have historically been underrepresented in planning processes to engage during the process to ensure their voices were included:

- Cultural communities
- Seniors/elders
- People with disabilities

¹ 2010 population from Census Bureau; 2020-2050 from Metropolitan Council regional forecast (2021)

- Renters
- Youth
- People who do not currently visit the Cedar-Isles area
-

TOTAL POPULATION			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
	13,804	424,536	1,255,296

RACE/ETHNICITY			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
American Indian and Alaska Native	.16%	1.38%	.7%
Asian	2.42%	5.91%	7.21%
Black or African American	1.5%	18.87%	13.18%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	.23%	.03%	.03%
White	89.28%	62.85%	70.61%
Some Other Race	2.28%	5%	3.44%
Two or More Races	4.37%	5.96%	4.83%
Hispanic (of any race)	4.01%	9.62%	6.95%

AGE			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
Under 18 years	14.2%	19.8%	22%
65 years and over	18.2%	9.9%	14.1%

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
Have a disability	8.8%	10.9%	10%

AVERAGE INCOME			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
Average Income	\$162,536	\$93,145	\$114,194

HOUSING			
	Local Area*	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
Owner-occupied housing	51%	45%	60%
Renter-occupied housing	45%	49%	36%
Homeownership rate	53.3%	47.4%	62.5%

Tables 3.1: Project Area Demographics: Source: the 2016-2020 American Community Survey

*Local Area includes the following census tracts: 1065, 1051, 1055, and 1066

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

As is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 2, the area that includes what is now known as Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles was inhabited by Indigenous people for thousands of years. Following the Dakota’s forced displacement, European settlement and urban development occurred, which eventually included establishment of the city of Minneapolis in 1867. ¹ The Minneapolis Park Board of Commissioners was formally approved by the legislature in 1883. Today, the land and water within the park system, including the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles project area, continues to hold significance for the Dakota people.

Indigenous community members face several contemporary barriers in accessing this area of the park system. Barriers include but are not limited to: an inability to connect with this area, feeling unwelcome because they don’t see themselves represented in current park users or amenities, inability for elders to access the natural areas due to difficult terrain, needing to pay for parking.

Additionally, the legacy of redlining and racial covenants have shaped access to this area by informing where people lived based on the color of their skin and/or income. Today, the homeownership rate for the land around both lakes is about 5.9% higher, average income is about \$60,000 more, and the population is about 26.4% whiter compared to Minneapolis, according to the American Community Survey 2016-2020. There are graphics showing the neighborhoods with covenants in Chapter 2.

¹ “Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park: Bde Maka Ska – Harriet Master Plan.” Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

3.5 PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT: VISION & DISCOVERY (WINTER 2019 - FALL 2021)

OVERVIEW

During Phase 1 of community engagement, staff implemented a number of strategies to gather community input on the vision, opportunities, and challenges within the project area. Due to COVID-19 shutdowns, staff extended the original timeline originally set to end winter 2020, through summer 2021. This allowed staff to spend additional time engaging a broader audience of community members about their vision for this area of the park system. *During this engagement phase, participation from stakeholders on the Met Council’s IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation ranged from Inform to Involve.*

The strategies employed in this phase included a mix of virtual, in person, and community-led opportunities. There were a number of themes that had broad consensus from stakeholders who participated in one or more of the available opportunities. Below are the most common overall themes across virtual, in person, and community collaborator engagement.

OVERALL THEMES:

- Support for and the importance of elevating water quality within the plan
- Appreciation of the nature and the beauty on site
- Support for preserving and expanding the natural and forested areas
- Support for the preservation of old growth trees and planting of new trees
- Interest in retaining open green space for programming and views
- Appreciation for the existing walking and biking network
- Interest in improving safety for pedestrians/bicyclists
- Appreciation for existing programming and amenities on site

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Staff hosted a series of online listening sessions in 2020 and 2021 where residents could ask questions and share their feedback. During this time there were also a variety of self-serve virtual options for community feedback to share feedback. The final online events wrapped up in May 2021 and the virtual feedback tools remained open until July 15th, 2021.

Below is a list of the most common themes heard from the virtual engagement, which are in addition to the overall themes for phase 1.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT THEMES:

- Enjoyment of the unique solitude one can find in this part of the park system
- Opposition to new development or structures
- Interest in reducing or slowing vehicle traffic on the parkways
- Concern that eastern shore of Cedar Lake is not accessible to the public
- Support for a walk and/or bike trail around Cedar Lake (paved or natural path)
- Concern with current crowding in the parks, especially during the pandemic
- Interest in limiting new development
- Interest in adding more amenities at key locations (ie benches, picnic tables, bathrooms, water fountains, food trucks, bike racks)
- Concern with safety in low trafficked/low lit areas
- Appreciation for what is already at these parks, not wanting to change too much
- Desire for improved maintenance of existing facilities
- Desire to leave parks as is, not add anything new

ONLINE SURVEY

Beginning in Winter 2019, an online survey was publicly shared through Gov Delivery, direct emails to partners, social media, mailers, and signage throughout the park system. A second survey focused on Dean Parkway was distributed in March 2020 following its addition to the project area. Six out of ten online survey participants responded to optional demographic questions. The majority of people who responded reported living in close proximity to the area and visit the park system regularly.

