

Vision Implementation Engagement

Current to January 27, 2021

Introduction

As the county's population increases and becomes more racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse, gaps are increasing between users and the recreational facilities and services that Parks & Recreation offers. To meet changing community needs and interests, Parks & Recreation developed a new vision for its parks and recreation system:

A dynamic, community-centered system that provides opportunities for our ever-changing community to engage with inclusive and welcoming parks and recreation sites and programming.

To help realize this vision, stakeholders were asked to provide input and ideas that will help shape budgeting, planning and community engagement efforts over the next decade. Below is a running compilation of results from various virtual and online engagements beginning January 26, 2021. **Learn more on the project [website](#).**

Compilation of Results to Date

This compilation combines results from live/virtual and online survey engagements to date. Over the course of this engagement some questions were refined or combined, and results were moved accordingly so that all results are included. Results are presented alphabetically by question and generally remain as written by the contributor or documented by a facilitator. Minor edits may have been made such as to correct obvious spelling or punctuation errors that affect clarity, remove vulgar words, or protect privacy.

All engagement opportunities included information about the Parks & Recreation system through this or a slightly shorter [video](#), and began with this statement: Imagine it's five years from now and Parks and Recreation is making great progress on this vision. Thinking about yourself, family, and friends in Ramsey County parks, facilities, and programs...

Where are you going, what are you doing, and when?

- A big group indoor space that can have special events
- Aztec dancing or dancing
- Battle Creek Watershed -- streams and hills. Walking with my wife and imagining hills from Hmong villages back in Laos --very nostalgic.
- Culturally specific programming, youth involvement in decision making. Relevant program offerings. Indoor and outdoor programming.
- Demonstration gardens where the community is learning with Parks staff and with each other.
- Development at Battle Creek Regional Park - take advantage of unique offerings.
- Different ways to garden or outdoor celebrations
- Enjoying my time in reading gardens that represent different cultures.
- entertainment
- Getting in steps with friends.
- Healing spaces for all cultures. Different communities coming together to be active (low impact activities).
- Hike on natural trails - non paved
- Hiking and birding, escaping the built environment.
- I am there with urban youths in the parks and there is a lot of learning.

- I am walking in nature with my family. The spaces I am around are interactive, accessible and near my house.
- Kids getting natural enrichment that the parent doesn't have to provide - learning, appreciating nature, education, activities, camps.
- More equipment rentals - affordable or free (bikes, skates, skis)
- More inclusive classes to be able to learn how to do activities
- Mountain biking
- Movies in the park
- Night markets or activities
- Non-traditional Minnesotan outdoor activity that Minnesotans can learn about
- Playing with grandchildren.
- Programming opportunities increased. New faces trying new things.
- See all kinds of people in the park: young people, moms - seating to be able to see people, but be able to observe and appreciate.
- Students able to get out in quiet with nature - as a stress reliever
- Taking a romantic walk in the spring with significant other, and other couples.
- Walk around and point out horticulture.
- Walking with my girlfriends through different cultures, booths of different cultures representing various cultures of Ramsey County.
- Watching group performances in the park or amphitheater. (example: Gervais Park --extends back to the elementary school nearby. Have seen signs along the trails with information about plants and trees, animals that live in the area. Behind the school, there is a place for dance or musical groups to practice.)
- winter activities - having fun while being warm
- XC skiing with family at Battle Creek Regional Park

What are you seeing? Hearing?

