



## Community Engagement

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### POLICY

This policy applies to all Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board divisions and departments and outlines the implementation of Chapter 11 of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Code of Ordinances. The policy outlines requirements for community engagement relative to projects for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, including projects approved and budgeted through third party agreement.

All Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board divisions and departments are encouraged to follow this policy in working and communicating with stakeholders on initiatives outside of the approved and budgeted Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

1. The Board is to purposefully seek the participation of a broad representation of stakeholders to ensure that diverse community needs, interests, and resources inform decisions for a project.
2. The Board is to evaluate this policy and procedure every four-year period, with the first evaluation conducted in 2015.
3. Project managers are to perform project assessment and develop community engagement plans.
  - a. Project managers are to provide public notice of opportunities for community engagement as defined by Chapter 11 of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Code of Ordinances and current policy and procedure.
  - b. Project managers are to coordinate with the Communications and Marketing Department to ensure strategies are consistent with current policy.
  - c. Project managers are to share community research and retain project records in accordance with the current MPRB Records Retention Schedule.
  - d. Project managers are to oversee consultant adherence to the requirements of Chapter 11 of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Code of Ordinances and current policy and procedure.
4. All projects require a community engagement plan. The Board is to be informed of community engagement plans and resulting plan recommendations.
  - a. Staff will consult with neighborhood organizations and other representative community groups and individuals in developing community engagement plans.
  - b. The Board and staff are to utilize approved methods to involve stakeholders. New outreach and research methods may be introduced and reviewed by the Board as part of a community engagement plan.
  - c. A community advisory committee (CAC) is recommended within a community engagement plan and must be conducted in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Code of Ordinances.
    - i. A CAC may be a non-appointed or appointed group of stakeholders.



- ii. The Board is to approve the final composition and charge for an appointed CAC, conduct public hearings on committee recommendations, and make final decisions regarding recommendations.
    - (1) An appointed CAC is required within a community engagement plan if the project outcomes may result in a change that is not specified in an approved master plan for a regional park.
  - iii. The Board is to review the charge for a non-appointed CAC, conduct public hearings for committee recommendations, and make final decisions regarding recommendations.
    - (1) A non-appointed CAC is required within a community engagement plan if the project outcomes may result in a change in public use of park land.
5. The Board is to allocate staff and financial resources to provide for implementation and evaluation of community engagement plans.
  6. This policy shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days after adopted by the Board. Once in force, this policy will be in effect for projects that do not have an in-process or already established CAC as required or recommended.

## **DISCUSSION**

A well-designed and consistently implemented community engagement process aligns agency decisions with the interests and priorities of Minneapolis residents and park users. The keys to engaging communities include visibility, transparency of process, the use of multiple channels of communication, respect for all points of view and ensuring the opportunity for every stakeholder to voice his or her opinion during a decision making process. The measure of community engagement is the level of participation - through increased participation the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is better able to successfully deliver projects representative of community needs, interests and resources.

Perspectives of Minneapolis residents, community groups, park users, staff, and the Board of Commissioners have informed the development of the policy on community engagement. Research on best practices, current trends, and national and local government policies in working with communities have contributed to policy framework.

The MPRB Board of Commissioners recognizes the organizational commitment necessary to stay engaged with and relevant to Minneapolis residents and users of the park system. This policy and procedure will guide the MPRB in authentically involving residents and park users in developing and delivering park projects that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

### *Goals of Effective Community Engagement*

The following policy goals establish the expectations of effective community engagement for the MPRB and complement the core principles of community engagement adopted by the Minneapolis City Council.

1. Promote a culture of openness and learning in which consistent outreach and research methods increase community interest and participation.



2. Develop and sustain relationships that encourage the MPRB and the community to work together to advance the common good.
3. Provide opportunities for diverse people, ideas, and information to influence the development and implementation of park projects.
4. Enhance communication and outreach methods using available and emerging technology, including social media.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Stakeholder(s):** Any segment of a community that is impacted by, or has direct interest in a decision. This may include elected officials, residents, community groups or organizations, underrepresented communities, communities of color, MPRB staff, neighborhood organizations, developers, business owners, etc.