SOCIAL MEDIA

To gather general visual feedback during this phase, MPRB staff

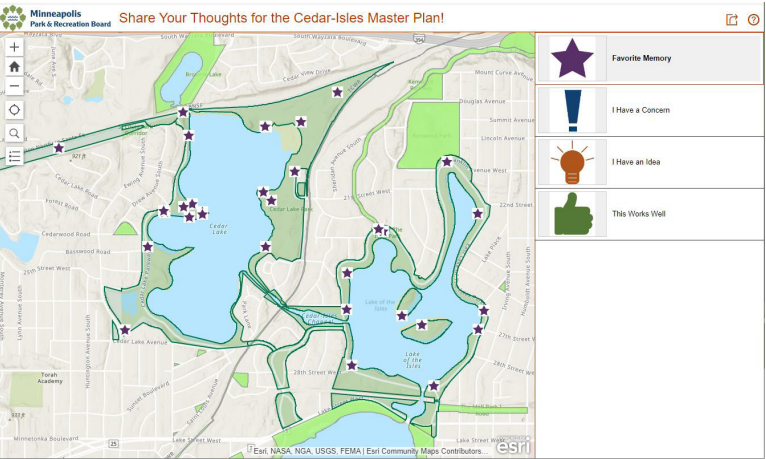
NUMBER OF ONLINE SURVEYS RECEIVED: 1,043

initiated a social media photo campaign from September to December 2020 using the hashtag #cedarisles. These campaigns were shared on Facebook and Instagram in an attempt to reach a younger and more regional audience. The hashtag continued to be used throughout the process as a project awareness tool.

INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

In March 2020, staff introduced an online mapping tool that allowed

community members to share location-specific responses of ‘favorite memories’, ‘things that currently work well’, ‘concerns’, and ‘ideas’ for the area.



Screenshot of MPRB interactive mapping tool. MPRB

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

MPRB staff hosted a series of events and conversations with current and future park visitors in summer 2021. Staff worked both independently and with community partners to hear from community about the vision for this area. A total of 26 events were held, and included one-on-one conversations, experiential canoe, hiking, and biking events, group conversations, and administering surveys. Staff also hosted pop-up conversations with visitors completing specific activities at specific locations, such as fishing at Lake of the Isles, swimming at East Cedar Beach, and canoing through the Kenilworth Channel. Translators were used during two of the events.

Staff gathered input from regional visitors, youth, families, communities of color, cultural communities, low-income seniors, folks who do not have access to a vehicle, and folks who live in the adjacent neighborhoods.

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT THEMES:

- That this area doesn't always feel welcoming to folks of color
- Preserve the old growth trees, increase canopy
- Need more spaces for large multi-generational events
- Would like to see more community-driven artwork by locals, youth, BIPOC
- Better wayfinding and signage
- Difficult to access this part of the park system
- Concern with safety
- Support for honoring Indigenous legacy in the area



Bike tour with youth at Cedar Lake. MPRB

PEOPLE WHO VISIT EAST CEDAR BEACH

When asked about Cedar Lake East Beach, many people reported that they traveled from different parts of the city or suburbs to visit due to the uniqueness compared to other beaches. Folks reported liking the secluded and relaxed feel of the beach, enjoying that its within a forest space, and were concerned about the impact from Southwest Light Rail Transit station to the beach. Folks also reported enjoying the existing programming, had an interest in more programming, and



East Cedar Beach. TEN x TEN

were open new amenities, such as more bike racks or a restroom building, provided that the new amenities didn't change the feel of the space.

FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH

Project staff partnered with youth programs based in north and south Minneapolis to provide outdoor experiences and gather feedback. Many participants on these trips had not visited one or more of the lakes before. They reported they enjoyed the natural spaces and would like to see the natural areas managed better, plus add additional pollinator gardens. They would like to see increased events, including street performers and vendors. The youth noted that MPRB could increase access to different community members by adding multi-lingual signage, creating intergenerational spaces, and allowing publicly accessible boats.



Boat tour on Cedar Lake with youth. MPRB

PEOPLE WHO FISH THE LAKES

MPRB staff spoke to people who were fishing at both Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Park staff learned that most people who had their own boat for fishing reported they didn't need additional amenities to fish. Folks who did not have access to a boat and fished on shore shared that they would appreciate access to more restrooms and

have more and/or longer docks for additional quiet spaces to fish. They also reported that informal shoreline fishing also works well.

FEEDBACK FROM MINNESOTA TRIBAL NATIONS

MPRB worked with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) from Lower Sioux Indian Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Upper Sioux Community who provided guidance to protect sensitive aspects of the landscape and improve accessibility for the Dakota. The THPOs reported wanting to see use of pre-colonization plants on site, limiting access to some secluded areas to use for ceremonial practices, and protection of the natural environment. They were also in support of soft surface trails instead of paved trails.

The THPOs wanted to see Indigenous history, including dark stories about their forced displacement, shared on-site through signage or online information. They supported designating foraging sites for Indigenous community members. They also reported that this area does not feel welcoming to many Native people, both because forced displacement created a disconnect for many and because most park visitors are white and wealthy.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR FEEDBACK

Project staff sought Community Collaborator paid services from businesses, institutions, nonprofits, and cultural organizations to design and implement engagement within specific audiences. This initiative was a paid opportunity that had two rounds during Phase 1 Engagement.