- Appropriate lighting at dusk. Flat surfaces to prevent falls.
- Art and artifacts of different cultures (example: traditional Hmong woven basket) on display in parks spaces and facilities. Different ways to attract visitors to a facility that they wouldn't have known about.
- Communities participating in diverse, year-round programming and activities offered.
- Culturally relevant activities to attracting more people to come out to the parks and programming.
- Dependent on the experience you seek. Want solitude in nature as well as active areas. Not all high dollar investments.
- Different languages
- Education about clean lakes and ponds, harms that cause wildlife. Programming in the parks to learn about environmental topics and issues.
- Expressions of joy and exhilarations, laughter
- Families grilling or getting together
- Healthy woodlands and prairies.
- Hear R&B, jazz, blues music at a facility. Indoors in an arena
- Interactive activity to learn more about the park - history and/or plants
- Kids are playing, planting and learning about what they're planting. Learning how to cultivate the soil.
- Laughing people
- Loud and meeting lots of people
- Music along the trails -- technology to have outdoor music along walking trails. Therapeutic and reminds visitors of their homeland.
- Nature sounds
- Park is big enough to feel like away from the busyness
- Quiet
- Safe space - not dangerous. If something happens be able to connect to police quickly
- See and hear a sense of community. Students (primary college) coming to learn about the environment.
- See users of our parks are reflective of our community, opportunity to engage.
- Solar panels and energy conservation efforts. There is education about garbage disposal.
- Trees, prairie grasses, and hearing the wind through the trees
- Visitors
- Water feature
- YMCA youth programming can have the afterschool youth go out into the parks and have activities designed around the park such as meditation, learning about the circle of life of the park, the idea ___ had about creation of a garden

is interesting because that allows the youth to have one on one interaction with nature and hopefully be more invested.

- Youth - teenagers

Who else is there?

- A park system – different parts of the system have different features and different types of recreation.
- ADA Accessibility
- Adding community gardens for people that don't have access to it.
- All ages and all backgrounds
- All ages, all abilities, all backgrounds.
- At jazz show, other adults, other couples enjoying themselves.
- But still do things on your own
- Create a culture of kindness in our parks to increase people's experience.
- Creating a culture of what the outdoors means to allow for diverse energy at parks.
- Different skill levels of activity (from novice to experts)
- Education and entertainment that includes several languages.
- Elders are there.
- Encourages people to prioritize balance in their lives.
- Everybody is on an aging continuum. Walkers, strollers, wheelchairs, skateboards all have a place in the parks.
- Everyone!
- Families and individuals of all race and ethnicities are there
- Feeling valued.
- Flexibility - changes according to needs (COVID is a good example)
- Friends - with supervision that's not directly related to you (safe to be by self or unsupervised)
- Gives us an opportunity to realize that we all share the same aspirations.
- Happy
- Happy for the opportunity to be accessible for all
- Happy laughing children.
- Immersed in nature
- Kids and young people are there
- Kids are seeing the diversity in the community.
- Learners of all ages
- Makes you feel valued (in the process)
- More diverse activities available.
- Music or food to help to meet new people
- Outdoor places get an immersion in a multi-cultural community.
- Parks programs offered closer to urban communities and more accessible (proximity, free, access)
- Presenters presenting beehives. Historian educating. Native American influence in a nod to the land.
- Relaxed
- Safe
- Signs near plants in braille
- Sports, and rentals so that kids can participate.
- Therapeutic space
- There are many ways to encourage physical activities --playgrounds designed for children as well as exercise playgrounds for adults.
- There would be a feeling of a sense of ownership.
- There would be more diverse communities in the parks.
- Want people to feel welcomed and a sense of belonging.
- We walk the talk
- Women walking alone safely What do you love about this? How does it make you feel?

What's different from today?

- Architectural designs are technologically advanced, solar panels, going green
- Connection to the workforce of parks & recreation
- Creating a brave space (beyond safe) where it feels like home
- Different levels of disparities - accessible by transportation - connection and/or pathways between schools and parks, and connections between other parks (physically and academically)
- Different people or leaders be consulted to develop new events and new spaces

