

# Pioneer Park Master Plan: Best Practices for Community Engagement



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The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or City of Little Canada.



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*Building Community-University Partnerships for Resilience*

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# Introduction

## Overview of RCP Fellows Program

This report is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Little Canada and the [Resilient Communities Project \(RCP\) Fellows Program](#). The RCP Fellows Program organizes interdisciplinary teams of University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UMN) graduate and professional students to assist local government agencies with projects and initiatives aimed at advancing their community's sustainability, livability, and resilience. This work was prepared by the Summer 2020 Fellows team, a group of five UMN graduate students with academic backgrounds in Communication Studies, Landscape Architecture, Linguistics, and Public Affairs; detailed team member biographies can be found in [Appendix A](#). Team members were selected via a rigorous application and interview process, with work beginning in mid-June 2020 and culminating at the end of August 2020.

## Project Summary

The initial project presented to the RCP Fellows focused on the development of a Pioneer Park Master Plan. Specifically, the Fellows were asked to aid the City in identifying and testing COVID-19-approved community engagement tactics, the results of which would be used to inform the Master Plan. However, conversations with City staff, Council Members, and Parks and Recreation Commissioners, as well as exploratory research in academic and practitioner literature soon revealed that a shift in project objective may be required. After consulting with City staff, a decision was made to pivot the project goal from on-the-ground fieldwork to big picture engagement research and strategizing.

Our early research indicated that an examination of community engagement best practices was necessary in order to provide the City of Little Canada a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of its community engagement. This change in objective was prompted after the Fellows identified a lack of previous engagement with large sectors of Little Canada, including residents adjacent to Pioneer Park. Despite City awareness of and engagement with a majority of stakeholders, the Fellows became concerned that any engagement undertaken without first stepping back would overlook underrepresented or marginalized stakeholders whose needs and desires were currently unknown. Our team quickly recognized that failing to involve the voices of a significant portion of community members would render equitable park planning ineffective and could hinder improvement efforts for Pioneer Park - a public park that all community members should be able to access and enjoy. This concern led the Fellows to redirect the majority of their summer work to focus on the topic of generalized community engagement.

Over the course of the summer, the Fellows and City staff identified and compared key community stakeholders and began development of an overarching community engagement guide that includes targeted recommendations and considerations for the City of Little Canada as it pursues development of a Pioneer Park Master Plan. The following report details the results of this work.

# Historical Context

## The City of Little Canada

### Positioning History

A first step in the RCP Fellows' work was to become familiar with the City of Little Canada and its people. At the outset of the project, the Fellows took a site visit to Pioneer Park; reviewed existing strategic documents such as the 2018 Park System Master Plan and 2019 Strategic Plan; and conversed with City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners on their vision for the Pioneer Park Master Plan. Overall, this early research revealed City pride for its community history, as demonstrated in the book *Little Canada: A Voyageur's Vision* (2018), and a desire to incorporate this history into an eventual redesign of Pioneer Park.

Our team took City interest in highlighting its community history seriously. To better inform ourselves and our work, our team conducted interviews and scoured existing documents to understand how Little Canada's history was incorporated in past community projects and initiatives. Our research was fruitful in that it revealed significant attention to City history in the Park System Master Plan; however, our group also noticed that the City's existing historical narratives excluded mentions of Indigenous and non-settler peoples. When an interview with Little Canada Historical Society President Curt Loschy revealed a lack of recorded information on these perspectives yet a desire to learn more about the history and lineage of Native Americans in the area, **our team conducted additional research on the City of Little Canada's past in an attempt to fill in some of these gaps.**

The results - which include in-depth explorations of the relationships between Native American, Dakota, and French Canadian peoples within the context of Little Canada - ground the findings and recommendations of our report and influenced our decision to develop community definitional language, which can be seen in the [Overview of Community Definitions](#) and [Appendix B](#) sections. We hope that our sharing of Little Canada's well-rounded and diverse history may guide City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners in future discussions regarding **how to appropriately recognize and honor the City's past, present, and future.**

### Native American/Dakota History

Minnesota (or Mni Sota) is the homeland of the Dakota people and central to Dakota creation stories. Today, the Dakota have various groups spread across Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Canada, which together form the Seven Council Fires. The Ojibwe also had (and still have) a presence and land in Minnesota.

Dakota land in Minnesota was systematically taken from the Dakota people through a series of treaties with the US government. This land stealing was enabled by the US government's failure to uphold their end of treaty agreements, which meant that Dakota land was never appropriately paid for. For example, a number of treaties underrepresented the true price of the Dakota land, which resulted in the Dakota being significantly underpaid. In addition, the government withheld most of their payments to the Dakota in order to "settle debts" that were never clearly defined. Furthermore, the Dakota were often unaware of the full terms of the treaties they were signing, as accurate and reliable treaty translations were provided infrequently, if at all. Although the Dakota expressed unwillingness to agree to these treaties, they were threatened with military force if they did not sign; consequently, their options appeared to be to sign the treaties and trust they would be paid the money and goods promised to them, or have the government take their land regardless.

## Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and Treaty of Mendota

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and Treaty of Mendota, signed in 1851, were two of the most important treaties signed by the Dakota. Both treaties required the Dakota to hand over large amounts of land in exchange for money, goods, and resources. However, after these treaties were signed, the US government resold the land they had purchased for 15 times what they paid the Dakota for it.

The terms of the treaties originally signed by the Dakota left them with only two 10-mile strips of land. Yet after the treaties were signed, the government changed the terms and removed the allocation of two reservations of land for the Dakota, leaving them with nowhere to go. The Dakota were forced to approve this change in order to receive any of the cash and goods they had been promised. The government then "permitted" the Dakota to live on the land until it was needed for "white settlement."

## The Traders' Paper

After signing the treaties of Traverse de Sioux and Mendota, the Dakota leaders were handed the Traders' Paper to sign. The Traders' Paper allowed the US government to use the money owed to the Dakota to instead pay debts to fur traders that they claimed the Dakota owed them. Even before these papers were signed, these "debts" to fur traders were a major reason that the Dakota were not paid for their land.

The Traders' Paper was not read or translated for the Dakota before signing; in fact, many Dakota thought it was another copy of the previous treaties. **In the decade following the signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, Treaty of Mendota, and Traders' Paper, over 100,000 white immigrants moved to Minnesota to live on land that was previously owned by Indigenous tribes.**

## The US-Dakota War

A combination of crop failure, an inability to hunt on what was now US land, and the failure of the US government to provide promised food, supplies, and money caused the Dakota to starve. Out of options and running out of time, the Dakota declared war on the US in 1862 in a last-ditch effort to reclaim their land. The war lasted only six weeks; the Dakota lost.

Following this loss, a commission tried Dakota men who were accused of “participating in the war.” Although 303 men were sentenced to death, President Lincoln eventually reduced the number to 39 men, who were then executed. **After the war, the Dakota were forced to leave Minnesota altogether, and the US considered all treaty obligations to the Dakota null and void.**

## City of Little Canada History

The Little Canada Historical Society website provides the following context for the emergence of the City of Little Canada:

The Mdewakanton Dakota from Little Crow's Village or Kaposia (seasonal home) made their summer home in the area that is today Little Canada because of the abundant fishing and hunting resources. The first white settlers in the region were French/Canadians. Many of the descendents of these settlers still reside in Little Canada. The city's largest lake, Lake Gervais, was named after Benjamin Gervais. He was the first white man to claim land here in 1844. (“Little Canada's History,” n.d.)

Little Crow was a prominent Dakota leader in the US-Dakota war and was also involved in many treaty signings. It is likely that there would have been interactions between Little Crow's village and the Canadian settlers who arrived on what is now Little Canada land. The quality of these interactions may or may not have been friendly - there is very little information available on this matter, so it is impossible to know for sure.

Additionally, the first person to claim land in Little Canada did so in 1844 - *before* the signing of the treaties of Traverse de Sioux and Mendota that gave Dakota land to the US government. Knowing this, it is quite possible that the Little Canada land that was settled could have belonged to the Dakota.

Residents of Maplewood, Minnesota have a similarly complicated history with early settlement. The Maplewood Area Historical Society website provides the following information regarding their town's history:

The written history of Maplewood begins about 165 years ago when European and French-Canadian settlers began farming in this area. Prior to this time, the land was inhabited by the Dakota Indians with occasional visits by French and English fur traders and explorers.

In 1850, a group of families ventured from St. Paul along an Indian trail that is now Hazelwood Street. They were the Bells, Caseys, Conlins and Vincents. At today's County Road C, they turned to the east and began to build their log cabins. The sound of their axes alerted the Dakota who had a hunting camp nearby and thought the land was still theirs.

The Dakota asked them to leave and the newcomers quickly retraced their steps. The settlers made repeated attempts to claim the land they had bought for two dollars per acre from the Federal government. Finally in 1853, after the Dakota moved to a reservation on the Minnesota River, the pioneers could build their cabins. ("History of Maplewood," 2020)

Maplewood's proximity to Little Canada suggests that the settling of Little Canada may have followed a similar path. Both the method of land acquisition and the likelihood of direct interaction between the founders of Little Canada and the local Dakota means that **the Dakota people likely played an important role in the town's history, thereby revealing an additional narrative that should be considered by current and future Little Canada community members.**

## French Canadian History

### Founding

Little Canada was founded by Benjamin Gervais in 1844, and his descendants still live in Little Canada. Gervais travelled to the US from what is now Winnipeg, along with 75 other French-speaking farmers. Before settling Little Canada, Gervais owned 500 acres in Pig's Eye - now known as St. Paul - after he provided funding for the area's first catholic church; a granite list of founding families can still be found in the cemetery.

When it was first founded, Little Canada was a French-speaking community, and remained that way into the 1900s. However, very few current Little Canada residents continue to speak French.

### Major Events and Facts

- In the late 1800's, a tornado killed approximately six people.

- When the church was to be demolished and rebuilt, the demo crew misjudged the amount of dynamite needed; this resulted in many of the windows around town exploding.
- The first commercial grist mill in Minnesota was located in Little Canada. That area is now Grist Mill Park, which was Benjamin Gervais' homestead site.
- In 1976, Canadian Days was founded as a centennial celebration that turned into an annual event; this event is still growing annually.