**Community Engagement:** The opportunity for stakeholders to influence decisions that shape the park system, including the intentional effort to create public understanding of MRPB projects, programs, and services, and to make certain the MPRB is aware of and responsive to stakeholder needs, concerns and industry trends. Interchangeable terms include: public participation, community involvement, and citizen participation.

**Community Outreach:** The practice of communicating with or gathering information from stakeholders to inform a specific project, impending decision or strategic planning effort. A variety of methods, tools, and strategies may be used to share information and obtain stakeholder perspectives. Examples of outreach include surveys, meetings, and focus groups.

**Community Research:** The practice of gathering data from primary or secondary sources to inform a specific project, impending decision, or strategic planning effort.

**Primary Research:** Any original research performed by MPRB staff. Examples include community surveys or aggregated data about program and services offered.

**Secondary Research:** Any existing research performed by another entity that has application to Minneapolis. This includes regional or national trend information; research completed by regional or state agencies, general industry, or market research.

**Project:** An intentional effort to achieve specific goals or outcomes in the development of new or redevelopment of existing facilities as approved and budgeted in a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, including construction and redevelopment of facilities approved and budgeted through third party agreement.

**Project Manager:** Any MPRB staff member or consultant responsible for following current policy and procedures on community engagement in development of new or redevelopment of existing facilities as approved and budgeted in a Capital Improvement Program for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.



**Board:** Reference to the nine-member Park Board of Commissioners that are the independently elected, semi-autonomous body responsible for maintaining and developing the Minneapolis park system.

**Committee of the Board:** Reference to any committee that is comprised of two (2) or more Commissioners and established by the Board.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **A. Project Assessment**

Determining the appropriate approach in working and communicating with stakeholders is not scientific practice; there is no one formula for determining the most effective engagement strategy. Project managers are to be aware of requirements for community engagement based on funding source or other project characteristics.

To guide project managers in their approach, the following is to be completed upon project determination:

1. Complete the project assessment form as part of a collaborative discussion with MPRB staff members that have high stake and interest in a project. Group responses will help identify the initial level of community engagement for that particular project.
  - a. Project managers are to be aware that substantial degrees of change to a program, facility or level of service increase potential impact to stakeholders and highlight the importance of group assessment.
2. Consult the community engagement grid to select the level of community engagement for a project (inform, consult, collaborate, partner). Review the variety of approved outreach and research methods that may be utilized to inform the public participation objectives of the project.
  - a. A combination of approved methods, or new methods, may be used to develop a comprehensive engagement strategy or community engagement plan (see section B, Community Engagement Plans).

The project assessment form and grid are tools that represent the minimum work required in considering how to best design opportunities for community engagement on park projects. The form and grid are to be used in combination with each other; other tools or best practices may be used to supplement project assessment, stakeholder identification and community analysis.

### **B. Community Engagement Plans**

All projects require a community engagement plan, even if the plan is simply a timeline for appropriate public notice and communications regarding the project. The plan's purpose is to provide clear and consistent direction regarding opportunities and expectations for community engagement over the project's duration.

At a minimum, the community engagement plan is to include the following information:

1. Identification of stakeholders that may be affected by the project.
2. Definition of stakeholder roles and responsibilities for the project.



3. Identification of the level of community engagement for the project, including the MPRB's goals and objectives and promise to the public.
4. Identification of approved outreach and research methods that will provide information to best inform the project outcome(s).
5. Identification of public notice and communication strategies.
6. Identification of resources needed to implement the plan.
7. Timeline for implementation, highlighting milestone dates.
8. An evaluation summary examining the efficacy of the community engagement process including a statement indicating how the process advanced policy goals (see section F, Evaluation).

Project managers are to:

1. Consult with established neighborhood organizations in developing community engagement plans. Collaboration with neighborhood organizations will ensure participation is broad based and inclusive, and build consistency between City supported participation programs and practices of the MPRB.
2. Consult with representative community groups or community leaders, and work with under-represented groups to develop and implement the plan.
3. Review the community engagement plan with the Board of Commissioners, and obtain approvals as necessary.
4. Encouraged to introduce new methods of engagement suggested by stakeholders and evaluate these methods for efficacy.
5. Modify the plan as circumstance warrants, and communicate substantial modifications to stakeholders and the Board.