AUDIENCES ENGAGED:

- Residents in Loring Park, Steven Square, Whittier that included renters; folks who identified as LGBTQ+, BIPOC, or having a disability
- Somali residents in Minneapolis
- Local youth ages 10-17
- People with disabilities and their caretakers outside of Minneapolis
- Indigenous youth and adults alongside Minneapolis residents
- Community members who live in or are associated with North Minneapolis

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR THEMES

- Desire for greater accessibility for people of all abilities and races
- Acknowledgment that there is a lack of diversity in the area
- Interest in elevating Indigenous legacy through education and interpretation
- Concerns about safety, specifically for people of color
- Support for additional art and culture

HARPER STEINBACH

Harper interviewed people at the parks and learned that people valued free spaces to gather, and interest in additional gathering spaces. There was also a desire for greater accessibility, including improved walkability and more interactive art and programming.



Snow sculpture photo by participant

BRYGHTSIDE LLC, ABDIMALIK MOHAMED

Abdimalik recorded and produced a video of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles in Somali and spoke with Somali community members who don't visit the park. They reported wanting to see more racial diversity in the park system, specifically for community elders to be welcomed into the park system, and a concern that this part of the park system feel private and not open to the public. They would like more field and activity spaces. The majority of respondents access the park by driving.



Aerial view of Lake of the Isles in the winter. Still image from Abdimalik Mohamed's video.

ARTRAGEOUS ADVENTURES, AMANDA VALLONE

Amanda Vallone engaged resident youth through visual arts, theater, and dance. They reported wanting more amenities, including picnic tables, a strolling ice cream cart, restrooms, fountain feature near the lake, and a nature-based play structure. At East Cedar Beach, youth hoped to see fresh sand, an improved mud pit, a diving raft or water slide. They also wanted to see public art incorporated into amenities, i.e. bike racks, hammock hooks, using recycled materials.



Group of youth participating in an ARTrageous Adventures activity in the woods at Cedar Lake. Still image from Zoe Fustgaard's video.

ANNA HAGLIN

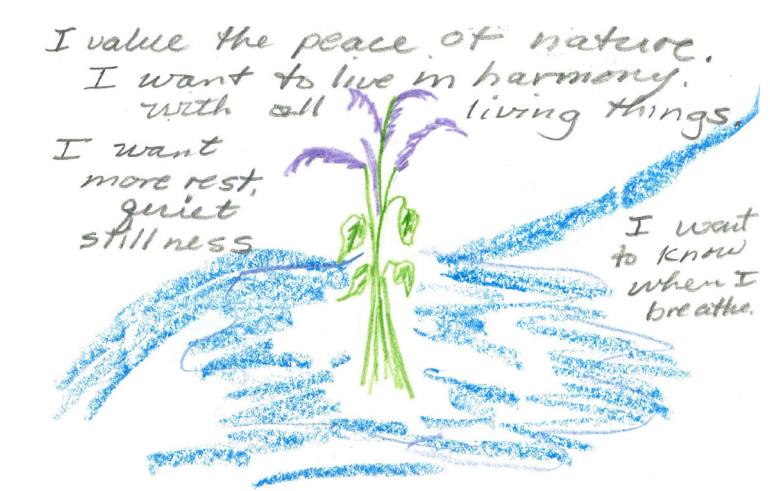
Anna Haglin engaged a group of people with disabilities and caretakers. Some concerns included water quality, the fact that there are no affordable food options, and that it is difficult to access this area of parkland alone. Suggestions included planting fruit trees for food and improving accessibility for all, including additional work on diversity and inclusion.



Art making at Cedar Lake. Anna Haglin

NIBIWALK, SHARON DAY

Sharon Marie Day (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe) led a NibiWalk alongside several Indigenous community partners. Community members reported on the importance of learning from Indigenous people (Dakota, Lakota, and Ojibwe) and the importance of making decisions to keep the water healthy. There was support planting native places, especially plants that hold medicinal value like sweetgrass, and for maintaining habitat for birds in the area. Folks also noted the importance of trails through these spaces, with a preference for unpaved.




Participant reflection from Nibi Water Walk

THE WITNESS PROJECT

The Witness Project, based in North Minneapolis, worked with writers to develop a compilation of essays and poems about Theodore Wirth Park, Cedar Lake, and/or Lake of the Isles. Feedback shared was an appreciation for nature and variety of animals and landscapes within the parks. There was also an acknowledgment that majority of the landscape and name changes have been through a European American lens; hard topics like forced removal of the Dakota and racial covenants are part of MPRB’s history and should be told. This plan is an opportunity to create welcoming spaces for everyone through names, landscapes, and amenities; there should be a variety of activities for all people to enjoy. Parks can be both a place of new discoveries and a place to find calm.

WHEN THE MOON FELL
Lisa Kyu

At last the thermometer broke into double digits. I and my friend Ahnjong donned our snowshoes and headed for the park. The snow was sterling white in the sunshine. It was as if the last night’s moon had fallen and spread herself atop the rises. We walked and walked in companionable silence at each other’s side. The acres glided by. In time, Ahnjong spoke. She has family living in Wuhan where a virus rampaged the city; but she did not talk of this. She told me of a recipe she found tucked inside a box of photos, passed down from her great-great-grandmother. She mentioned Bal, her cousin, quarantined in Seoul, and I was reminded of my son, his once-cocooned body, trying to survive childhood leukemia. To even say his name would bring forth tears. I merely sighed.



Excerpt from Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles/Theodore Wirth: A Literary Documentary. The Witness Project

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETINGS

The following are overviews from CAC meetings in this phase. Full meeting notes are included in Appendix B. During this phase, all CAC meeting documents, materials, and videos were uploaded in advance of each meeting. Meetings were also all held virtually on Zoom.

CAC INTRODUCTION MEETINGS - PART 1 AND 2

July 13, 2020 and August 3, 2020

MPRB hosted two virtual introductory CAC meetings to help CAC members get to know each other, discuss how to address racial equity within the planning process, and give guidance about whether the project should proceed virtually following the COVID-19 shutdowns.

