



Urban Agriculture Activity Plan

Draft Document



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board



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Our Mission

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

Acknowledgments

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Urban Agriculture activity plan is a result of focus and collaboration of Minneapolis residents and park visitors, individuals serving on plan advisory committees, staff, and elected officials. The MPRB Planning division would like to thank all individuals who have contributed their time, effort, and expertise in shaping the content of this plan.

MPRB Commissioners

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Project Advisory Committee

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Paul Martinson
Calvin Noble
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Julia Roessler
Shane Stenzel
Larry Umphrey

Technical Advisory Committee

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Kirsten Saylor
Jane E. Shey
Bertrand Weber
Alicia Uzarek

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INTRODUCTION

Minneapolis boasts an extensive network of non-profit groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and individual residents that support the city's well-established urban agriculture community. Within the last several years, initiatives including *Homegrown Minneapolis* and the City's adoption of an **Urban Agriculture Policy Plan** have expanded the community's ability to grow, process, distribute, consume and compost more healthy, sustainable and local foods. As Policy Plan implementation continues and trends for urban agriculture activities evolve, citywide efforts of this type have helped residents and policymakers develop consensus about the topic of urban agriculture and related food system goals.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan establishes sustainability as a core organizational value and creates the expectation that it will be integrated into everyday work throughout the park system. This direction was based on strong agreement among commissioners, staff and residents that the MPRB should be at the leading edge of sustainability locally and nationally. Urban agriculture is linked to the sustainability of cities, and related activities provide social, economic, environmental, and health benefits as proven by numerous studies.

The Urban Agriculture activity plan is a strategy to further sustainability as a core value and promote the vision and goals of the MPRB Comprehensive Plan. This plan is to be used as a baseline for the MPRB to increase integration of urban agriculture in the parks and guide the investment necessary to sustainably support related activities.

Many of the City's sustainability indicators support the expansion of urban agriculture. Goals and strategies of this activity plan align with city's indicators and follow successful models of park systems nationally to increase public access to healthy foods, make land available for urban agriculture uses, promote organics collection, bolster public education and strengthen public-private relationships. The plan's success is directly tied to improved collaboration with the MPRB's jurisdictional partners: the Minneapolis Public Schools, City of Minneapolis, and Hennepin County.

Delivery goals and related strategies within this plan were shaped by community outreach conducted on a citywide level and therefore reflect stated needs at this scale. The plan's broad framework gives the MPRB the ability to best implement policy, facility, program, or service improvements in response to changing urban conditions. These conditions may include trends in urban agriculture, regional or city demographics, or shifts in community need over the years of plan implementation. Plan implementation and evaluation is the shared responsibility of the MPRB divisions of Planning, Recreation, and Environmental Stewardship.

This plan is to be effective for eight years after adoption and is to be updated after revision of the MPRB Comprehensive Plan.

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WHAT IS Urban Agriculture?

Urban agriculture can be defined as growing food and raising animals in urban environments, and is accompanied by other complementary activities such as processing and distributing food, collecting and reusing food waste, and educating, organizing and employing local residents.

Urban agriculture is integrated in individual communities and neighborhoods, and has become an important factor for the growth, function and management of urban spaces.

The City of Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan notes there is not one accepted definition of urban agriculture and states the term "generally describes the effort of supporting local food production, processing, distribution, and consumption in the urban environment."



REGIONAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN MINNEAPOLIS

- Regional Parks
- Neighborhood Parks





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Glossary

Homegrown Minneapolis: citywide initiative lead by the Minneapolis Health Department and the Minneapolis Sustainability Office dedicated to expanding Minneapolis' ability to grow, process, distribute, eat and compost more healthy, sustainable locally grown foods.

Urban Agriculture Policy Plan: the City of Minneapolis policy plan to guide efforts to improve the growth, sales, distribution, and consumption of healthy, locally grown foods within the city.

Metropolitan Council: the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan region. The Metropolitan Council works with local park agencies to plan, acquire, develop and maintain the regional parks and trails system.

Regional Parks Policy Plan: the Metropolitan Council policy plan for managing and coordinating the regional parks and trails system. The plan is intended to guide local agencies in their management of regional parks within the system, and any changes in usage to existing parks and trails must follow the policies laid out in this document.

Local Food: food grown within 100 miles of the city boundary.

Gardening Matters: local independent organization dedicated to serve community gardeners and their communities.

Community Garden: a garden area within a neighborhood park focused on education, food production or training that directly serves a neighborhood population. The garden is open to the public and collectively maintained by a group of interested individuals.