### C. Establishment of Advisory Committees

Advisory committees provide an opportunity for stakeholder groups to share insight and resources, and serve to build and sustain relationships between the community, partner agencies and the MPRB. Members of different types of advisory committees work collaboratively to provide comprehensive project recommendations to the Board.

#### *Project Advisory Committee*

1. Criteria for Creation
  - a. The project advisory committee (PAC) is comprised of a MPRB project manager and a cross-functional team of staff from departments affected by or involved in the project. The PAC allows for full information sharing for the community on options and implications for project development and implementation.
  - b. The Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent recommends MPRB staff for a PAC; the PAC may include individuals representing a consultant group.
2. Responsibilities
  - a. Manage all phases of the project to completion, ensuring that diverse stakeholder needs, interests, and resources are shared and inform decision making throughout the project phases.
  - b. Develop, execute and evaluate the community engagement plan.
  - c. Provide professional expertise on topics related to work responsibility.



- d. Maintain records of the process and make these records available for public review.
- e. Attend all scheduled committee meetings or assign a representative from their work specialty in case of absence.
- f. Regularly communicate project information to appropriate stakeholders, including MPRB staff.

*Technical Advisory Committee*

1. Criteria for Creation
  - a. The technical advisory committee (TAC) is comprised of individuals representing public agencies that are affected by or involved in the proposed project, including representatives of the MPRB, City Council, school board, City departments, state agencies, groups of professional industry expertise, established partners or partner groups, and other surrounding jurisdictions. A TAC is typically formed for projects of regional or city-wide significance involving multiple layers of complexity.
2. Responsibilities
  - a. Inform other advisory committees of inter-jurisdictional policies, professional recommendations, timelines, budgets, and political realities related to the project.
  - b. Attend all scheduled committee meetings or assign a representative from their work specialty in case of meeting absence.
  - c. Led by the PAC, the TAC will work collaboratively with other advisory committees to provide comprehensive recommendations to the Board.

*Community Advisory Committee*

1. Criteria for Creation and Responsibilities
  - a. The establishment of a community advisory committee (CAC) is recommended within a community engagement plan.
  - b. A CAC is one of two types: non-appointed or appointed.
  - c. The Board approves the final composition and duties, or charge, of an appointed CAC.
  - d. An appointed CAC is required if the project outcomes may result in a change that is not specified in an approved master plan for a regional park. An appointed CAC is typically used for projects of regional or citywide significance.
  - e. The Board reviews the duties, or charge, for a non-appointed CAC.
  - f. A non-appointed CAC is required if the project outcomes may result in a change in public use of park land. A non-appointed CAC is typically used for projects of neighborhood or community level significance and/or a project that replaces an existing and well used amenity, such as a playground, athletic field, trail segment, or wading pool.
  - g. A CAC will work collaboratively with other advisory committees to provide comprehensive project recommendations. Once complete, the CAC recommendations are presented before the Board in conjunction with a public hearing.
2. Committee Structure
  - a. Appointed - Appointed CACs shall be representative of stakeholder groups impacted by the project. An individual may be nominated for appointment by a Board Commissioner, City or State elected officials, neighborhood organizations, nearby cities or jurisdictions, or other community group representative of affected stakeholders. The project manager in consultation with the Board and



management will review the appointees to ensure equitable representation from stakeholder groups. The total number of appointed members will amount to an odd number.