CAC MEETING 1: ACCESS

September 29, 2020

CAC and members of the public completed a power and stake activity, designed to get people thinking about which voices have power and/or stake in the planning process. CAC members were introduced to Access and Circulation in the project area and regional context and answered the following questions:

- What are opportunities to improve how people get to and/or move around these parks?
- How do we improve access and circulation while honoring the aspects of these parks that are loved by current park users?

CAC MEETING 2: HISTORY: INDIGENOUS LEGACY THROUGH THE MID 1900S

October 26, 2020

Project staff facilitated a debrief of the power and stake activity from CAC #1. CAC members were asked the following reflection questions:

- Do you notice any differences or similarities between the boards?
- How do you see this exercise playing out in the master plan process?
- How should we engage different levels of stakeholders?
- Are there any missing stakeholders that should be added?

Next, project staff presented information about the history of the site, including challenging history facts about Indigenous legacy and restrictive covenants. A facilitated discussion of the CAC centered on the following questions:

- What physical changes over time have had the most impact on how the lakes are experienced today?
- How should the parks’ historical development be honored, while incorporating contemporary needs and values?

CAC MEETING 3: CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

November 30, 2020

Representatives from the Cedar Lake Park Association, Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association, Kenwood Neighborhood Association, and MPRB briefly highlighted some of the more recent initiatives in the area followed by Q&A with the community panel. Reflection questions:

- What are your takeaways from the panel today?
- What contemporary values do you see reflected in this work? Are there any gaps?

CAC MEETING 4: RESILIENCY

January 25, 2021

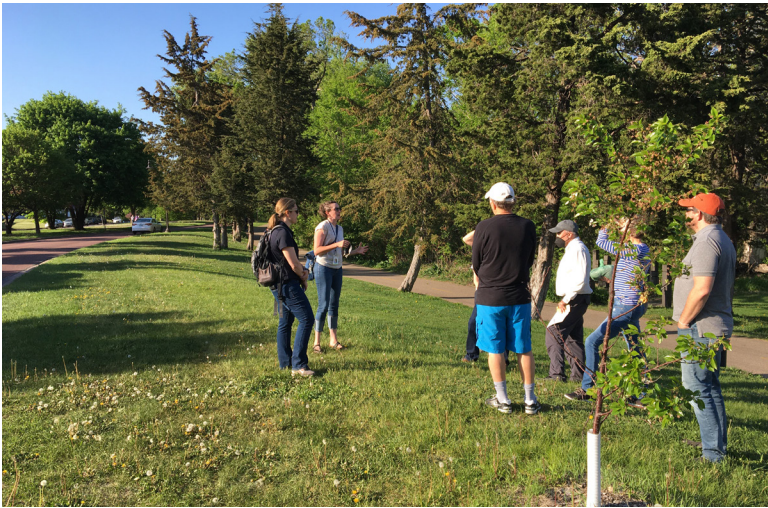
Project team members and partner agencies covered future climate projections, historic context of the land and water, and future opportunities. A facilitated discussion of the CAC centered on the following questions:

- How can we balance natural resource opportunities with the current park-like aesthetic and uses (lawn and recreation) that people love?
- How does the master plan respond to the increase in new users coming to enjoy natural areas (habitats, water, wildlife) while minimizing impacts?

CAC MEETINGS 5: DRAFTING A VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND 6: INITIAL MAPPED LAYERS AND SKETCHES

September 9, 2021 and November 9, 2021

In meeting 5, the project team took the CAC and members of the public through their process in developing a draft of guiding language; the CAC then shared feedback on this initial version. Meeting 6 closed out the guiding principles and vision conversation and transitioned into a discussion about proposed ideas for the initial park concepts. The group was broken into breakout rooms to discuss different topics: programming and amenities; circulation and access; entries and gateways; and water, climate mitigation, ecology, and wildlife. Feedback from this meeting was used to finalize the draft initial park concepts.



CAC tour at Cedar Lake. MPRB



CAC tour at Lake of the Isles and Kenilworth Channel. MPRB

3.6 PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT: INITIAL PARK CONCEPTS (DECEMBER 2021 - APRIL 2022)

OVERVIEW

Phase 2 of community engagement gathered input on the guiding principles and the two initial park concepts that were developed from phase one’s feedback and shared out in December 2021. Many engagement strategies continued into this phase as a mixture of virtual and in-person options. Engagement strategies adapted to COVID-19 conditions with an eye to creating more in-person opportunities when possible. The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) continued to provide guidance to the project team about what should be included in the preferred park concept. A full summary of community feedback and CAC meetings notes can be found in the appendix. *During this engagement phase, participation from stakeholders on the Met Council’s IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation ranged from Consult to Involve.*