Edible Landscape: designated area where food-producing plants grow within a park landscape. Fruit and nut trees, shrubs, perennials, or annual plants may be used.

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EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS

The MPRB currently supports urban agriculture through a variety of existing park programs, facilities, and services

Regional parks comprise approximately 75% of the parkland within Minneapolis.



Youth building compost bins at J.D. Rivers Children's Garden.

The park system currently provides programs, facilities and services that directly support urban agriculture activities in Minneapolis. These opportunities are available in all geographic sectors of the city, and are accessible to the high percentage of the city's population living within walking distance of a regional or neighborhood park.

Park facilities, specifically recreation centers, are public spaces where individuals share knowledge, resources, and build strong community connections. Community kitchens within park facilities host classes about nutrition, food preservation, gardening and nature-based education. Through a variety of programs, city youth learn to cook healthy foods and consume a high number of healthy meals annually.

Events in the park system, whether produced by the MPRB or permitted groups, promote recycling and organics collection. A number of park vendors serve healthy, local food using compostable serving ware. Food grown within parks supports child-care programs, beehives on parkland provide urban beekeeping education, and events celebrate food culture and tradition. The parks support a small number of community gardens where paid youth or dedicated volunteers work to grow food and flowers, or simply gather for socializing or passive recreation.

Despite this variety of offerings, the park system has no single facility or park property for exclusive urban agriculture use. This includes parkland reserved for large scale urban food production, such as urban farms. Property within the park system is designated as either a *regional* or *neighborhood* park (see map, page 2). As an implementing agency of the Regional Parks System supported by the Metropolitan Council, the regional parks and trails owned and operated by the MPRB are recreational open space and serve the region's population.

The Metropolitan Council's **Regional Parks Policy Plan** guides local agencies in development of regional parks and trails and encourages the integration of natural-resource conservation into all land-planning decisions. This policy framework guides appropriate land use and allows funding for regional park development, acquisition, maintenance and operations. With the population of the metropolitan area expected to grow nearly a third by 2030, this growth makes preserving land for outdoor recreation and natural spaces within developed cities more difficult, and challenges existing policy when considering large scale agricultural use on regional park property. Conversely, neighborhood parks are highly programmed areas containing multiple park amenities and lack the acreage necessary for large scale food production.

Rough estimates indicate the entire park system receives approximately 22 million visits annually, with regional parks and trails receiving an annual estimated 18 million visits – 48% percent of which are from non-residents. Therefore, residents and those visiting the park system are the primary audiences considered within this plan. The city's youth are specifically considered as the MPRB provides a high level of service to this group and strives to provide healthy food environments to combat the prevalence of childhood obesity.

EXISTING TRENDS AND PROJECTED DEMAND

The Minneapolis urban agriculture community is a complex set of stakeholders that collectively work to expand and increase the security of our local food system. As no single entity coordinates all information about urban agriculture activity citywide, it is difficult to accurately assess the number of people who participate, the total amount of food grown in the city's farms and gardens, or develop a Minneapolis specific metric that can demonstrate comprehensive benefits at a neighborhood or citywide scale. Despite this, numerous studies have demonstrated that urban agriculture activities provide health, social, economic and environmental benefits to urban populations. Our local combination of many different types of food-producing spaces, stakeholders, policies, and resources promote these benefits and have accumulated over time to strengthen interest and demand for urban agriculture activities.

The increase in farmers markets, mini-markets and winter markets, including recent changes to zoning code to support commercial growing on property zoned for industrial use, are working to meet resident needs for local food availability and production. Residents buy locally grown food supplied by the highest concentration of food cooperatives in the country and support businesses that source and serve local ingredients. Participation in community supported agriculture (CSAs), local food resource hubs, food foraging, and raising bees and chickens on public and private land is increasing. These collective efforts reflect a steady level of resident support for the local food system and translate to the high value of our local food economy.

For a large number of residents, growing food within a community garden is their direct link to urban agriculture activities. According to data from Gardening Matters, the demand for community garden space exceeds supply of available community garden land in the metropolitan area. Increasingly, development of community garden space by residents or community based organizations is a successful method to connect to diverse communities, especially new immigrant populations. Of the approximately 192 community gardens in Minneapolis, 70% percent are food-producing. Gardeners are providing donations to community food shelves and other gleaning programs in response to current economic and health conditions. Other trends include community organization and advocacy for long-term access to land, as the vast majority of community gardens or urban farms are located on borrowed land.