Although the Little Canada Historical Society has put great effort into tracing the lineages of settlers in the Little Canada area, little to no effort has been made to trace and acknowledge those who were already in the area prior to Ben Gervais' purchase of the land. The Little Canada Historical Society acknowledges that many French-Canadian people also have Native American ancestry, but as of today, no discernible emphasis has been placed on this lineage. Dedicating more time to uncovering this piece of history, openly acknowledging the white French-Canadian settlers *and* the area's original Native American settlers, and expanding current and future community understanding of the multiple narratives that exist within the City of Little Canada will allow for a more robust, complete, and inclusive story to be told.

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# Overview of Community Definitions

Creating shared vocabulary

## Background

Early meetings of the RCP Fellows, City staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council frequently utilized “buzzwords” that are popular in today’s climate. However, our team became concerned that differences in interpretation as to the meanings of these words could create confusion during planning and decision making processes. After observing definitional sections within multiple community engagement guides (e.g. Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, 2019; Metropolitan Council, 2016), our team determined that the City of Little Canada would benefit from being able to reference and utilize a similar shared vocabulary, the results of which can be viewed in [Appendix B](#).

**The RCP Fellows collaborated with City staff to identify and define words that often emerge during planning and decision making discussions.** Many of these conversations were informed by definitions developed by other cities and community organizations. We hope that these terms and meanings will evolve with the development of the City and provide guidance for City residents and local officials as they work to achieve community goals and objectives.

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# Review of Literature

What is “community engagement”?

## Exploring Community Engagement

Developing community engagement (CE) opportunities that are equitable, accessible, and representative of all stakeholders can be a conundrum for those charged with designing and implementing them. Furthermore, constraints related to COVID-19 have rendered some CE tactics unusable, thus placing additional challenges on top of an already complicated problem.

With these considerations in mind, **our team researched CE strategies utilized by academics, practitioners, and individual communities in order to provide answers to common questions regarding effective CE.** The following section summarizes our findings and presents recommendations in the form of three phases of successful CE: Inclusion, Recruitment, and Consideration.

## Inclusion: Who must be at the table?

Effective CE begins with identifying stakeholders and community members key to the issue. Because marginalized and diverse populations are often overlooked or underrepresented in CE efforts, this section reflects on what inclusive CE means, why acquiring feedback from diverse stakeholders is vital to a project's success, and how to better involve communities that are commonly underserved in CE processes.

## Defining Inclusivity

Aspiring for inclusive CE demonstrates to citizens that their voice and opinion matters. McMonagle (2017) recommends that CE utilize a deliberative approach, whereby public conversations “must strive to be inclusive and represent the whole community, and participants must be considered equal during the deliberation” (p. 3). Although stakeholders should not expect to have their perspective represented in every CE effort, stakeholders should always be provided “a meaningful opportunity to participate in [the] process and to have their needs, concerns, and interest[s] understood by their fellows” (Briand, 1999, p. 75), even if they choose not to participate.

## The Benefits of Including Diverse Stakeholders

Bringing diverse populations into the conversation has multiple advantages. McMonagle (2017) notes that including marginalized and underrepresented groups in public forums improves the quality of conversations, increases stakeholders' willingness to consider alternative perspectives

and ideas, and encourages participants to participate in future CE processes. By contrast, when a CE process is considered exclusionary, it may be labeled unfair or illegitimate, which can lead participants to dismiss the results, reject the adopted changes, or refuse to participate in the future (McMonagle, 2017).

## Serving the Underserved

Previous research has noted that parks, monuments, and other outdoor recreation areas are frequented less often by marginalized and underrepresented groups, particularly racial and ethnic minorities (Pease, 2015). Roberts (2007) attributes this low attendance to a number of factors, including access limitations, such as transportation and cost restrictions; communication challenges, particularly lack of multi-language materials; fear of discrimination from other visitors and the space itself; lack of diversity in staffing; and generalized lack of knowledge, experience, and awareness about where to go and what to do. Overcoming barriers such as these begins by identifying and inviting underrepresented perspectives in CE efforts.

Expanding the involvement of racial and ethnic minorities in public engagement is a first step for many communities. In 2016, Smiley et al. analyzed survey data of low-income and minority groups' park preferences in urban Houston, Texas. Their analysis revealed that low-income and minority park users preferred improvement efforts that upgraded current park amenities over new accessibility projects that connected parks to neighborhoods and to one another (Smiley et al., 2016). By attending to the desires of majority-minority park users, the city of Houston was able to streamline the larger park planning process and prioritize improvement efforts that would benefit marginalized community members (Smiley et al., 2016).

Although socioeconomic demographics are instinctive considerations, stakeholders with other characteristics are also frequently overlooked. While seeking to identify best practices for conducting sustainability planning in the "Basin" of British Columbia, Canada, Davis (2010) conducted interviews with 35 local government elected officials and staff to identify three populations that often did not attend CE events: seniors, youths, and members of the business community. With this knowledge, Basin communities made sure to hold separate meetings and events to specifically involve these groups, including a business luncheon, a talk at a community senior center, school classroom visits, and a photography workshop for local high schoolers (Davis, 2010).

Including diverse and representative perspectives in public engagement processes requires introspection, investment, and a willingness to change. Yet identifying the necessary voices is only one part of the equation - the voices have to be willing to show up.

## Recruitment: How do you bring them to the table?

It is not enough to identify diverse stakeholders if those invited to the conversation never make it. Broad CE goals of inclusivity, equity, and accessibility begin when community members are called in to CE opportunities, and they must be enacted consistently in order to ensure that marginalized and underrepresented populations are willing and able to fully participate in CE efforts. The next section identifies common barriers to equitable CE and suggestions for removing these constraints on participation.

### Barriers to Community Engagement

Despite our best efforts to get all stakeholders to the table, factors such as education, socioeconomic status, and proximity to social networks greatly influence who is willing and able to participate (Ryfe & Stalsburg, 2010). McMonagle (2017) stresses that CE efforts that require community members to opt-in to participate - such as invitations to public forums or mailed surveys - tend to recruit wealthy, educated, and professional community members, which is often not a representative sample of the greater community. Factors such as these that influence and shape who is willing or able to participate in CE are known as *barriers*.

Barriers can be categorized in two ways: external and internal. External barriers impact a person's ability to receive or follow through on an invitation to the table. Timing, transportation and technology access, a person's trust in those managing the participation process, and one's belief that their contributions will make a difference are all examples of external barriers that may physically or emotionally prevent someone from participating in CE (McMonagle, 2017). By contrast, internal barriers are those that impact a person's ability to fully and effectively participate at the table once they have arrived. Common internal barriers to participation include inadequate or nonexistent facilitation, safety concerns, lack of language or communication accommodations, and feelings of tokenism (McMonagle, 2017). Luckily, scholars have dedicated time and resources to identifying solutions for overcoming these barriers.

### Overcoming Community Engagement Barriers

One practical theory that has been useful in overcoming participatory barriers is Trinity of Voice (Senecah, 2004). Trinity of Voice evaluates the effectiveness of participatory processes based on their adherence to tenets of access, standing, and influence (Senecah, 2004). The first tenet, access, refers to internal and external barriers of "opportunity, potential, and safety" (Senecah, 2004, p. 23). According to Trinity of Voice, for a CE process to fully overcome access barriers, it must minimally include:

- An attitude of collaboration
- Convenient times
- Convenient places

- Readily *available* information and education
- Diverse *opportunities* to access information and education
- Technical assistance to gain a basic grasp on the issues and choices
- Adequate and widely disseminated notice
- *Early* public involvement, and
- Ongoing *opportunities* for involvement (Senecah, 2004, pp. 23-24)

Solutions for overcoming inclusivity barriers have similarly been proposed by Dougill et al. (2006) in their work on Peak District National Park. Peak Park's location in rural northern England summons a diverse grouping of retirees, vacationers, and younger unskilled workers, all of whom are valuable stakeholders in environmental management decisions yet bring their own conflicts, extremist politics, and intense opinions to the table (Dougill et al., 2006). To address these barriers, Dougill et al. (2006) recommend using social network analysis to identify conflicts among stakeholders and those who may be cut off from existing decision making relationships, which can reduce common internal barriers to participation. They also note that social network analysis can help recognize opinion leaders within a stakeholder group whose ideas and suggestions hold sway with other participants (Dougill et al., 2006).

Ideally, bringing marginalized and underrepresented groups to the table would ensure the inclusion of diverse and representative perspectives. However, these stakeholder voices also need additional support and attention in order to be heard and involved in the decision making process.

## Consideration: When they're at the table, how do you make sure they're heard?

Seeking out and acquiring a diverse array of stakeholders and community members is an enormous step towards equitable CE. However, Smiley et al. (2016) note that inviting disadvantaged populations to the table is not enough: their voices and opinions must also be prioritized. The final section overviews strategies for fostering equitable participation during CE, considers the benefits and drawbacks of online CE tools, and suggests innovative CE tactics that have been successfully implemented in communities around the world.

## Ensuring Equity

Even after ensuring the attendance and participation of diverse stakeholders, it can be difficult to guarantee that their voices will be equitably heard and hold sway on the final decision. Senecah's (2004) Trinity of Voice theory makes sense of this dilemma through its other two tenets, standing and influence. Standing, or "the civic legitimacy, the respect, the esteem, and the consideration that all stakeholders' perspectives should be given," works together with access to grant participants influence over the outcome (Senecah, 2004, p. 24). "If I have

access to a process but my participation in it is not accorded standing,” writes Senecah (2004), “then I might as well as not have access,” which can leave participants feeling frustrated, suspicious, or disenchanted by a process which they perceive they have no impact on (p. 24). However, when participants are successfully afforded access and standing, they experience feelings of influence, or a genuine belief that their ideas and suggestions have been equitably considered alongside others’, *even if* their contributions were unable to be incorporated in the final decision or outcome (Senecah, 2004).