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

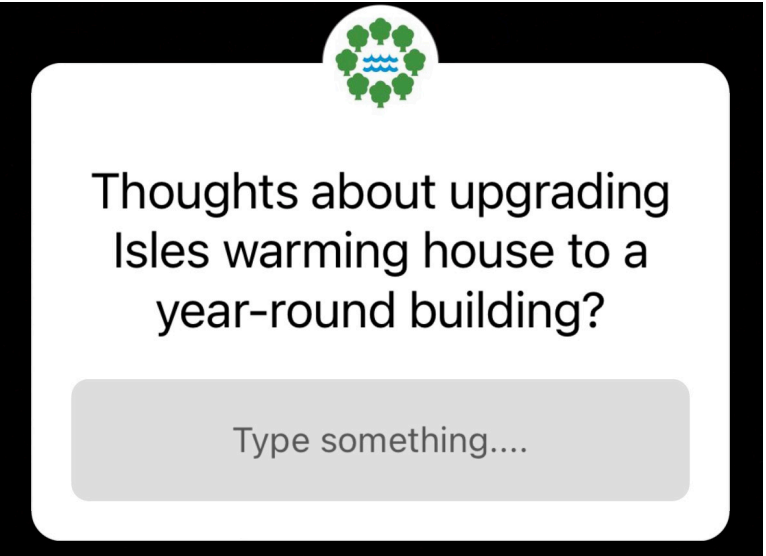
ONLINE SURVEY

In mid-December 2021, an online survey was shared alongside the initial park concepts. The survey asked folks to rank the guiding principles from highest to lowest priority, and feedback on the initial park concepts. The survey was open through mid-March 2022. Similar to phase one, based on the optional demographic data, the majority of people who responded to the survey lived in close proximity to parkland.

NUMBER OF ONLINE SURVEYS RECEIVED:
684

SOCIAL MEDIA

To engage a boarder audience, Facebook and Instagram were used to gather input. Four stories were created sharing information and asking for feedback related to proposed features and topics in the initial park concepts.



Question from winter Instagram story. MPRB

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

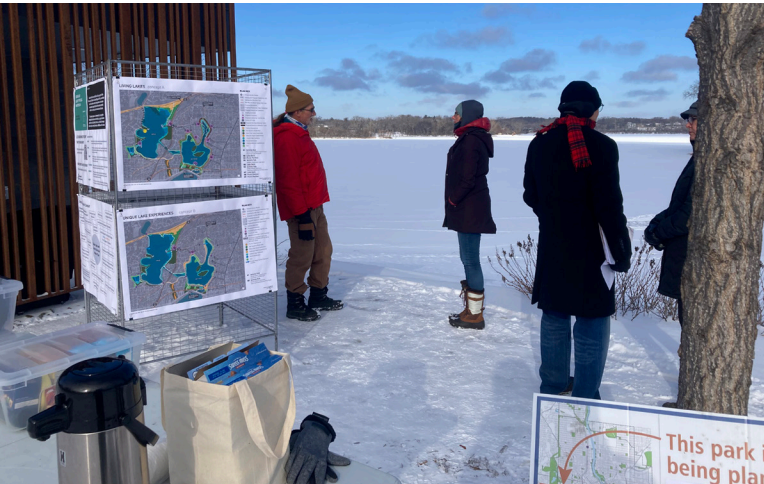
Project staff held a series of open houses to gather feedback on the initial park concepts. Folks were encouraged to share what they liked or disliked about each concept. Events took place at different locations around the project area and virtual open houses were all on Zoom. There was also a formal informational open house hosted in partnership with a local neighborhood association towards the end of this phase that included a presentation and question and answer time.

In addition to open houses, project staff organized focus group conversations, some of which included walking tours, to discuss proposed changes with park neighbors, restoration volunteers, and community groups and volunteers. The Cedar Lake Park work group began as a focus group conversation and evolved into a community-led working group with participation from several CAC and community members. The working group brought their recommendations to the full CAC.

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- General
- Support for water quality improvements
 - Support for natural areas improvements
 - Support for a connection between the lakes along Kenilworth Channel
 - Support for adding a permanent restroom
 - Concern about overuse of parkland

- Lake of the Isles
- Support for increasing natural areas, but also to maintain lawn areas for gathering
 - Opposition to proposed parkway closures
 - Support for and opposition to two-way bike circulation
 - Opposition to boardwalks
 - Support for and opposition to a permanent warming house
 - Opposition to new structures
 - Support for and opposition to permanent restroom structure
 - Support for the skating loop



In-person engagement during the Initial Park Concepts phase. MPRB

- Cedar Lake
- Support for increasing natural areas and shoreline plants
 - Support for and opposition to proposed one-way parkway on Cedar Lake Parkway
 - Concerns with current and future parking
 - Support for a trail around Cedar Lake and making the shoreline publicly accessible
 - Support for and opposition to boardwalks
 - Support for and opposition to a boat rental at East Cedar Beach
 - Support for and opposition to adding a skating rink on Cedar

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

Project staff sought Community Collaborator services from businesses, nonprofits, cultural organizations, and community leaders to help gather community feedback. Of the six participants in the first phase of engagement, two community collaborators participated in the initial park concepts engagement phase. Work took place in March and April of 2022.

- AUDIENCES ENGAGED:
- People with disabilities and their caretakers outside of Minneapolis
 - Community members who live in or are associated with North Minneapolis

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR THEMES

- Need for greater accessibility through design, visuals, and information
- Support for safety considerations and amenities
- Design for the different of communities of color; their needs are different than for white folks
- Design for people with disabilities, hidden and visible
- Support for natural environment
- Support for places of solace in nature
- Support for additional restrooms

ANNA HAGLIN

Anna Haglin engaged people with disabilities and folks who work with people with disabilities include direct service professional and an outdoor education director.

- Themes:
- Information about park features and amenities should be available in advance and on site Include accessible restrooms, permanent preferred
 - Smooth trails and seating, especially near water are important
 - Include natural areas throughout the park, with areas of seclusion
 - Supportive of boardwalks, ice skating, and picnicking

THE WITNESS PROJECT

The Witness Project, based in North Minneapolis, worked with local writers to develop a body of work responding to content in the initial park concepts and potential outcomes in the future.