Local governments across the nation are landscaping public spaces with fruit trees, vegetables, herbs and edible plants as a method to address social and environmental sustainability goals. This contribution is an excellent way to reduce carbon emissions, improve biodiversity, increase food security and contribute to social and educational activities in service to residents.

Individuals and groups surveyed for this plan stated their primary limitations in practicing urban agriculture are lack of land available, lack of time and resources, and lack of knowledge. Community members commonly cited local government regulations as prohibitive to urban agriculture pursuits. The following plan goals and strategies outline the MPRB's commitment to address these barriers and increase support for urban agriculture activities within the park system.



Minneapolis supports a diverse and growing local food economy.

GOAL ONE:

Park programs and services provide public education, access to healthy foods, and economic support for the local food system.

STRATEGIES

- Increase program offerings related to growing, preparation, and preservation of healthy, local food.
- Implement the MPRB Healthy Foods policy and seek opportunities to increase amount of local food served within park food environments.
- Award contracts to food vendors that procure from local food sources and adopt an organization standard for these requirements.

Food has a direct effect on individual health and the overall well-being of our community. Many residents are faced with the difficult choice between food cost and quality, as much of the affordable food that is readily available is high in calories and low in nutrients. Limited access to healthy food contributes directly to increasing rates of obesity-related chronic diseases and healthcare costs nationwide. These conditions have signaled the need for communities to be more self-sufficient; residents of Minneapolis have responded by increasing their involvement in urban agriculture activities.

When asked to rank the multiple benefits of these activities, Minneapolis residents ranked the connection to health as most important. Residents strongly agreed that the parks must support programs and services that benefit health and should partner with other organizations to satisfy community need. A majority of residents surveyed had experienced cooking, nutrition, or gardening classes in the parks, and frequented park supported events that served healthy foods and composted food waste.

The connection to healthy eating habits and access to healthy food, especially in service to youth, is a natural intersection for parks as approximately 100,000 meals are annually served to youth through ongoing programs. Collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools on food procurement, and implementation of the MPRB Healthy Foods Policy will continue to increase access and availability of healthy meals made with locally grown food. One effort to monitor during implementation of this plan is the initiative to pass a Minnesota Food Charter. Once adopted, this document will guide planning and decision making for communities and policymaking entities to increase public access to healthy, affordable and safe food.

Parks can support procurement of local food by establishing standards for food vendors within the parks. Vendors may be contracted for stand alone regional or neighborhood park events or supply local food for recreation center programs. Procurement standards must align with the City of Minneapolis financial policies and the MPRB Healthy Foods Policy in purchasing and making available more local food for public consumption.

In achieving this goal, residents and park visitors will experience a healthy food environment within parks where they can learn how to support the local food system.

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Implementation and Estimated Investment

The urban agriculture activity plan was developed to work across the organization and has the support of division service delivery groups to uphold core MPRB values and deliver its three goals and associated strategies. Evaluation measures specific to each strategy track progress and mark significant achievements.

STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Increase program offerings related to growing, preparation, and preservation of healthy, local food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number of food related programs and events within parks Equitable geographic distribution of urban agriculture related programs 	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Operating
Implement the MPRB Healthy Foods policy and seek opportunities to increase the amount of local food served within park food environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in volume of food procured from local farmers markets Local food procurement added to Healthy Food Standard within MPRB Recreation Standards 	\$10,000		\$10,000		\$10,000	Operating
Award contracts to food vendors that procure from local food sources and adopt an organization standard for these requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of one-time food vendors serving local foods for MPRB produced events Increase number of ongoing contracts with vendors who serve local foods 		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		Operating

Potential risk factors for this goal include:

- Lack of resident time to participate or awareness of programs offered
- Lack of updated recreation center kitchen amenities needed for program types
- Lack of efficient financial procedure to procure local food

For this goal, the cost of increased program offerings may be offset by cooperating with existing public or private entities that provide urban agriculture education, services and resources. By shifting a percentage of existing park programs offered to this topic area, the general cost of program development and implementation is absorbed within the general operating budget. Opportunities for revenue include increased fee-based program registration, event participation, and rentals of community kitchen facilities.

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GOAL TWO:

Park facility renewal and development fosters urban agriculture activities.

STRATEGIES

- Add flexible outdoor spaces within park master plans for promotion, sale and distribution of local food.
- Explore integration of supportive infrastructure within recreation facilities, including, but not limited to, greenhouses, green roofs and kitchen improvements.
- Expand organics collection and public education efforts within every MPRB owned and operated facility.
- Connect park operations procedures to organics collection, processing, and reuse to improve the health of park soils.
- Collaborate with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to promote organics collection as an expanded public service.