The work of Johnston and Lane (2019) builds on Senecah’s (2004) Trinity of Voice by emphasizing the need for authenticity in the participatory process. Whereas Senecah (2004) asserts that CE processes must create space for the voice of participants, Johnston and Lane (2019) state that CE must go one step further and seek out *authentic* voices, or “the voices of diverse, quiet, and silent community members” (p. 4). In their research, Johnston and Lane (2019) interviewed CE practitioners to understand how the concepts of voice and authenticity play out in CE work. Two themes emerged during interviews: authenticity of process and authenticity of outcome (Johnston & Lane, 2019). The first theme, authenticity of process, describes CE practitioners’ responsibility to find the right community representatives, distinguish between dominant and underlying perspectives, and report accurate and nuanced findings (Johnston & Lane, 2019). By contrast, authenticity of outcome relates to Arnstein’s (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation - which will be further discussed in the [Overview of Community Engagement Evaluation Tool](#) and [Appendix D](#) sections - and concerns of tokenism and predetermined decisions (Johnston & Lane, 2019). True authenticity of outcome occurs “when the conclusions drawn from CE are a reflection of group perspectives, and when those outcomes can make a difference” (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 8). Taken together, Johnston and Lane (2019) and Senecah (2004) establish the need to refine and reflect on the CE process so that the voices of marginalized and underrepresented citizens can confidently emerge.

Highlighting and adhering to the suggestions of underserved audiences is of particular importance in park planning. Khazaei, Joppe, and Elliot (2019) summarize that park planning and management is dominated by the voices of nonimmigrants and long-term park users, which can overshadow the insights of existing and potential marginalized park visitors. Their mapping and analyzing of CE efforts to establish Canada’s first urban park in Greater Toronto, Ontario, revealed that a broad strategy to engage multicultural communities, youths, and urban Canadians did not appropriately reflect “the diversity and heterogeneity of communities living in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Park or individual differences among immigrants,” which resulted in valuable viewpoints being left out of the planning process (Khazaei et al., 2019, p. 308). Had CE practitioners shifted from an equality-based mindset to an equity-based one, the park could have better accommodated for and invited in new and underserved park visitors (Khazaei et al., 2019). Thus, like Senecah (2004) and Johnston and Lane (2019), the work of Khazaei et al. (2019) stresses the need to intentionally involve the voices and views of diverse community members early on in park planning processes.

## Community Engagement and Technology

Technology can be a valuable tool for designing participatory processes with equity at the forefront. In her white paper “The Promise and Problems of Deliberation,” Ohio University Professor Laura Black (2011) contends that internet growth and an increase in interactive tools have made it easier than ever for citizens to receive and share information and opinions on public issues, which has positive implications for CE and democracy itself.

One advantage to moving CE online is that information about decision making can be presented transparently and immediately, as participants can “read new stories, watch videos posted by other group members, or visit websites” while a participatory process is occurring (Black, 2011, p. 9), thus addressing Senecah’s (2004) recommendation of making information and education available and accessible through diverse mediums. Another benefit of technological CE is that participants can choose their level of anonymity or personalization, which can protect vulnerable participants, allow for more authentic opinion sharing, and foster closer relationships than may exist in face-to-face interaction (Black, 2011). Finally, incorporating technology into CE can overcome frequent barriers of time, place, and space: community members can involve themselves when and where they want, and the CE itself can be designed to accommodate large or unknown numbers of participants (Black, 2011).

Despite these advantages, technology still struggles to allow citizens to effectively “realize their disagreements are based on differing experience, recognize trade-offs, and make choices based on those realizations” (Black, 2011, p. 4). Consequently, it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing internet and technology for CE purposes; more detailed considerations on this subject can be found in the [COVID-19 Considerations](#) section and [Appendix F](#).

## Community Engagement in Action

Identifying, inviting, and accommodating diverse stakeholders for CE can admittedly be overwhelming. However, there is evidence to suggest that innovative solutions for equitable CE is a worthwhile investment of time and resources:

- Gordon and Manosevitch (2010) explore a successful use of **augmented reality** in public participation. Their research examines a CE pilot project called Hub2, which used the online virtual world Second Life to facilitate the planning of a community park in Boston, Massachusetts (Gordon & Manosevitch, 2010).
- Menconi et al. (2020) demonstrate how **card games**, played both online and face-to-face, can aid citizen decision making. Their case study recounts the successful development and implementation of a card game to aid community discussion related to the renewal of a historic Italian urban park (Menconi et al., 2020).

- In 2009, the Eden Project, an “environmental and education charity and regeneration project,” created a 3-day **drop-in creative engagement event** to consult five parishes in England about the possible development of an Eco-town (Eden Project, n.d., p. 1). The Project coordinated with local councils, schools, workshop facilitators, and artists to “create an inviting and immersive environment” that collected participant feedback using stickers, drawings, verbal recordings, and flag placement, among many other tools (Eden Project, n.d., p. 3).
- Siders (2017) discusses the use of **structured deliberative forums** to understand citizen use of and access to Piatt Park in Cincinnati, Ohio. His story recounts the establishment of Community Conversations in Piatt Park, an hour-long open forum held at the public library that used probing questions and a guiding script to provide participants and potential moderators a model for future community conversations (Siders, 2017).

**This review of academic, practitioner, and community research on approaches to CE creates a knowledge framework for the report that follows.** Later sections will further the broad ideas presented in this segment by identifying specific engagement guides and tactics that may be useful to the City of Little Canada as it engages residents for the Pioneer Park Master Plan, as well as other future projects and initiatives.

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# Review of Community Engagement Guides

## How do others foster community engagement?

In addition to drawing on academic, practitioner, and community literature related to community engagement (CE) generally, the RCP Fellows also reviewed existing CE guides to identify specific community approaches to this work; detailed summaries of these guides can be found in [Appendix C](#). Our hope is that these existing CE guides and tested practices will help the City of Little Canada plan and model its own CE efforts for the development of the Pioneer Park Master Plan.

The CE guides reviewed by our team were developed by city officials, regional authorities, and CE specialists or organizations. Although not all of the guides reviewed are park-specific, some are. Many of the guides are city and region-specific and come from cities that have made large advancements in CE work, such as Pittsburgh and Austin. A CE guide created by the local Metropolitan Council is also included for a more local perspective. Finally, some guides produced by external groups present generalizable guidance that could be incorporated in cities such as Little Canada. Overall, **our team believes that these CE guides provide instrumental best practices and strategies for effective and inclusive engagement.**

Key takeaways for community engagement that emerged from existing guides include:

- Develop **definitions** of important terms
- Create an **engagement vision or mission statement**
- Use engagement to generate a **project vision**
- Consider **resources and goals** prior to initiating engagement
- Outline **staff responsibilities and capabilities** prior to engagement
- Refer to the **spectrum of public engagement** to orient what CE tactics to implement
  - *(Example: Is the goal of the CE to acquire community input or facilitate a process of co-creation?)*
- Identify **stakeholders**, assess **potential barriers** to engagement, and consider **strategies** for overcoming obstacles and conflicts
- Define a **replicable procedure** to evaluate the best type of CE for a project, create a plan, analyze input, and assess the engagement effectiveness
- Address how the public will be **notified** before, during, and after the engagement

# Community Engagement Best Practices

## Key takeaways of community engagement literature and guides

The term “community engagement” (CE) is referenced so frequently by universities, nonprofits, and government agencies that it is almost as if the term has lost its meaning. Exploring CE from a deep academic level as well as a broad applicative level was therefore necessary in order for our group to understand the City of Little Canada’s goal of engaging its community members in unique and innovative ways.

The findings of our literature review provide a solid framework for making sense of CE processes and common language. Our research broke CE into stages of inclusion, recruitment, and consideration, which allowed us to identify the ways that accessibility, equity, and sustainability shape CE from beginning to end. Specifically, our research showcased the importance of ensuring that diverse and marginalized populations such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income residents, seniors, youths, and business representatives are at the CE table. Our findings also considered internal and external barriers that influence stakeholders’ ability to participate in CE efforts and suggested Trinity of Voice (Senecah, 2004) and social network analysis (Dougill et al., 2006) as possible aids in overcoming these obstacles. Finally, our review emphasized the need to prioritize and create space for diverse and marginalized communities to share their authentic experiences and the ways that technology can help and hinder these moves towards equity.

Our findings from various CE guides then demonstrated how the above suggestions have been accomplished in municipalities and organizations around the world. For example, cities such as Seattle have developed CE guides that require that community members, especially underserved and underrepresented populations, be involved in decision making processes early and often to shape the final outcome. Additionally, CE guides from organizations such as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have created procedures to assess the effectiveness of CE efforts in bringing in diverse perspectives, accommodating all community members, and measuring the quality of community outreach. Finally, CE guides across the board highlighted new and creative ways to engage community members outside of traditional quantitative surveying and mapping tools, many of which could be replicable and implemented both virtually or in-person in Little Canada.

The RCP Fellows’ attentiveness to both academic and practical understandings of CE was vital to our summer work. Overall, **our team believes that the literature and CE guides summarized in this report present the City of Little Canada with an exciting opportunity to think differently about CE and the relationships that are developed between those in power and those on the outskirts.**

Key best practices for community engagement that emerged from our exploratory research include:

- Develop and adhere to an **engagement vision or engagement mission** for all CE efforts
- **Expand understandings of diverse and marginalized stakeholders** to include youths, seniors, and members of the business community
- Prepare for the **existence of conflict and extremist opinions** among stakeholders and design CE with this past trauma in mind
- Identify and address **internal and external barriers** that may emerge throughout the CE process
- Consider who is advantaged and disadvantaged by the **use of technology for CE**
- Create space for the sharing of **authentic experiences** by prioritizing and protecting diverse and marginalized stakeholders
- Recognize **nuanced and underlying perspectives** that may be overshadowed by dominant voices or over-structured CE questioning
- Balance the use of measurable, highly targeted CE with unstructured, open-ended CE to **empower citizens as decision makers**

# Overview of Community Engagement Evaluation Tool

How do we know if our community engagement is succeeding?

The American Psychological Association (2009) defines **civic engagement** as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.” Civic engagement seeks to assess community outreach efforts and evaluate attempts to address the public issues that emerge during these community conversations. Specifically, civic engagement can be thought of as the efforts undertaken to involve all community members in decision making as much and as often as possible.

Although quantity of community involvement is of high importance, an additional layer of consideration is also the quality of community involvement. Civic engagement pushes back on community involvement that positions community members as passive consumers or uninformed contributors. Instead, civic engagement proposes community involvement efforts that are well-structured, appropriately guided, and hold decision makers accountable in honoring the needs and desires of the community they serve. It is not enough to host informational sessions or “listening forums” in which community feedback can be ignored - community members must be involved in shaping the decisions that impact their daily lives.

