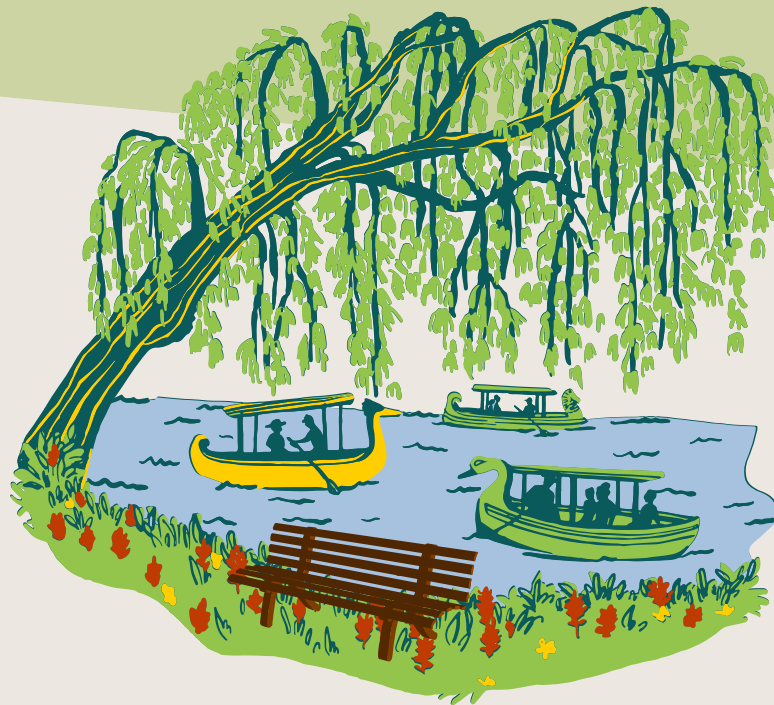


A QUICK GUIDE TO EQUITABLE PARK PLANNING



Introduction to this guide:

Parks are a critical community resource providing space to play, gather, and connect with nature. However, parks are unevenly distributed throughout communities, with advantaged groups enjoying better access to better parks than disadvantaged groups, such as low-income residents and people of color.

This guide is meant to serve as a starting point for community organizations and planners involved in the development of parks to think about the importance of equity in their planning processes. Centering equity in planning and implementation is critical to undoing the discriminatory planning practices that have created the unjust conditions of today.

With conscious equity considerations, we can create safe, healthy, and vibrant communities that serve all of its residents equitably.

The following are tips for developing a robust community engagement process that will lead to more equitable park planning and access to better parks for all.



1. Understand Community Needs

Take time to understand your community's needs and desires, and work with local stakeholders to prioritize. What are the top priorities and how can you work to further those through your project? You can identify and understand community needs and goals by conducting preliminary outreach, such as surveys or listening sessions. You will also need to review existing community plans, such as Open Space and Recreation Plans and Housing Production Plans, to understand your community's most currently documented goals and opportunities.

2. Build Relationships and Trust



Identify respected community leaders and organizations and build rapport with them. This will ensure buy-in on your planning process and outcomes. Partnerships will also help your project become more adaptable to changing community needs and priorities.

3. Prioritize Equitable Engagement

Make strides to center the voices of historically marginalized groups in your planning conversations. Consider the impacts that your project will have on vulnerable populations and welcome their input through targeted outreach. You may need to create outreach materials in multiple languages, make meeting times accessible, and provide opportunities for feedback on your engagement process. The resources and engagement strategies you employ will depend on the needs of your community, so familiarize yourself with the demographics of the area.

4. Align Goals with Community Needs

Work with community leaders and established partners to ensure the goals of your project are reflective of the community's needs. This will ensure support and ownership of the project. It will also create a project that will have the greatest positive impact on your community.



5. Make Participation Easy



Provide incentives and resources to participate in meetings, such as childcare, food, and transportation, making it easier for under resourced community members to attend. Plug into existing community events and provide a variety of opportunities for your community to engage in the planning process and beyond. Make meetings a safe space for participants by creating guidelines for just participation.

For additional resources on inclusive park planning and examples of equitable engagement in park planning processes, please visit the National Recreation and Park Association's Equity in Practice Resource Library via their website at nrpa.org.

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