- Themes:
- Support for water quality and natural resources improvements
 - Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles are not welcoming places for everyone
 - Human design has already impacted the park, does there need to be more?

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Below is high level content discussed during each CAC meeting during the Initial Concepts Phase. All meetings began with a community engagement overview and an update from subcommittees if applicable. Meetings were held virtually during this phase, except for CAC 10, which was the first meeting held in-person. Full CAC meeting notes are located on Appendix B.

CAC MEETING 7.1 AND 7.2: WATER QUALITY DISCUSSION

January 11, 2022 and January 27, 2022

Over the course of two meetings, project staff presented an overview of community engagement to date along with an in-depth overview of the water quality strategies included in the draft initial park concepts. Many comments were centered around the desire for more data to support how the water quality strategies proposed would actually improve water quality, beyond what MPRB normally supports during a master plan process. To respond to CAC and community feedback, a Water Quality CAC Subcommittee was created to create more space for learning more and making informed recommendations on water quality.

WATER QUALITY CAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 1

March 8, 2022

In the first meeting of Water Quality CAC Subcommittee, the majority of the meeting was spent discussing CAC members’ vision of what “improved water quality” meant to them, plus outlining water quality-related questions they would like the consultants to answer. Discussion from this meeting informed the content for the subsequent subcommittee meetings.



CAC boat tour on Cedar Lake. MPRB

CAC MEETINGS 8: CIRCULATION AND ACCESS AND 9: PROGRAMMING, STRUCTURES, & AMENITIES

March 10, 2022 and April 7, 2022

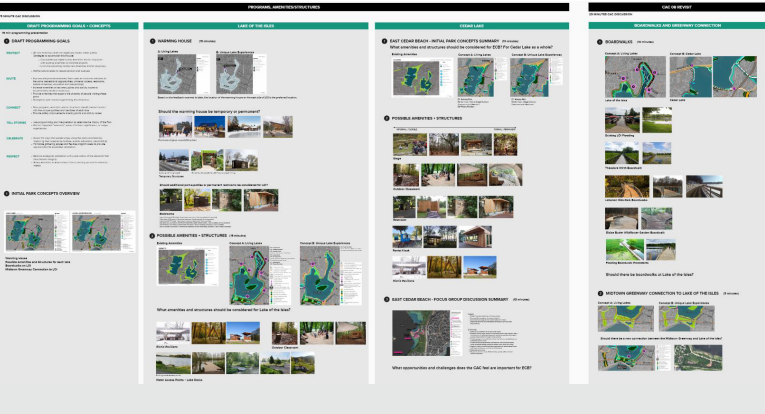
Meetings 8 and 9 were held to get guidance from the CAC on specific topics and/or items shared in the draft initial park concepts to inform the preferred park concept. Discussion topics and questions:

Circulation and Access Discussion Topics:

- Kenilworth Channel Connection
- Northeast Cedar Lake Connection
- Lake of the Isles Two-Way Bike Connection
- Temporary and Permanent Parkway Closures

Programming, Structures, & Amenities Discussion Questions:

- Should the warming house be temporary or permanent?
- Should additional port-a-potties or permanent restrooms be considered for Lake of the Isles?
- What amenities and structures should be considered for Lake of the Isles?
- What amenities and structures should be considered for East Cedar Lake Beach? For Cedar Lake as a whole?
- What opportunities and challenges does the CAC feel are important for East Cedar Lake Beach?
- Should there be boardwalks at Lake of the Isles?
- Should there be a new connection between the Midtown Greenway and Lake of the Isles?



Discussion activity from CAC 9. Ten x Ten

WATER QUALITY CAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS 2 AND 3

April 14, 2022 and April 21, 2022

In depth presentations were shared on limnology, context for how lakes are evaluated, and current conditions for Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles were shared with subcommittee members to provide foundational knowledge and start to establish a common language. Throughout the informational presentations the subcommittee also had opportunities to get questions answered. During Subcommittee #3, MPRB staff brought a draft of Water Quality Goals and Strategies developed using CAC guidance from meetings #1 & #2 which the CAC continued to edit together. These goals informed development of the Preferred Park Concept.

CAC MEETING 10: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

April 28, 2022

The Water Quality Subcommittee gave an overview of the draft goals at lake management plan, master plan, and high-level watershed levels. Next, the CAC moved into a facilitated discussion on some outstanding questions based on feedback received from the public, including:

- Should we consider adding parking near East Cedar Beach?
- Should we consider reorganizing or removing some parking to improve water quality?
- Should we propose removing the portion of Lake of the isles Parkway that runs parallel to Franklin Avenue?

The CAC then moved to discuss revising the draft vision and guiding principles presented with the initial park concept. Feedback from this meeting was used to inform the preferred park concept

3.7 PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT: PREFERRED PARK CONCEPT (JUNE 2022 - AUGUST 2022)

OVERVIEW

Phase three's primary goal was to ensure the preferred park concept that was released in June reflected input obtained during the previous community engagement phases and help the CAC work towards making final recommendations on the design. A combination of virtual and in-person engagement strategies were implemented. A feedback summary report was shared with the CAC to help them make community informed decisions on their final recommendations. The full summary of engagement feedback from this phase is located on Appendix B. During this engagement phase, participation from stakeholders on the Met Council's IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation ranged from Consult to Involve.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

ONLINE SURVEY

A third online survey was shared with the release of the preferred park concept in late June 2022. The survey was open until the conclusion of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) process and was the primary method for gathering input from the public during this phase of the project. Similar to previous phases, the majority of folks who responded reported living in close proximity (adjacent neighborhood or one neighborhood over) from the park area.