Civic engagement efforts such as these employ a concept known as **collaborative government**. Collaborative government involves transitioning from a top-down form of decision making towards a bottom-up approach that attends to and allows for the incorporation of community members’ diverse lived experiences in public dialogue and deliberation. Together, civic engagement and collaborative government are essential in creating and facilitating community engagement that is equitable, accessible, and reflective of a community’s breadth and depth.

In order to assess the effectiveness of community engagement efforts in the City of Little Canada, our team proposes utilizing an instrument known as the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969); a document detailing this tool can be found in [Appendix D](#). This instrument merges civic engagement and collaborative government into an evaluative tool that considers the power of those making and participating in public decisions (Arnstein, 1969). The RCP Fellows suggest utilizing the Ladder of Citizen Participation in order to measure, design, and improve existing and future community engagement strategies and tactics.

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# COVID-19 Considerations

Why must our community engagement adapt?

## Engaging Community While Remaining Socially Distant

Public engagement has long been crucial to city planning and design processes. Facilitating a dialogue between community members and their public representatives is an opportunity to gather new ideas and diverse perspectives, clarify project details, and increase project buy-in from the community. But how can this vital part of the design and planning process remain intact in the age of social distancing?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyday life for the City of Little Canada, the state of Minnesota, and the greater world. The virus has prompted top local and global medical experts to promote social distancing behaviors and enact limits on group gatherings, both of which have drastic impacts on the in-person events that communities often rely on to receive public feedback. Although restrictions on face-to-face events do not mean that community engagement (CE) must stop, they do require significant changes in well-established practices. Despite these challenges, reimagining public engagement during COVID-19 is also an opportunity for cities like Little Canada to design new ways of involving publics that will remain applicable even after the pandemic recedes.

Aware of Little Canada's commitment to developing the Pioneer Park Master Plan, **our team researched opportunities for CE that would be feasible to implement during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.** The following section summarizes strategies for responsible community engagement during COVID-19, considers the pros and cons of pandemic-approved community engagement tactics, and identifies additional resources for socially distant community engagement.

## Summary of Community Engagement Precedents

COVID-19 has completely halted so many of our routines and events, but it should not halt community engagement. The RCP Fellows researched CE initiatives that have been undertaken by cities and organizations during the pandemic that may be applicable to Little Canada; the full results of this work can be found in [Appendix E](#). We also found CE examples that are non-pandemic related but could be easily adapted to adhere to social distancing guidelines if needed. Our exploration includes local cities such as Plymouth and Minneapolis; non-Minnesotan metropolitan cities such as Portland, Oregon and Flint, Michigan; and non-domestic areas such as the City of Thunder Bay in Canada.

Key takeaways for pandemic-approved community engagement include:

- Even during a pandemic, **public engagement should not just be a checkbox**, but rather, an essential part of the decision making process.
- **Bridge the digital divide.** Many events and public forums must move to digital platforms, and it is the responsibility of organizers to promote technological literacy to all residents to ensure that every citizen has access to the participatory platform.
- **Utilize social media.** This isn't just for sharing information or pretty pictures. Allow comments on posts for open forums, promote Twitter or Instagram polls, share information live on Facebook or Instagram, or have City officials participate in “ask me anything” sessions on Reddit. Social media is designed to communicate with a network of people, not just project information.
- **Use multiple mediums** to meet people where they are. Reach out to the community to discover how people can and want to connect. For people who are unable to connect via the internet, consider providing a phone call option or a text-message hotline. Put up physical posters in diverse locations or provide pin-up boards or drop-boxes for people to leave written messages.
- **Record online meetings** for people to watch on their own time. This ensures people with busy schedules or child-care responsibilities can also remain in the information loop. Provide subtitles, ideally in multiple languages, to accommodate hearing or language barriers.

## Comparing Community Engagement Tactics

The precedents cited above highlight a number of CE tools and tactics for continuing successful public outreach amid COVID-19. Yet when deciding on an appropriate engagement medium, it is equally important to make sure that it is the right tool for the job.

Included in [Appendix F](#) is an infographic, developed by Black (2011), that **overviews CE technologies that may be useful in facilitating public participation in a time of social distancing**. The graphic evaluates tools on a scale of simplicity to complexity and proposes six different instances in which these tools may be needed for CE: Naming Problems, Framing Issues, Making Decisions Deliberately, Identifying and Committing Civic Resources, Organizing Civic Actions, and Learning Together. The graphic also outlines key advantages and disadvantages of using these tools, which is valuable when considering which marginalized stakeholders are crucial to a project and what access barriers they may encounter.

Our hope is that this graphic may aid the City of Little Canada in determining which CE tactic is best suited for which purpose and decrease the mental workload required to assess the use of CE technologies for the Pioneer Park Master Plan.

## Additional Resources for Consideration

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# Overview of Survey Questions

## Questionnaire and focus group community engagement questions

Groves et al. (2004) define survey as “a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the large population of which the entities are members” (p. 2). Survey design, implementation, and analysis can vary widely, from the people and places being surveyed to the way the information is collected to how often data is collected and by whom (Stoop & Harrison, 2012). These variances were of particular import to the RCP Fellows’ summer work and resulted in our all-encompassing interpretation and use of the term “survey.” Specifically, **our team chose to view surveying as a catch-all for all forms of information gathering from a sample of a larger population**, including quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, stakeholder focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

In the initial project presented to the Fellows, a key request from the City of Little Canada was to “provide unique and innovative ways to engage the community regarding planning for Pioneer Park.” Although the Fellows’ summer work shifted in project focus, our team understood the need to provide tangible next steps for collecting community feedback that could inform the Pioneer Park Master Plan. As a result, **our team developed a first draft of survey questions, which can be viewed in [Appendix G](#), that may be revised by and disseminated in the near future to aid Little Canada in furthering its creation of the Pioneer Park Master Plan.** In line with our open interpretation of surveying, we designed survey questions with considerable leeway, which we hope will enable some or all of the questions to be asked in an online or paper questionnaire format, during in-person and/or virtual focus groups and/or interviews, or during more creative and informal event settings.

Although surveying has significant advantages in community engagement, **designing, disseminating, and analyzing effective surveys does not ensure that the responses received will be an accurate or representative portrayal of all community ideas and concerns.** “Lurking sources of bias that are not sample-related” can greatly influence how survey results are interpreted and prioritized, which may lead to the overshadowing of nuanced perspectives from marginalized stakeholders (Gideon, 2012, para. 5). To help recognize and address potential bias, the following section overviews a planning evaluation tool that could be used to guide the assessment and prioritization of community feedback and ideas.

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# Overview of Planning Evaluation Tool

How do we make sense of the feedback we receive from community members?

The purpose of the Planning Evaluation Tool is to assess community feedback and ideas so that community input can be strategically considered during the City planning process. The use of structured questions to assess and prioritize community feedback has proven to be an effective guide for strategic decision making and has been successfully employed by other municipalities (e.g. City of Ann Arbor, 2017; City of Palo Alto, 2016; Khazaei, Joppe, & Elliot, 2019; Naperville Park District, 2011). **The tool, which can be viewed in [Appendix H](#), presents guided questions that City staff and decision makers in the City of Little Canada should take into account when evaluating community feedback and ideas related to community parks.**

The tool aims to consider how community feedback and ideas relate to or fulfill community understandings of Equity, Accessibility, Sustainability, Diversity, and Community, as defined in [Appendix B](#). It also encourages decision makers to look beyond funding, cost, and other quantitative performance data (Parker, 2016) and instead consider how the feedback or idea reflects previous community input, amplifies the voices of marginalized stakeholders, and aligns with previously established City goals and recommendations.

It is important to note that **this tool does not weigh or offer criteria for prioritizing input**. However, the use of guided questions to analyze community feedback and ideas can reveal critical insights that make the prioritization process easier when comparing suggestions side-by-side.

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# Overview of Stakeholder Analysis

## Identifying key community groups for public outreach

Stakeholders are those “persons, groups, neighborhoods, organizations, institutions, societies, and...natural environment[s]” who share a relationship with a project, initiative, or similar situation (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, p. 855). Stakeholder analysis examines a stakeholder’s influence (denoted as “power” on the accompanying graphic) and interest in relation to the influence and power of other stakeholders (Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009). Visualizing the placement of stakeholders can be useful in identifying stakeholders who have been previously marginalized or excluded from decision making, discerning existing or potential conflicts among stakeholder groups, and discovering shared relationships among stakeholders that can be strengthened during community engagement (CE) efforts (Daniels & Walker, 2001; Grimbly & Wellard, 1997; Stringer et al., 2006).



The stakeholder analysis model utilized by the RCP Fellows positions stakeholders based on scales of influence and interest. As a result, stakeholders are placed in one of four quadrants:

- **High Influence/High Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant have significant and/or direct interest in and influence on a project’s direction. It is recommended that communication and involvement with these stakeholders be closely managed and considered throughout the process.
- **High Influence/Low Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant have the potential to heavily shape a project’s direction, but their limited interest in the project reduces their wielding of influence. It is recommended to provide these stakeholders with consistent project updates and consider how planning decisions may impact their satisfaction.
- **Low Influence/High Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant are highly interested in the outcome or decision at hand, but lack the ability to shape or influence the decision making process. It is recommended to keep this group of stakeholders informed and evaluate barriers or constraints that may be impacting their lack of influential power.
- **Low Influence/Low Interest:** Stakeholders in this quadrant require minimum effort, as they have neither great power nor great influence on the final outcome. It is recommended to monitor stakeholders in this group and ascertain if providing additional knowledge influences their interest in the project.

Of the quadrants listed above, those in the low influence/high interest and low influence/low interest quadrants are of particular importance due to their lack of influence in the decision making process itself. Reduced influence could be attributed to various barriers outlined in previous sections of this report, such as language constraints, lack of invitation to the table, inaccessible participatory design, or previously damaged relationships with community engagement organizers. These considerations thus highlight **two goals for stakeholder relationship building and CE design**:

1. How can we elevate low influence/high interest stakeholders to have more power and influence?
2. How can we encourage low influence/low interest stakeholders to become more invested in the project or decision being discussed?

