PARTNER SPOTLIGHT!!

East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC) Community Collaborator Youth Workshop #1

This story contains photos and written excerpts from EPIC’s reporting

“The East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC) worked with community partners and the MPRB to lead a workshop for youth to redesign East Phillips and Cedar Field Park. This [overview] showcases the ideas [from Workshop #1] of eight youth from a 6-week program.”

“All the students grew up or currently live within a few miles of East Phillips and Cedar Park, with two students who grew up at Little Earth, where their grandmother still resides. Each student shared a profound connection to the park, enriched by a plethora of memories. They reminisced about swinging on the tire swing, strolling with their grandparents, shooting hoops in the gym, lounging on the grass, engaging in soccer matches, swimming, and countless other cherished experiences.”

DESIGN IDEAS

“The students wanted more tree coverage between the highway and the park, a sand volleyball court, a deeper pool for older kids and a shallow pool for young kids, a heater area where people can be outside in cold winter months, a climbing wall, some kind of walking bridge that connects East Phillips and Cedar Park, more swings and a tire swing, bathrooms with stalls outside, murals done by community members, bigger slide, comfortable seats for the elderly, more garden space, flooded ice rink in the winter, more picnic space, merry-go-round, lights on the field, and a speaker where people could play music.”
PROGRAMMING IDEAS

“Many students expressed ideas unrelated to park infrastructure, advocating for initiatives that address fundamental concerns regarding safety and overall park enhancement. We urge the park board to allocate funding toward these proposals, as they directly tackle underlying issues affecting the park’s atmosphere. Suggestions included diversifying park staff, increasing the availability of needle disposal boxes, and raising awareness about safe needle disposal practices. Moreover, students proposed expanding the range of classes and activities offered at the park, such as AA meetings, dance and cooking classes, and environmental workshops promoting eco-friendly infrastructure for improved public health.”

“Discussions frequently revolved around safety concerns and drug-related issues within the park, which deterred students from spending time there. Consensus emerged on the understanding that infrastructure alone cannot mitigate violence, emphasizing the necessity of investing in personnel and programming to foster a safer environment and discourage drug use. In light of the prevalent drug-related issues, there were discussions about leveraging Park Board resources to facilitate conversations and provide support for individuals struggling with addiction.”

Learn more about the other youth workshops in future newsletters.