NUMBER OF ONLINE SURVEYS RECEIVED: 211

Themes:

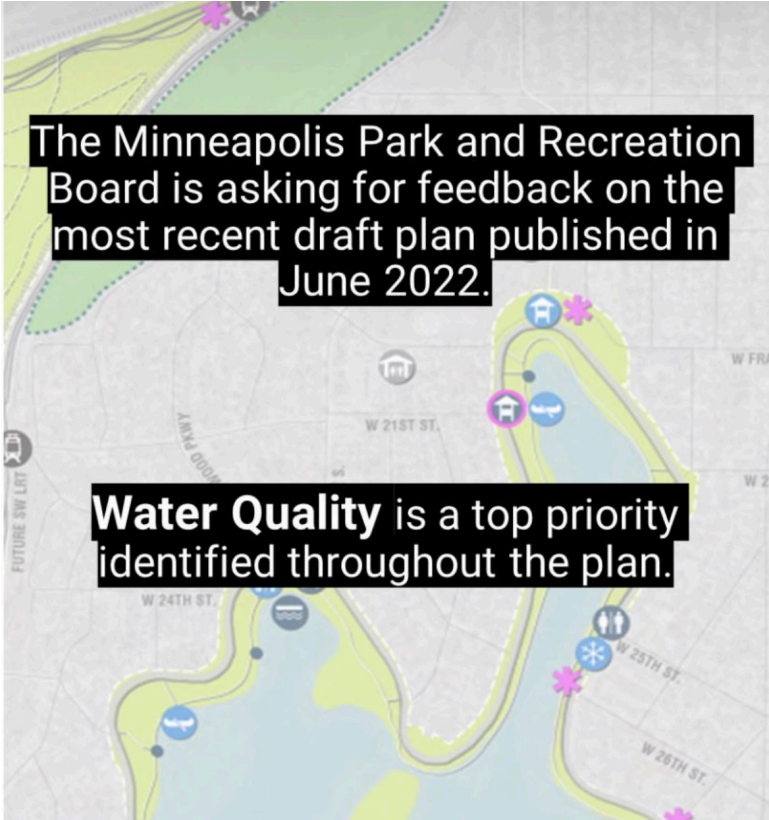
- Support for water quality improvements
- Support for formalizing water access points
- Support for improved natural areas
- Concern about cost of maintenance and improvements
- Suggestion to further improve walking and biking access
- Suggestion to further improve safety at intersections
- Support for and opposition to formalization of ad hoc forest trails near Cedar Lake
- Support for and opposition to two-way bicycle circulation around Isles
- Concern that there is not a path proposed around Cedar Lake
- Concern of proposed design of NW Cedar Parkway
- Concern that accessibility is not adequately represented in the concept
- Concern that the proposed went "too light" and has not adequately included needs of regional audience
- Suggestion for a permanent restroom
- General support for winter amenities
- Support for preferred park concept

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook and Instagram were used as a way to gather input on the preferred park concept from a broader, regional audience. Stories were created to ask questions about different aspects of the preferred park concept. The story topics were: water quality, amenities, and trails, parkways, and connections.

Themes:

- Support for water quality improvements
- Support for picnic areas and enhance welcome entry points
- Support to connect both lakes along the Kenilworth Channel



Slide from water quality Instagram story. MPRB

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

OPEN HOUSES

In July 2022, project staff held outdoor open houses to gather input on the preferred park concept from folks out in the parks. One open house was hosted at Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles and a third pop-up open house was held at Lake Harriet. Open houses were an opportunity for community members and park users to connect with project staff about the design.

Themes:

- Concern about two-way bike segments around Lake of the Isles
- Support for additional access by trails or signage to different parts of the park
- Support for natural resources restoration
- Support for and opposition to adding a permanent building(s) for restrooms and/or concessions



MPRB staff at outdoor open house for preferred park concept. Matthew Clark on streets.mn

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In July 2022, two canoe trips were organized with youth and staff from programs based in South Minneapolis and Minneapolis as a whole. The canoe trips visited different spots and discuss what was proposed in the preferred park concept. Some of the participants from these trips had participated in engagement in summer 2021 during the initial park concept phase. For many who hadn't participated in community engagement in 2021, this trip was the first time they'd either canoed and/or visited the park.

- Themes:
- Support for a permanent restroom
 - Suggestion to have two-way biking around all of Lake of the Isles
 - Support to connect both lakes along the Kenilworth Channel
 - Support for picnic areas



Boat tour with youth on Cedar Lake. MPRB

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

During the Preferred Park Concept phase, subcommittee meetings continued to be held virtually while full CAC meetings were held in-person. Full meeting notes are available in the appendix.

CAC MEETING 11: PREFERRED PARK CONCEPT

June 22, 2022

The release of the preferred park concept was published three hours prior to CAC meeting 11, and this meeting was an informational meeting on the newly released preferred park concept. This meeting responded to the CAC’s request for a preview, or first look, of the preferred park concept before the public began to weigh in and ask questions. Project staff provided overviews of the different topics and some location specific areas in the preferred park concept and responded to questions from the CAC and general public.

WATER QUALITY CAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS 4 AND 5

July 12, 2022 and July 21, 2022

Meetings 4 and 5 of the subcommittee included an in-depth review and discussion of the water quality recommendations in the preferred park concept and the draft goals and strategies. The design team worked to bring a number of responses to meeting #5 that were not able to be answered during Meeting #4. The final meeting concluded with the subcommittee members unanimously voting to support the goals and strategies with some additional amendments to bring back to the full CAC.