Guided by conversations with City of Little Canada staff, Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and City Council members, the RCP Fellows conducted their own stakeholder analysis for the Pioneer Park Master Plan, the results of which can be found in [Appendix I](#). Although our team made every effort to objectively identify and position a broad swath of stakeholders, it must be noted that **our analysis was inevitably shaped by our own interpretations and perceptions of the City of Little Canada, Pioneer Park, and the challenges revealed in the previous iteration of the Park System Master Plan**. Because of “the difficult dialectic between issue identification and stakeholder identification” (Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009, p. 502), our team’s identification of project and stakeholder issues likely reflects our own interests and biases (Clarkson, 1995; Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). Our team thus urges the City of Little Canada to consider these limitations when reviewing the stakeholder analysis results and to conduct (and consistently revise) a stakeholder analysis of their own for Pioneer Park.

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# Final Recommendations

Based on the findings outlined in this report, the RCP Fellows present the following recommendations to the City of Little Canada for its future community engagement (CE) work:

## 1. Investigate and emphasize a well-rounded community understanding of the City of Little Canada's diverse history

The RCP Fellows spent considerable time and effort exploring the City of Little Canada's history and culture from a variety of perspectives. The insight our team gained enriched our understanding of the community's culture, mission, and citizens, and it greatly influenced the direction of our work throughout the summer.

City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners have all noted the importance of Little Canada's history to its people and expressed a desire to include a historical theme in the redesign of Pioneer Park. Although our team supports this idea, we suggest first attending to community members' understanding of what and who that history involves. We believe it is important that any future historical representation extends current community knowledge of the City by appropriately recognizing diverse narratives and people who have not yet been given consideration. Considering that the Little Canada Historical Society supports efforts to learn more about the history and lineage of Native Americans in the area, our team suggests that the City engage with an American Indian historian to help research the local context and tell a more well-rounded story.

## 2. Identify and foster sustainable relationships with representatives among key stakeholder groups

Our team believes that developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships is critical to the long-term success of CE in the City of Little Canada. Previous conversations with City staff, City Council, and Commissioners have stressed to the RCP Fellows that previous efforts to foster these relationships have been unsuccessful; our team empathizes with how frustrating this can be and thus have invested time and resources this summer in considering new forms of outreach that can be initiated this fall.

The Fellows would like to support the implementation of this recommendation by identifying singular representatives or points of contact for large stakeholder groups and initiating conversations with these stakeholders this fall. After making initial connections, we would communicate to stakeholders the exact nature of the engagement activities planned to facilitate community feedback on the Pioneer Park Master Plan, as well as define the extent of citizen involvement in and control over the final outcome. Ultimately, our goal would be to build a bridge

between the City and stakeholder groups, which hopefully would allow for relationship building to continue after the RCP Fellows' eventual severance with the project. At this time, the RCP Fellows would suggest focusing these relational efforts on youth serving organizations, neighborhood associations, youth sports organizations, school boards, PTAs, and senior centers.

### 3. Design and prioritize community engagement efforts that are inductive rather than deductive

Our team suggests reallocating time and energy to CE efforts that reflect a bottom-up feedback model instead of a top-down model. Specifically, the RCP Fellows recommend balancing CE that is narrow and leading with CE that is more broad and open-ended. For example, although a survey question framed as "Would you support the inclusion of a splash pad in Pioneer Park?" provides specific and measurable results, it does not permit the sharing of qualitative and nuanced responses, which can tease out underlying thoughts and opinions that reflect the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented community members. Instead, our team would suggest using more open-ended questions such as "How would you feel about the inclusion of a splash pad in Pioneer Park?" or in a perfect world, the entirely unrestrained "What would you like to see included in Pioneer Park?"

Our team acknowledges that more unstructured forms of CE are not always possible and that they may not provide the immediate, quantifiable feedback that City staff, City Council, and Commissioners need as evidence of their tireless efforts to serve the City of Little Canada. However, intentionally designing CE efforts that empower citizens as decision makers and allow for the emergence of new ideas may ultimately lead to a stronger Pioneer Park Master Plan, which is vital considering the document's long-term impact on the future of Little Canada.

### 4. Conduct community engagement work with accessibility, sustainability, and equity at the forefront

The community definitions presented by the RCP Fellows, found in [Appendix B](#), include descriptions of the terms Accessibility, Sustainability, and Equity. From the very beginning, our team realized the crucial role these three ideas play in the successful design and implementation of CE that includes and reflects all community members of the City of Little Canada. Although our team understands the need to conduct CE quickly, we believe that taking the time to incorporate these three ideas will lead to the development of CE efforts that can be easily replicated for all projects and initiatives with little need for revision.

Overall, the root of this recommendation is a belief that attending to accessibility, sustainability, and equity early and often will result in richer feedback from citizens and enable the creation of a Pioneer Park that is accessed and enjoyed by all community members.

## 5. Develop a community engagement plan to direct and align all future City planning

The final recommendation presented by the RCP Fellows is likely the boldest: a suggestion that the City of Little Canada seek to develop an overarching community engagement plan that would direct and guide all of its CE efforts. Our team is highly aware of the time, energy, and resources that a project such as this requires, and furthermore, that any focus given to such a process would inevitably result in less focus to other equally important projects. Even so, our team firmly believes that developing a plan such as this would greatly benefit the City's longevity and demonstrate the City's commitment to involving and empowering its citizens as leaders and decision makers.

Even if City staff, Council Members, and Commissioners were to embrace this final recommendation, our team understands that the development of such a plan could not happen quickly. Considering this, we also present a smaller alternative option: the development of a community engagement mission statement that is grounded in the tools and strategies our team has outlined in this report. The creation of such a mission statement would aid in evaluating future engagement efforts on a more manageable scale, and if successful, could serve as the foundation for the development of a more thorough community engagement plan down the line.

# Appendix A

## Team Member Biographies

**Vipasha Bansal** (BA/BS University of Texas at Austin) is a second year masters student in Linguistics at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Her research currently focuses on the Hmong language, specifically the dialects spoken in Minnesota. She also has experience in marketing, nonprofits, and film production. In addition, she spent a year teaching English and German in India and Thailand. After her MA degree, Vipasha intends to continue on to a Linguistics PhD.

**Catherine J. Bruns** (BA Concordia College, MA James Madison University) is a Communication Studies doctoral student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where she studies environmental communication and advocacy. Her most recent publications include a chapter in the book *Water, Rhetoric, and Social Justice: A Critical Confluence* (2020) and a case study in the textbook *Cases in Public Relations: Translating Ethics Into Action* (2018). Outside of academics, she has worked with community arts nonprofits, served on local leadership boards, and assisted with Minnesota election turnout. She is a former college speech competitor and coach and is a 2015 initiate of the Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society.

**Gunnar Carlson** (BA & MPA University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) spent the first seven years after receiving his Psychology degree as an adolescent therapist. He then transitioned to independent pharmacy management for the next 15 years before returning to graduate school in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Along the way, he has enjoyed service on many boards, including service as a two-time President of the Hopkins Rotary, founder and past chair of the Southwest Metro Chamber of Commerce, and current Vice President of the MN Off Road Cyclists. Since returning to school, Gunnar has enjoyed traveling to Ghana for his Capstone project, working as a research assistant for the Metropolitan Council and interning with the Center for Integrative Leadership and the MN Young American Leaders Program on an Arts Initiative in Greater MN.

**Kyle Franta** (BLA South Dakota State University, MLA Candidate University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) is a Master of Landscape Architecture student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where he studies ecological restoration and food sovereignty through the lens of planning and design. Kyle currently works as a Landscape Design Assistant and is active in the Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architect's Equity Planning Group that focuses on enhancing equity among the landscape architecture industry's professionals, educators, and students. Kyle has also advocated for city planning that facilitates creating healthy communities in small rural towns in a collaborative project titled *Healthy Communities, A Guidebook for Small Towns*. This work was presented at the 2018 International Conference for the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture.

**Kendra Klenz** (BA St. Olaf College, MLA Candidate University of Minnesota-Twin Cities) is a Master of Landscape Architecture student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where she is interested in land value and ownership as well as small-scale and public spaces. Her undergraduate degree is in economics and environmental studies. She has experience in large-scale community outreach and planning for waste and recycling infrastructure in Northeastern Minnesota through Minnesota GreenCorps. Her experience in community-centered work continued in 2018 with an award-winning design/build project in rural Sweden in collaboration with architecture and design students. Kendra also has experience in ecological restoration and research and works as a gardener.

# Appendix B

## Community Definitions

### 1. Community

#### Community means...

The co-constructed identity that connects those who live, work, and/or play within a particular place and at a particular time.

#### Community involves...

- Acknowledging past, present, and future histories, experiences, and traumas
- Establishing, maintaining, and revising shared traditions, norms, and relationships
- Having one's individual needs, desires, and ideas considered by and reflected in a greater collective narrative

#### Questions to consider

1. Who does our identity include, who does our identity exclude, and who are we forgetting right now?
2. What structural and systemic disparities and differences exist in our space?
3. What beliefs, values, and goals motivate those in our space?
4. How does our ideal community vision align with our current community realities?
5. How do community advancement efforts represent, accommodate, and respond to existing community demographics?

### 2. Engagement

#### Engagement means...

Actively calling in community members in community problem solving, knowledge gathering, and decision making.

#### Engagement involves...

- Empowering community members to share their honest thoughts and experiences and allowing the feedback obtained to inform the final outcome
- Developing and implementing varied and accessible public participation opportunities throughout all stages of a project or initiative

- Evaluating community feedback based on openly available, measurable, and equitable criteria that community members have aided in creating

### Questions to consider

1. What individuals, community groups, constituencies, and organizations must be at the table and what support must be provided to facilitate their involvement?
2. Who traditionally has not been at the table and what factors may have caused or contributed to their lack of involvement?
3. Is/are knowledge, resources, and power being mutually and beneficially exchanged among all parties?
4. How much influence should/do community members have in shaping a final outcome or decision?
5. What strategies and tactics exist to involve community members and what gaps do they create that must still be addressed?

## 3. Equity

### Equity means...

Committing to the creation of a community that openly acknowledges and actively combats the everyday realities of systemic injustice.

### Equity involves...

- Reallocating community resources and decision making power with the goal of bridging opportunity gaps among community members
- Evaluating decision making processes and procedures for unintended bias and dedicating time and energy to improving these systems
- Prioritizing the development of community initiatives and projects that address existing disparities related to access and advancement

### Questions to consider

1. How does the issue or decision at hand help, hurt, or otherwise impact various community members?
2. Have current community needs been adequately considered and addressed before current and/or future community desires?
3. Are the interests of all community members being represented accurately and proportionately?
4. Are all community members able to share authentic insights without fear of prejudice or retribution?