- Different types of food and cultural events.
- Elementary to college students and learners of all ages are learning in parks spaces
- Environmental pollution (air, water, land) has not increased
- Equipment to pick up garbage as you walk.
- Free programming and opportunity to try new and different things.
- More environmental groups involved
- More racially and ethnically diverse families in parks, from inner city.
- More variety of sports (high and low impact) that is representative of different cultures that communities play in their cultures/home countries.
- More visibility of parks/trails. Is there a way to include plants from other cultures. Path in Washington County included poetry by incarcerated women along the trail -- it was uplifting and connected me to learn more about incarcerated women.
- Parks are recognized as the solution to community issues (homelessness, education disparities)
- Parks engaging with partners like Eastside Athletics organization.
- People put things in recyclable containers.
- People will take ownership - if someone drops something, the next person will pick it up.
- Reading gardens where people gather individually or as groups, learning, sharing, and building community with each other.
- Seeing kids explore their minds, having kids pursue their talents and dreams.
- Sense of shared community
- There is information about the area. Visitors gain knowledge and history of the land, wildlife and animals that call this space home.
- There is programming in community, not just in parks spaces
- There is signage and information about the spaces I'm in. (example: I visited the Maplewood Nature Center and they have signage about the land, plants as I walk through nature.)
- Visitors are immersed in nature
- Check, Why do all the Black kids sit together in the cafeteria book for reference. Different ethnic and age groups intermingle seamlessly. Don't need protection of homogeneous community.
- You would save a lot of youth from being labeled "at risk," you would see less kids being killed.

How did those changes happen? Who shaped the decisions?

- Changes happen because youth get involved. Elders are strong advocates, too.
- Civil unrest.
- Community would have a voice at the table to make decisions to bring changes through the Board of Commissioners and Parks & Rec department.
- Current leadership to understand role in standing beside communities that are underrepresented
- Different cultural and ethnic leaders in these decision-making spaces
- Different people and leaders to be brought onto the team to help drive the work forward
- Diverse residents, businesses are aware of programs and services parks has to offer.
- How to get diverse families in the park - P&R connect with families in shelters. Parents and kids have access to those services.
- Increased parental involvement with youth.
- Key component to move forward livelihood
- Kids, young adults, seniors/elders are involved and engaged in decision making.
- Land use decisions --developers, district councils, environmental councils
- Likes virtual town halls.
- Offerings more organic and less traditional.
- Opportunity to provide input - town halls.
- P&R has buses or transportation to give people access.
- Parks have to be located in areas that people can walk to. Centrally located or on a route.
- Partnered with other civic organizations to help realize the vision.
- People respond. What are the concerns/needs of those who don't attend.
- Recognizing parks can be space to heal from noise pollution or other issues in the community and help with other health concerns
- Residents who live in our community.

What are 2-3 key actions we can take together to get these changes started?

- Acknowledge what's missing now.
- Activities/sports representing different cultures -- engage with these communities
- Continue to identify partners and find champions.
- Encouraging field trips and programs in nature that connection people
- Equity conversation can come to a place of healing (holistic wellbeing)
- Find out how that looks to them. Grassroots up. What does it look like to diverse communities.
- For those that have limited family - what is the attraction to go to different events?
- Grow with the technology through parks and recreation
- Host community members and invite leaders in the park spaces
- I go to the rec centers, how do I know about the larger parks further out to experience nature, etc.
- Identify that outdoors offers professional opportunities. Communicate to our residents the opportunities that exist for employment and careers in recreation.
- Indoor spaces like Como Conservatory
- Invite them to the table.
- Make it accessible for everyone (abilities, cost, proximity, transportation)
- Meditation center
- More Black/African American elders and leaders in parks and connected to city rec centers
- More off-leash dog parks.
- Native American and Indigenous community
- Notion to heal mental and physical health
- Opportunity to bring the community in to help make decisions to move forward
- Parks and Rec be proactive in developing relationships with community and supporting community driven efforts i.e., Parks and Rec attending community events and meetings
- Partner with health care sector to work together in creating healthy communities
- Representation on the workforce
- Safe, welcoming environment of like people
- Summer year-round.
- Trade/cultural program exchange program to help engage communities in space we
- True engagement across the board not to just check the box.