CIRCULATION CAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS 1 AND 2

August 10, 2022 and August 18, 2022

During CAC Meeting #12, proposed changes to circulation raised by CAC members were not resolved and as a result, the CAC determined a subcommittee to discuss circulation would be the best way forward. Circulation CAC Subcommittee Meetings 1 and 2 established design goals and guidelines for moving through meeting topics. Over the course of both meetings, the subcommittee discussed a number of circulation topics that did not have community or CAC consensus and provided recommendations on ten topics. Recommendations were then brought to CAC Meeting #13 for adoption by the full CAC.

CAC MEETINGS 12 AND 13: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE PREFERRED PARK CONCEPT

July 28, 2022 and August 23, 2022

During these final two CAC meetings, CAC members discussed the preferred park concept, asked questions, and worked towards final recommendation. Meeting 12 introduced the final recommendations from the Water Quality subcommittee and the Cedar Lake Park work group, and also elevated several design changes to the proposed circulation within the Initial Park Concepts, resulting in the creation of a Circulation subcommittee. The CAC also heard from members of the public in attendance at both meetings. At the final meeting, the CAC unanimously voted in favor of recommending the recommendations from the water quality and circulation subcommittees, the Cedar Lake Park work group , and preferred park concept with their outlined modifications. The conclusion of CAC 13 marked the end of the CAC’s charge for this project.

3.8 PHASES 4 AND 5 ENGAGEMENT: DRAFT PLAN AND APPROVAL OF FINAL PLAN (FALL/WINTER 2022-WINTER 2023)

PURPOSE/PROCESS

The project team developed a draft plan document informed by the final CAC recommendations and feedback gathered to date. Once complete, the draft document will be made available for public review and comment.

45-DAY COMMENT PERIOD

The 45-day comment period will begin the last week of January 2023. At the close of the public comment period, MPRB staff will compile and review all comments and revise the document as warranted. Then, a public hearing will be conducted where the final plan will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

3.9 REFLECTION ON ENGAGEMENT

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Feedback from the public has been foundational to the development of the plan. The draft plan was informed by the CAC recommendations and a number of additional items raised throughout engagement. Water quality, for example, was identified as a top priority early on in the process, especially for local community members, and the draft plan reflects this focus.

Similar to other planning processes, staff learned that it was often easier to engage residents who live in the adjacent communities than to engage people who live in other parts of the city or region. This is an understandable challenge since community members are often deeply invested in decision-making near where they reside. MPRB staff found that many neighboring residents shared input numerous times through several engagement avenues; specifically, the online survey and public comment time at CAC meetings were overrepresented with local voices and underrepresented with regional voices. Because the neighboring residents engaged strongly throughout the process, it was often difficult for staff to adequately incorporate and support ideas from underrepresented voices in meetings, such as people of color or people who lived outside the adjacent communities. Additionally, park planning processes take years to complete and it is difficult to expect people to stay engaged over the duration of a project that may not impact them on a daily basis.

Alongside the usual challenges at engaging underrepresented voices in park planning, this specific project coincided with the COVID-19 global pandemic, several polarizing elections, and the racial reckoning in Minneapolis and across the country that followed the murder of George Floyd. Data has confirmed that Black, Indigenous, and people of color experienced a higher level of trauma and economic instability than white residents over the last several years.¹

¹ Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7005a3.htm> / Brookings Institute: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/racial->

It should be no surprise that these accumulated issues increased MPRB’s challenges in engaging broader audiences throughout the project timeline.

To better elevate underrepresented voices amidst the stated challenges, staff implemented a number of targeted engagement strategies to elevate different voices and this feedback was shared regularly with the CAC. CAC members were also charged to be a representative for all voices, not just the loudest voices, when making final recommendations for the project.



Boat tour with youth on Cedar Lake. MPRB

HOW DID THE PLAN EVOLVE?

Some of the “big” ideas received more positively by a broader and more regional audience were strongly opposed by the neighboring communities and were ultimately removed during the process. These ideas included: adding picnic shelters for gathering, building a permanent warming house, or improving water quality by limiting or eliminating vehicle traffic from parkland. However, many of the “smaller” ideas shared by a broader audience with a goal to improve access and a feeling of welcome were recommended by the CAC and ultimately included in the plan. These ideas included: adding smaller picnic amenities, adding more bathrooms, maintaining parking, and improving pedestrian and/or bicycle connections.

Some proposed features in the draft plan have had mixed community feedback during the process and do not have full consensus from the public. Notable topics include whether to add a permanent restroom building within the project area, complete a trail around the entirety of Cedar Lake, add a bicycle connection through the northeast forest of Cedar Lake, and how/if to add two-way bicycle circulation around Lake of the Isles. Either due to CAC recommendations or in response to public input, some of these items have been proposed in the final design and some have not.

The draft plan, which is a draft of the full park plan document, was published for a 45-day public comment period in which formal comments could be made that could inform final modifications to the plan prior to adoption by the Board of Commissioners.

Following adoption of the plan, further community engagement will be completed as funds become available and projects are implemented. It will be important for outreach to continue to include a local and regional audience to ensure a diversity of perspectives. It will also be important for staff implementing the park plan to keep in mind that not everything included in the plan had universal support. Some of the more contentious items that moved forward in the plan had greater support from a more regional and diverse perspective.

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