5. How do engagement opportunities account for disparities and differences among community members?

## 4. Diversity

### Diversity means...

The equitable representation of internal and external characteristics, perspectives, and experiences.

### Diversity involves...

- Purposefully seeking out feedback from an array of types, abilities, and backgrounds regardless of how it advantages or disadvantages the final outcome
- Actively demonstrating a desire to hear and learn from community members' lived experiences during all phases of community engagement
- Resolving to adjust or redesign current and future projects and initiatives that do not adequately incorporate the breadth and depth of the community

### Questions to consider

1. What voices and perspectives must be prioritized and what is being done to ensure this occurs?
2. What social capital and connections must be (re)built to support the interest and involvement of a representative community?
3. Which socioeconomic and demographic characteristics are being over-represented, under-represented, or forgotten in community engagement efforts?
4. Is diversity adequately displayed throughout all levels of community leadership and decision making?
5. Are diverse suggestions and ideas making their way out of internal community conversations and into external community projects and initiatives?

## 5. Accessibility

### Accessibility means...

A conscious community consideration for the widest range of abilities within the widest range of situations to the fullest extent possible.

### Accessibility involves...

- Acknowledging, reflecting, and accommodating the needs of community members in public community spaces
- Anticipating and addressing internal and external barriers that may hinder community members from participating in community life
- Providing information and data relevant to community decision making transparently, in multiple formats, and in a timely manner

### Questions to consider

1. Is accessibility a consideration during all stages or merely the final product?
2. Who or what is not being addressed or involved and why?
3. Is the information being shared about the project and process understandable to all community members?
4. How much, how often, and what type of technology is appropriate?
5. What type of financial limitations exist?

## 6. Sustainability

### Sustainability means...

Constructing a community that responds to the needs and constraints of the present day while predicting the wants and challenges of the future.

### Sustainability involves...

- Weighing environmental and community interests against available community resources
- Initiating and maintaining processes that support a seamless transfer of knowledge to future leaders and community members
- Envisioning and aligning projects and initiatives that transcend the community's current legacy and contribute to the well-being of future generations

### Questions to consider

1. How does the project or initiative serve multiple communities and will it leave each better off than they are now?
2. Is the project or initiative being discussed financially and logistically feasible?
3. Is the decision making or implementation process repeatable and reasonably modifiable?

4. How might the final result represent or be viewed by the community in five years? 10 years? 50 years?
5. How might the use or purpose of the final product evolve or transition in five years? 10 years? 50 years?

# Appendix C

## Community Engagement Guides

### [City of Seattle Public Involvement Policy for Parks Planning Processes](#)

**Mission Statement:** *Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) will work with all citizens to be good stewards of our environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community.*

This is the City of Seattle's official policy on public engagement; it is aimed specifically at Parks Planning. Its purpose is to describe the role of park users and neighbors in the planning process and outline situations in which public input will not be solicited. Although this policy was first adopted in July 1999, it has been amended many times since then; the most recent version is from July 2012.

The document lists relevant stakeholders and the potential responsibilities of Parks staff. It also contains a step-by-step list of procedures for developing a community engagement plan. **An important point made in this section is that community engagement must be inclusive, diverse, and racially equitable.**

In addition, the document provides examples of community engagement tactics that may be used, including public meetings and workshops, emails to neighborhood organizations, user groups and councils, online surveys, news releases, and social media. The document also provides questions that help assess the extent of public involvement that is required for any given project. **An important question that should be considered here is: What are the unintended consequences of including or excluding the public in the decision making process?**

Finally, the document outlines what materials should be created for public meetings (such as signs and fliers), what information the materials should contain, and a timeline for their distribution.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Public involvement should be encouraged in the planning process of any project that would substantially modify the property's use or appearance.

- Stakeholders - including those who do not usually participate in park planning efforts, such as immigrant and refugee populations - should be provided early and thorough notification of all projects and proposals.
- Funding to carry out community engagement in communities where 5% of the population speaks a specific language other than English should be encouraged.
- Whenever possible, the community should be asked for ideas rather than presented with a list of options to choose from.

## Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board

### Community Engagement Policy

**Guiding Statement on Community Engagement:** *A well-designed and consistently implemented community engagement process aligns agency decisions with the interests and priorities of Minneapolis residents and park users.*

This is the City of Minneapolis Parks and Recreation’s official policy on community engagement. It is reviewed every five years; the most recent review was in March 2019.

Overall, this policy outlines required levels of community engagement that should be undertaken for different types of projects. **The document identifies four levels of community engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, and Partner.** These go from least to most engagement; the level of engagement required depends on the project. The policy outlines the engagement goal for each level, as well as MPRB’s commitments for each.

One key element of this document is its defining of terms related to community engagement. Specifically, **the document provides definitions for Community Engagement, Community Outreach, Consensus, and Stakeholder.** It is important to note that engagement and outreach have been given very different definitions here.

The document also outlines procedures that should be followed for different stages of the project and engagement, such as project assessment, engagement planning, establishment of advisory committees, public notice, and evaluation of a project and the community engagement. It also describes the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the engagement process, including both stakeholders and city staff.

### Key Takeaways:

- The key to engaging communities is to ensure that the decision making process is visible, transparent, uses multiple communication channels, recognizes power dynamics, ensures fairness and equitable access to participation, respects viewpoints, and provides opportunities for every stakeholder to voice their opinion.

- Equity and the inclusion of underrepresented groups is defined and deemed critical to the process.
- There is no single formula for determining the most effective engagement strategy for any given project; instead, it should be measured based on the quality and level of participation. This effectiveness should be evaluated from both the stakeholder's and the organization's point of view.

## Making Austin: Public Participation in a New Comprehensive Plan

**Plan Goal:** *To develop a plan that reflects the values and aspirations of the entire Austin community.*

This community engagement guide, written in September 2009, was developed by the City of Austin to outline the role of public engagement in creating a comprehensive plan for the city. Each stage of creating the comprehensive plan is outlined in detail, along with the public engagement activities that will occur at each stage and the materials and information that will be distributed.

**The guide summarizes what community engagement activities have already taken place in Austin, as well as those that the city plans to utilize in the future.** It also presents a detailed plan of the organization and timeline for community engagement events, detailing four planned community forum series, what events they will include, the goals of each forum, and intended outcomes.

This guide is particularly useful in that it provides a concrete list of community engagement strategies and ideas. **An important point made in this guide is that “citizens must understand what the plan is in order to effectively provide input”; in other words, the project must be clearly explained to the community in order to set them up for success.** To achieve this, the guide divides community engagement into two stages: outreach and education, and information gathering. In each stage, specific suggestions for community engagement tactics, such as utilizing the local media and arranging meetings-in-a-box, are presented.

### Key Takeaways:

- Community engagement should be inclusive and open to all, regardless of demographics, location, finances, etc; engaging underrepresented groups who are often uninvolved in city planning is particularly important. The guide presents concrete ideas to achieve this, such as holding community forums in different locations in the city and at different times, pursuing relationships with community leaders, offering translation

options for non-English speakers, and recruiting specific groups to participate in workshops.

- Transparency is important: is the public input being taken into account? Again, strategies to achieve transparency are included.
- Finally, it is important for the process to be fun! There is no need for engagement events to be dry, the more enjoyable it is for participants, the more enthusiasm the project will receive.

## Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan

**Plan Goal:** *The goal of this Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan is to make a shift in the planning process from thinking about traditional outreach and participation processes to an engagement model that fosters shared problem solving, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships.*

This public engagement guide was developed by the Metropolitan Council as part of their preparation to create a comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metropolitan area called Thrive MSP 2040. The community engagement plan outlined here is what the council plans to use for this project.

The main argument made in this document is that the needs of the people are the most important part of regional planning, and that **public engagement needs to be a collaborative, equitable process centered on people and communities, rather than on what sort of new infrastructure or facilities will be created.** The guide argues for shifting the community engagement process from more traditional outreach to a model that focuses on collaboration, problem solving and strong community relationships.

The overall message of this guide can be understood through the following quotes:

- A regional public engagement strategy that assures policies are **reflective of all the region's residents and supports prosperity for all** (p. 3)
- In public decision-making processes, **community engagement is an intentional, strategic, purposeful process to connect and empower** individuals and communities (p. 4)
- This Public Engagement Plan recognizes **people as full and equal partners in the region's decision-making processes** at all levels (p. 5)

### Key Takeaways:

- Diversity and equity are extremely important. Organizations should actively engage with historically underrepresented communities, as well as people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels.

- Community definitions are also provided. Of particular note is that Engagement and Outreach are defined separately: Engagement is described as a much more collaborative process that aims to generate new ideas and build lasting relationships within the community.
- The plan outlines eight principles for conducting and achieving meaningful engagement: Equity, Respect, Transparency, Relevance, Accountability, Collaboration, Inclusion, Cultural Competence
- Strategies to strengthen the role of community engagement in the planning process are explained, as well as what is involved in each one. Some of these strategies include: have a better presence in communities, leverage existing partnerships, highlight best practices in the field, and use online interactive spaces.
- A list of steps that can be taken before, during, and after a project to measure and evaluate the success of public engagement efforts is provided.

## City of Pittsburgh Public Engagement Guide

**Guide Goal:** *To provide recommendations and resources for equitable, transparent and inclusive engagement for planning and policy development.*

This guide was developed by the City of Pittsburgh in July 2019. This guide is slightly longer than others, but contains rich information, resources, and definitions.

This guide pays particular attention to diversity and equity. Conducting equitable engagement is one of the main focuses of this guide. Equity is defined as “when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their wellbeing and achieve their full potential” (p. 22). **The guide argues that it is the City’s responsibility to engage all communities and make sure underrepresented groups are heard.** It provides a list of factors related to equity, and details strategies for ensuring equitable public engagement, how to achieve them (with examples), and how to determine the success of each one.

At the end of the guide there are **multiple resources that can be used by organizations for their own public engagement timelines.** Some of these resources include example timelines, stakeholder worksheets, a public impact assessment worksheet, an engagement process planning worksheet, a sample communications strategy, a sample website, and a sample survey. Finally, this guide provides a comprehensive list of what makes public engagement effective and sustainable, which are useful evaluation criteria to keep in mind.