- i. A CAC chairperson is appointed by the Board President.
  - ii. The CAC chairperson is to assist the facilitation of public proceedings, act as spokesperson, and assist in presenting recommendations to the appropriate Committee of the Board or full Board.
- b. Non-appointed – Any stakeholder attending a public meeting or indicating interest in a project is considered a member of a non-appointed CAC. MPRB staff or a duly appointed representative will facilitate meetings and present the CAC recommendations before the Board.
- i. No CAC chairperson is required.
  - ii. Any amount of individual members may comprise a non-appointed CAC.
3. Meeting Requirements
- a. Either type of CAC is required to hold one or more meetings as necessary to determine project recommendations appropriate to the committee charge as approved or reviewed by the Board. Meeting agendas and discussion will focus on fulfillment of the committee charge.
  - b. All meetings are open to the public.
  - c. Expectations for all proceedings are that participants will engage in respectful civil discourse in an effort to enhance mutual understanding and promote collaborative decision making.
  - d. The PAC is to maintain and keep on file records of meeting attendance, notices, agendas, minutes, and committee actions. Stakeholder feedback gathered through approved tools and methods outside of a public meeting forum is information to be considered by the CAC.
  - e. The PAC is to make records available for review at each CAC meeting and throughout the course of the project upon stakeholder request.
4. Voting Requirements
- a. CAC members are to attend all scheduled meetings in order to ensure full, fair, and informed participation and decision-making. Ideally, consensus is the preferred form of decision-making.
  - b. When a vote is appropriate or necessary to produce final recommendations to the Board, participating CAC members attending two-thirds of public meetings are eligible to vote. Voting results are determined by majority rule, or more than half the votes of eligible members.
  - c. The CAC may submit resolutions to the Board indicating preferences for future improvements related to the project or project area that are outside the scope of the committee charge.
5. Board Procedure on Community Advisory Committees
- a. The designated Committee of the Board is to hold a public hearing for the review of recommendations of an appointed or non-appointed CAC (see section D, Public Notice).
  - b. The chair or acting chair may set the parameters of testimony to be received from interested parties.
  - c. Any person may testify at the public hearing regarding the CAC recommendations.
  - d. The project manager or consultant is responsible for presenting the full range of stakeholder recommendations to the Board, including any alternative recommendations or concerns identified by committee members.
  - e. After review of the recommendations and public testimony, the designated Committee of the Board will announce its decision to approve the recommendations or lay the matter over to a subsequent





committee meeting. Decisions of the Committee of the Board will be dated and forwarded to the full Board.

**D. Public Notice**

The purpose of public notice is to inform stakeholders of the opportunity for participation and provide timely, factual information on projects or proceedings. Notice may be provided to an individual by request, or delivered to a geographical area or target audience. Failure to give adequate notice to all affected stakeholders or defects in public notice shall not invalidate the process or project proceedings.

Staff is to:

1. Identify methods and strategies for public notification and communication as part of a community engagement plan.
2. Maintain records of public notice.
3. Notify MPRB internal customers, such as affected departments and individual staff in advance or concurrent with public notification.
4. Consult with the Communications and Marketing Department to ensure public notice procedure is consistent with current policy.
5. Utilize technology and distribution formats that effectively and economically communicate public information.

The *minimum* requirements for public notice are as follows:

1. For city-wide notification, staff is to:
  - a. Publish notice of the time, place, and purpose of a subject at least once, not less than ten (10) calendar days before the occurrence date in a newspaper of general circulation.
  - b. Issue a news release indicating the time, place, and purpose of a subject at least once, not less than ten (10) calendar days before the occurrence date.
  - c. Post notice of the time, place, and purpose of the subject not less than ten (10) calendar days before the occurrence date on the MPRB's website.
2. For notice of public meeting(s) for a project or a public hearing, staff is to:
  - a. Publish notice of the time, place, and purpose of the public meeting or hearing at least once, not less than ten (10) calendar days before the public meeting or hearing date in a newspaper of general circulation.
  - b. Issue a news release indicating the time, place, and purpose of a public meeting or hearing date at least once, not less than ten (10) calendar days before the public meeting or hearing date.
  - c. Mail notification to registered property owners within a three (3) block radius of the affected service area not less than ten (10) calendar days before the scheduled public meeting date or the first date in a series of public meetings.
  - d. Post notice of the time, place, and purpose of the public meeting, not less than ten (10) calendar days before the public meeting on the MPRB's website and at park facilities on or near the project area.





3. For any items subject to public review and comment, a minimum forty-five (45) calendar day review period is required. For notice of items, staff is to:
  - a. Publish notice of the time, place, and purpose of the item for public review and comment before or concurrent to the date the review period is to begin in a newspaper of general circulation.
  - b. Issue a news release indicating the schedule and purpose of the item for public review and comment before or concurrent to the date the review period is to begin.
  - c. Provide a print copy of the item for public review and comment at MPRB recreation centers and the main customer service desk.
  - d. Post the electronic copy of the item for public review and comment on the MPRB website and archive for one (1) calendar year after the closing date at this location.

Project managers are to comply with additional requirements for notification as indicated by outside agency policy, agreement or funding source.