### Key Takeaways:

- Public engagement is a two-way conversation.
- Best practice is to define from the beginning of a process the intended engagement plan and to make that information available to the public

- There are three foundations for public engagement: Values Based, Decision Oriented, and Goal Driven. An explanation of what these mean is provided in the guide.
- Five different levels of community engagement are outlined, as well as the goals of each type and the responsibilities of the city in each case. From least to most engaged, these levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower.
- Finally, descriptions of the stages of a public engagement process are provided, with detailed information on each step.

## Community Planning Toolkit: Community Engagement

This guide to community engagement was developed in 2014 by an organization in Belfast, Ireland called Community Places as part of a larger community planning toolkit.

The guide presents a list of community engagement strategies and a comprehensive analysis of each. In addition to a **detailed explanation of how to carry out each tactic, the document includes the strengths and weaknesses of each, as well as the overall appropriateness of the method and in what situations it would be the most effective.** Some of the most innovative tactics include street stalls, community mapping, Planning for Real (constructing a model of the area in question with ideas written in appropriate locations), and citizen's juries. Some of the suggestions are more applicable to Little Canada than others, but many of the ideas are unique and hands on.

The guide also presents **an evaluation tool of 10 standards to use when evaluating the quality of community engagement.**

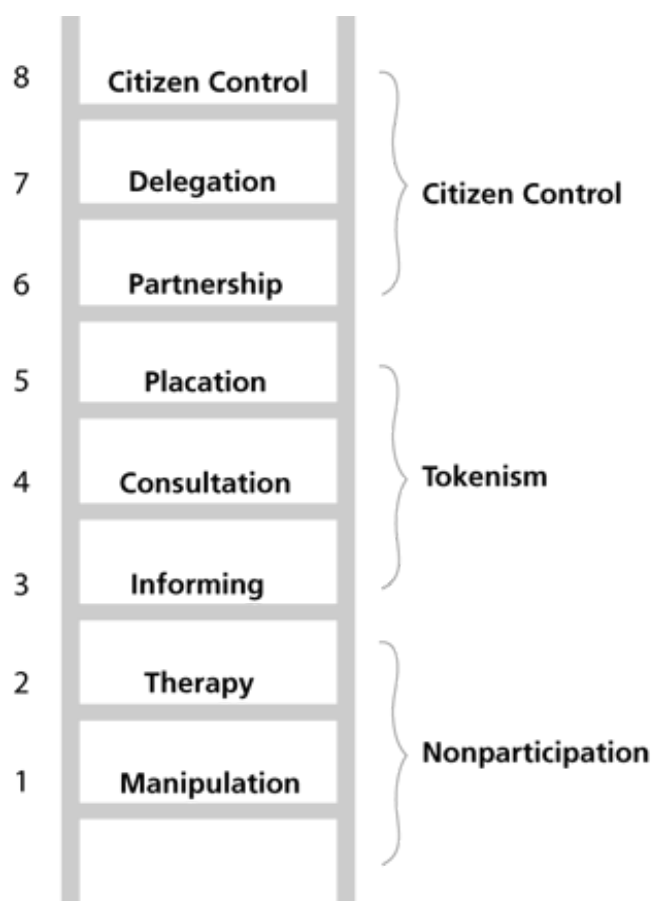
### Key Takeaways:

- It is important to define a clear purpose for the community engagement process.
- There are five suggested levels of community engagement. From least to most engaged, these are: Being Informed, Being Asked, Commenting on Decisions, Developing Solutions, and Delivering Services.
- Local community development networks and support organizations should be involved in identifying community stakeholders, their particular interests and needs, and how best to engage with them
- Inclusiveness is important. The guide outlines potential barriers to engagement and suggests various factors that address these barriers when designing engagement.

# Appendix D

## Tool for Evaluating Community Engagement

### The Ladder of Citizen Participation



**Arnstein's Ladder (1969)**

Degrees of Citizen Participation

The Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) imagines community engagement efforts as rungs on a ladder. Each of the eight rungs designates a different degree of community engagement, from bottom-tier Manipulation and Therapy that minimizes the impact of citizen contributions to top-tier Partnership and Delegation efforts that empower citizens.

Ideally, all community engagement strategies and tactics would aim for the Citizen Control rung at the top, but reaching that rung is not always feasible. This makes it critical that cities identify opportunities when citizen power *can* be strengthened and consider what type of community relationship is being created. When lower rungs of citizen participation are unavoidable, the engagement must still strive to maintain open and transparent communication so that Tokenism and Nonparticipation can be avoided.

Aiming for the top tier and striving to disperse other citizen participation opportunities appropriately across the Ladder creates realistic expectations for citizens at the outset, which may

decrease the chance that community members will be frustrated by or feel left out of the decision making process. In all cases, **facilitating open communication about decision making processes can help citizens feel more engaged in their participation and to their community, even if they cannot be directly involved in the final decision.**

# Ladder Rungs

## Nonparticipation

### Manipulation

The bottom rung of the Ladder of Citizen Participation disguises public relations efforts as community engagement. In this rung, community engagement serves as a vehicle for those in power to coerce citizens to arrive at a predetermined conclusion.

#### Example

A marketing campaign on a community's need for a new playground that is being paid for by the company that wants to install the playground.

### Therapy

Engagement in this rung contends that citizen frustration with the engagement process is because of the citizens themselves, not the process. In this rung, citizens are highly involved, yet only in ways that fit pre-established engagement norms.

#### Example

Community engagement surveys are disseminated in English even though the disseminators know that a significant portion of the community speaks only Spanish.

## Tokenism

### Informing

This first rung of the Tokenism segment of the Ladder is a top-down flow of information from city officials to citizens. Engagement in this rung often happens too late in the decision making process for citizens to provide feedback or contribute to the final outcome and instead is used to notify citizens about the decision itself.

#### Example

An open house notifies citizens about a new traffic pattern that is currently under construction in order to help community members understand the past problem and in-progress solution.

## Consultation

Engagement in this rung creates opportunities for citizen involvement whose results can be measured quantitatively, such as surveys, “listening sessions,” or public forums. Although these forms of engagement may be deemed successful due to high levels of attendance or response rate, they do not account for citizen satisfaction with the engagement process itself.

### Example

A public comment period asks for citizen feedback on a list of pre-selected names for a new community building.

## Placation

This Ladder rung involves citizens in decision making by placing citizens with less power on community advisory committees or boards. Incorporating marginalized voices in decision making spaces is a valuable step towards equitable community engagement, but it does not guarantee that a citizen’s voice will be heard or that their input will be represented in the final decision.

### Example

A female Somali citizen serves on a community advisory board that presents recommendations to an all-White, all-male board with final decision making power.

## Citizen Control

### Partnership

The first rung of the Citizen Control segment of the Ladder enables power sharing between citizens and officials through dialogue and deliberation. In this rung, decisions manifest through combined input rather than unilateral decision making. Additionally, community representatives in the decision making process are directly accountable to the community members they represent.

### Example

A community advisory committee is equally composed of city officials and community-appointed representatives and makes decisions after input is received from all board members.

### Delegation

Engagement efforts in this rung place the majority of decision making power in the hands of the citizens whom the decision affects.

### Example

A citizen advisory committee is majority community-appointed representatives and minority city officials and makes decisions after input is received from all board members.

### Citizen Control

The final top-tier Ladder rung is the most ambitious degree of community engagement and involves placing all decision making control and responsibility in the hands of citizens. Citizen Control is normally accomplished with the assistance of an external corporation or governing agency that designs the program and facilitates citizen-led implementation of the initiative. In true Citizen Control, city officials are only involved as monitors and managers of the end result.

### Example

A ballot measure proposes to change the public park opening hour from 7 AM to 8 AM and will be voted on by all citizens.

# Appendix E

## Community Engagement Precedents

### COVID-19 Specific

#### [Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan](#)

In winter 2019, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation initiated the Cedar-Isles Master Plan project to guide improvements and stewardship at Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles and surrounding parkland, parkways and trails for the next 20+ years. Following the emergence of COVID-19, the project engaged the public through virtual Community Advisory Committee meetings and an online ArcGIS mapping tool; both tactics were publicized on social media and the project website. The mapping tool specifically invited community members to share memories, ideas, and concerns related to the Cedar-Isles Master Plan; upload photos to explain their comments; and agree with or reply to already submitted comments.

#### [Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan](#)

In 2018, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation initiated the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan project to guide capital improvements in the regional trail area over the next 20-30 years. In June 2020, a draft version of the plan was published online and released for a 45-day public comment period. Due to the pandemic, comments were accepted via an online survey, as well as by emailing or calling the project manager. Printed materials were also available to be mailed or delivered in a “COVID-19-safe manner.”

#### [Plymouth City Center](#)

In early 2020, the city of Plymouth began developing a long-term vision for its existing Plymouth City Center site. City residents were directed to the project website to take a survey, leave a comment on an online mapping tool, or comment on an online idea board. The idea board structured comments around topics of value, serious concern, big change, and vision for the future; contributors could include a descriptive photo and submit their contact info for future follow up, as well as engage in the comments made by others.

#### [Crim Fitness Foundation \(Flint, MI\)](#)

Crim Fitness Foundation is a non-profit dedicated to advancing the national agenda for improving community health. During the pandemic, Crim held live-stream “community conversations,” digital lunches, and online instructional sessions to teach people how to use

Zoom and other remote technologies. In response to community need to connect remotely through mindful practices, a Crim Mindfulness Team was created that recorded video series on subjects such as yoga, guided meditation, and mindfulness and nutrition. Between March and July 2020, over 2,400 people participated in the Crim Mindfulness offerings; a follow-up survey completed by 643 of these participants found that “over 90% of individuals who participated in a live-streamed class reported a significant increase in overall wellness.”

### [North Bay Parks Master Plan \(Ontario, Canada\)](#)

In June 2020, the city of North Bay began developing a Parks Master Plan to guide city programming and investment in its parks for the next 20 years. To gather community feedback, the city created an online survey and hosted five online community work sessions (one session per city region) on Facebook Live. During each session, project members presented preliminary development themes that had emerged through survey results and private meetings, and community members were invited to ask questions and share comments.

## Applicable Non-COVID-19

### [Washington Park Master Plan \(Portland, OR\)](#)

In April 2017, Portland Parks and Recreation began public outreach to update its previous Master Plan, which was developed 25 years ago. Engagement efforts included a Party in the Park event, an online Party in the Park event, solicitation of comments via social media, tabling at the local Farmer’s Market, and focus group meetings held in three languages. Public engagement took 18 months, was conducted in four languages, and involved more than 2,500 people. Although the project was completed prior to COVID-19, many of its online engagement efforts, particularly its online event development, function well within pandemic constraints.