#### E. Outreach and Research

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:

1. To evaluate the success and measure the community impact of existing programs, services or facilities.
2. To gain stakeholder insight and perspective regarding the development of a new program, service or facility.
3. To proactively identify or explore park and recreation trends or ideas.
4. To determine the essential services to be provided for a community or park area.
5. To query stakeholders when proposing or revising policy.
6. To resolve persistent conflicts or problems.

Stakeholders are empowered to generate new ideas as to how they would like to be communicated with, involved or engaged for a project. All new methods will be reviewed by the MPRB project manager prior to implementation. New methods can be added to the community engagement grid through feedback provided to the Board within an evaluation summary.

The purpose of community research is to collect data that will best inform specific project decisions or strategic direction and support the policy goals of effective community engagement. Research completed in advance of and during project development may include review of previously completed directives or mandates, master plans, community studies, industry trends, historical and demographic data. The project manager is responsible for determining the research data necessary to support and document decision making for a project.

The project manager is to retain community research data gathered for a project. The MPRB Records Retention Schedule establishes minimum retention periods for records based on their administrative, fiscal, legal and historical value and identifies how long to retain them. Project managers are to retain project records as indicated by the current MPRB Records Retention Schedule.



The department supervisor is to establish a management system to capture and retain research information in a shared repository, in either electronic or print form. The shared repository is to include primary and secondary research work or studies, including any data obtained through research partnerships, academic, or volunteer studies completed on behalf of the MPRB or contracted by the MPRB.

#### F. Evaluation

The Board is responsible for evaluating community engagement policy and procedure within the organization. Every four year cycle, the Board will review the community engagement policy and procedures to determine:

1. Overall compliance and alignment with the policy goals of effective community engagement.
2. Overall satisfaction and efficacy of methods from a stakeholder and organization point of view.
3. Addition of new tools and methods.

Data gathered from this review will determine policy revisions or budget allocation, and help to align the community engagement process with evolving stakeholder expectations. Ideally, this information would be captured as part of a citywide, statistically valid survey of overall resident and park visitor satisfaction and prioritization conducted on a periodic basis.

As required by a community engagement plan, the project manager is to provide an evaluation summary analyzing the effectiveness of the process from both stakeholder and organization points of view. The summary requires a brief statement indicating how the process advanced policy goals. The evaluation summary will assist the Board and staff in evaluating and informing an ongoing community engagement process.

#### G. Roles and Responsibilities

Every individual involved in a project is responsible for upholding excellent standards for community engagement by following approved policy and practicing consistent procedure. All persons have a right to be informed of projects of interest, be involved, and contribute to project goals and outcomes.

1. Stakeholder Role
  - a. Contribute feedback and remain informed on a project; encourage other stakeholders to participate in the process.
  - b. Participate in the process in a manner that promotes respectful civil discourse and enhances mutual understanding of all stakeholder viewpoints.
  - c. Work collaboratively with all stakeholders toward a common goal or project outcome.
  - d. Report project progress to community members, including businesses and interest groups.
  - e. Direct requests for information to the designated project manager.
2. Board of Commissioners Role



- a. Provide policy level support and resources to maintain an ongoing and effective community engagement process for the organization.
  - b. Understand and communicate the opportunities available for community engagement to stakeholders.
  - c. When recommended or approved, ensure a CAC process is conducted in compliance with Chapter 11 of the MPRB Code of Ordinances.
  - d. Share information obtained from stakeholders with project managers through the office of the Superintendent.
  - e. Be available to and communicate with stakeholders in a timely, consistent, and respectful manner.
3. Staff Role
- a. Provide assessment and determine approved methods to engage stakeholders; develop a community engagement plan and provide evaluation of the process.
  - b. Establish advisory committees as identified within a community engagement plan and manage the work of all advisory committee proceedings.
  - c. Provide stakeholders with feedback on how their input influenced a project decision and remain productively engaged with stakeholders throughout project phases.
  - d. Incorporate multiple sets of stakeholder considerations in order to present the most equitable and collaborative options for project decisions.
  - e. Be available to and communicate with stakeholders in a timely, consistent, and respectful manner.
  - f. Retain and share community research information.
  - g. Manage consultant adherence to current requirements of ordinance, policy, and procedure.

**FORMS** – All forms are available under the Planning Department at <http://PBIntra>.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. [Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Code of Ordinances, PB11](#)