### [Burlingame Master Parks Plan \(Burlingame, CA\)](#)

In 2018, the Burlingame Parks and Recreation Department began development of its first Parks Master Plan. To engage the community, the city first held in-person individual and small group stakeholder interviews with City staff, Commissioners, community business owners, field users, recreation groups, and school representatives. The city next hosted eight pop-up events at parks, recreation facilities, and community events over the course of three months, which successfully gathered input from over 300 people. An online map survey was also disseminated using Mapita and received more than 540 responses. Later, the city held a public workshop for community members to learn about and contribute to the planning process; this was followed by a second survey circulated via telephone, online, and paper. Burlingame stands as a model for

thorough and staged community engagement, much of which can be conducted during and after COVID-19.

### [Northwood Playfield Splash Pad \(City of Thunder Bay, Canada\)](#)

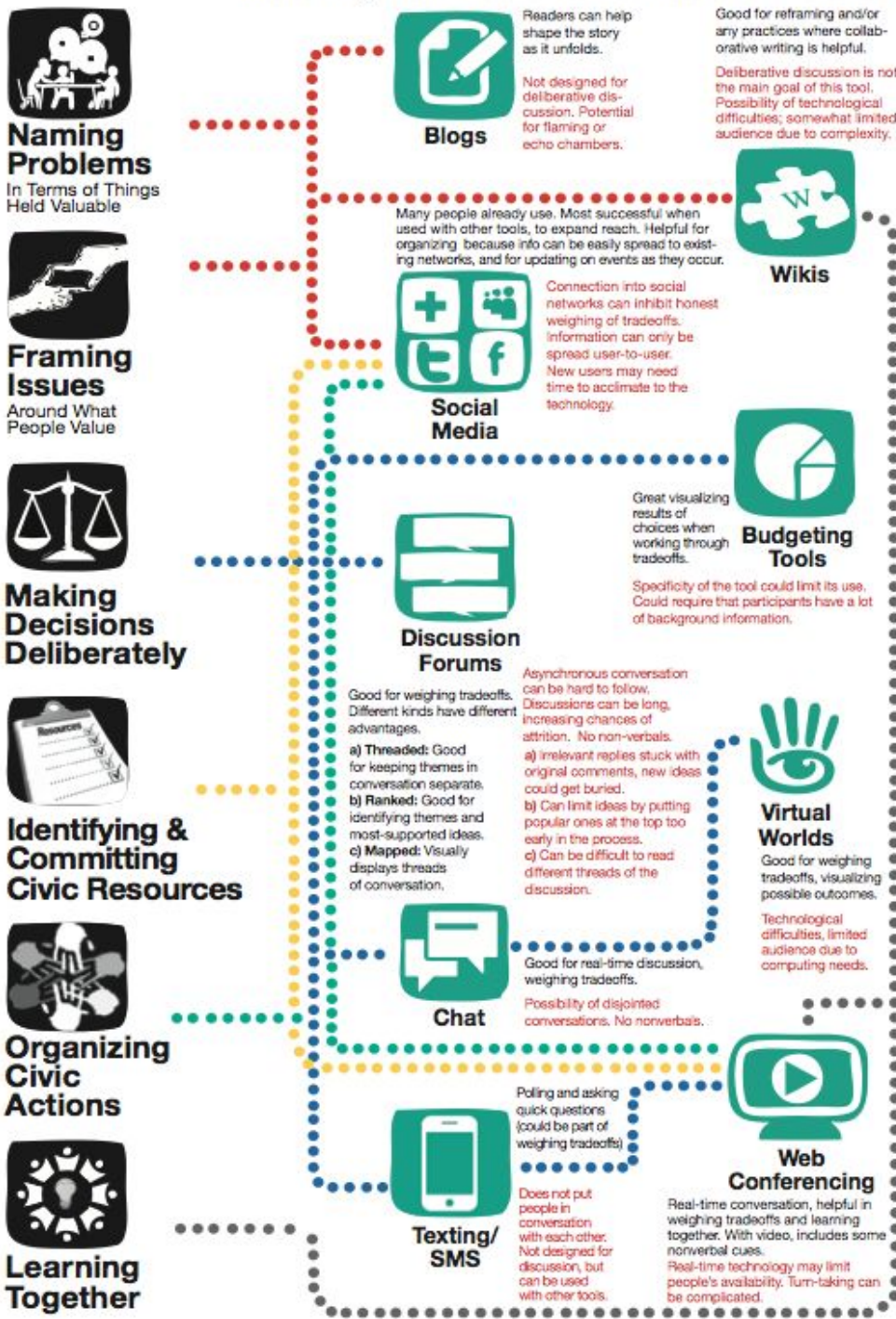
The City of Thunder Bay has previously identified a need to provide splash pads across the City. After the City's Parks & Recreation Open Spaces recommended that the next splash pad be located in Northwood Playfield, the City sought community feedback from residents and the general public on the appropriateness of the location for installation of a splash pad and thoughts on general Northwood Playfield features. To engage community members, the City hosted a public open house at a local youth centre in July 2019. An additional online survey was also made available for those unable to attend the event; the survey was conducted using Bang the Table and made available for roughly one month. Project updates were provided on the project website. Thunder Bay has long been viewed by Little Canada as a city planning model to strive for and highlights the importance of *supplementing* community engagement events with survey feedback instead of *prioritizing* survey data. The two community engagement efforts undertaken by the City of Thunder Bay could also be easily adapted by the City of Little Canada for implementation during or after the pandemic.

# Appendix F

## Tool for Evaluating Community Engagement Tactics

### The Right Tool for the Job

#### ..... Matching New Media To Democratic Practice



ease of use → simple → complex

# Appendix G

## Survey Questions

### Focus Group Questions

1. What is your favorite part about living in the Little Canada community?
2. Do you know anything about the history of Little Canada?  
Is knowing a community's history important to you?
3. What do you believe is the role of a public park to its community?
4. Have you been to Pioneer Park before?  
If so, how often do you visit and what brings you there?
5. What bothers you about Pioneer Park and/or the City of Little Canada?  
How does this affect you?  
What would help alleviate the problem?
6. When you think of your ideal park, what would it look like?  
What features would it have? *Or,*  
What is your favorite park and why?

### Pioneer Park Survey Questions

#### Questions about Pioneer Park *specifically*

1. When was the last time you visited Pioneer Park?
  - a. Within last month
  - b. Within last 6 months
  - c. Within last year
  - d. I have not visited Pioneer Park
2. Do you feel safe when you visit Pioneer Park?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure

3. Do you feel welcome when you visit Pioneer Park?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure
4. What are your top 3 favorite activities to do in a park?
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

5. Of the options below, please choose the top 3 activities/equipment you currently enjoy in Pioneer Park:

Bike Pump Track	Natural Area	Children's Play Area	Basketball Court	Volleyball Court	Outdoor Exercise Equipment
Soccer Field	Multi-Purpose Field	Pavilion/ Covered Shelter Area	Community Room	Walking/ Running Path with Distance Markers	

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is not available in Pioneer Park that you would like to see added?
7. What would make you want to visit Pioneer Park more often?

# Appendix H

## Planning Evaluation Tool

This tool presents Yes or No questions for City planning decision makers to consider when evaluating community feedback - all in the context of the community member's power and position in the decision making process.

**Before answering the following questions, consider:**

1. *Who* is the community member providing input?
  
2. *Where* does the community member exist on the Stakeholder Analysis?

## Section 1: Community Member

### Knowledge

- YES NO Does this community member live in the City of Little Canada?
- YES NO Does this community member live near the area their feedback impacts?
- YES NO Does this community member have a strong relationship to the community?
- YES NO Is this community member a current park user?
- YES NO Was this feedback solicited? *\*Consider whether the input emerged out of a specific community engagement effort or was provided unprompted\**
- YES NO Has this community member given feedback before?

### Power

- YES NO Does this community member currently have power or influence in City decision making?
- YES NO Is this community member part of a stakeholder group that is currently underrepresented in City planning or decision making?
- YES NO Is this community member part of a stakeholder group that is currently underrepresented in the community?

## Section 2: City

### Vision and Plan

- YES NO Is the idea consistent with the park's vision statement?
- YES NO Is the idea consistent with the goals and/or recommendations outlined in the [City of Little Canada Park System Master Plan](#)?
- YES NO Is the idea consistent with the goals and/or recommendations outlined in the [City of Little Canada Strategic Plan](#)?
- YES NO Does this idea fulfill or address multiple City goals and/or recommendations?
- YES NO Does this idea contribute to long-term community needs?

### Maintenance and Funding

- YES NO Does this idea complement existing park elements and/or programs?
- YES NO Does this idea address an existing park amenity that is currently in poor condition?
- YES NO Would maintaining this idea be a reasonable and feasible expense?
- YES NO Does funding for this idea currently exist?
- YES NO Would it be possible to share funds and/or develop or leverage partnerships to make this idea happen?
- YES NO Does this idea have the potential to generate revenue?
- YES NO Will this idea create a revenue stream sufficient enough to justify an initial investment?

### Precedents and Timeline

- YES NO Has this feedback or idea been shared before?
- YES NO Does this feedback or idea relate to previously shared feedback or ideas?
- YES NO Are efforts underway to implement this idea elsewhere and/or in the future?
- YES NO Is this idea time-sensitive? *\*Consider whether the opportunity for implementation will be lost\**

YES NO Is there current enthusiasm for this idea among other community members?

YES NO Is there current enthusiasm for this idea among City staff and officials?

### Section 3: Guiding Definitions

This section refers to the Community Definitions outlined in the RCP Fellows Final Report.

YES NO Does the feedback or idea serve the *Community*?

YES NO Does the feedback or idea promote *Diversity*?

YES NO Does the feedback or idea support notions of *Equity*?

YES NO Is the idea *Accessible*?

YES NO Is the idea *Sustainable*?

Concluding Thoughts / Notes:

# Appendix I

## RCP Fellows Stakeholder Analysis

### Color Key:

Orange: General population groups and community organizations

Pink: Business and government

Green: Sports and recreation

Blue: Housing developments, neighborhoods, and complexes

Yellow: Schools