The park system offers a geographic distribution of facilities, each with the potential to connect residents and park visitors to a variety of activities related to urban agriculture. As the parks are public spaces to serve all residents and visitors, it is important that facilities develop flexible public spaces, both indoor and outdoor, where a variety of community needs are supported. Community members surveyed indicate current activities they are primarily engaged in are growing their own food, buying food or products at farmers markets, going to restaurants that serve local food, and composting. In the future, individuals plan on pursuing activities like food preservation, joining a CSA, raising chickens or bees, or simply growing more of their own food and composting the food waste.

As the popularity of farmer's markets increases, there is increased demand for outdoor venues. Outdoor farmers markets need utility access, adequate vendor space, parking availability, management oversight, and support from nearby residents. When considering this type of use within park master plans, design concepts must address how a flexible outdoor venue used to promote sale and distribution of food would also benefit programs and services offered seasonally within the park.

An analysis of current community kitchen use in recreation centers indicates there is additional capacity for hours of use for park programs or community rental. Non-profits or program partners are potential groups in need of community kitchens to host food related programs. The upgrading of kitchen facilities will attract expanded park program use and community rental, and provide capacity for event food service. Other facility improvements to consider will evolve as trends for activities change, but current trends and community response point to high resident interest in greenhouse space, upgraded kitchens, and beehives or gardens on rooftops.

Expansion of organics collection in park facilities will aid in removing unnecessary waste from landfills, provide public education, and promote sustainable practices by contributing to full life cycle of food. Working with Hennepin County and the city of Minneapolis, public education efforts and collection within each park facility will promote awareness and support for this activity while encouraging residents to try composting at home.

There are few organics processing facilities in the region and an increase in parks collection may assist in development of a local processing facility. In working with the city of Minneapolis, collection and processing of organic waste into compost can be connected to operations procedures to build soil health. The environmental benefits provided by healthy soils, primarily to aid in storm water management, underscore park's contribution to the ecological functionality of the city.

In achieving this goal, residents and park visitors connect to and better understand the local food system that supports our community. Expanded organics collection diverts waste from landfills and best practices in land management provide healthier park soils.



Implementation and Estimated Investment

The urban agriculture activity plan was developed to work across the organization and has the support of divisional service delivery groups to uphold core MPRB values and deliver its three goals and associated strategies. Evaluation measures specific to each strategy track progress and mark significant achievements.

STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Add flexible outdoor public spaces within park master plans for promotion, sale and distribution of local food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current outdoor spaces that may be used for this purpose Master plan consideration and inclusion 			\$20,000		\$20,000	Capital
Explore integration of supportive infrastructure within recreation facilities, including, but not limited to, greenhouses, green roofs and kitchen improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase budget for design fees within concept plan consideration 	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	Capital
Expand organics collection and public education efforts within every MPRB owned and operated facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in annual volume of organics collected Increase in number of park facilities supporting organics collection 	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	Operating
Connect park operations procedures to organics collection, processing, and reuse to improve the health of park soils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual yardage of compost added to park soils 		\$10,000		\$10,000		Operating
Collaborate with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to promote organics collection as an expanded public service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative measure 						Operating

Potential risk factors for this goal include:

- Priority for capital improvement funding to replace aging park infrastructure
- Slow rate of return for capital investment
- Consideration of urban agriculture uses and balance of resident priorities when planning new or redeveloping facilities
- Capacity of local organics processing facilities
- Staff resources needed to implement procedures for long-term improvement to park soil health

For this goal, the cost of capital improvements can be sustainability provided over many years when considering facility improvements within park master plans or within development of the MPRB recreation facilities and programs plan begun in 2013. Park operations need the ability to intermittently suspend outdoor athletic or park programs to build soil health within highly used areas.

Opportunities for revenue include market vendor relationships in which a percentage of sales are allocated to parks, parking fees for event venues, or fees collected through increased facility use due to need-based improvements.

GOAL THREE:

Food available on parkland benefits residents, park visitors and the environment.

STRATEGIES

- Modify MPRB Code of Ordinances to allow for public harvest of food produced within edible landscapes.
- Increase edible landscaping; designate park areas where food producing trees, shrubs, and perennials are suitable for public harvest and human consumption.
- Pursue opportunities to promote urban fruit tree growth on parklands and provide for maintenance, harvesting and donation of food produced.
- Expand and promote the opportunity to establish community gardens on tax-forfeited property.
- Develop policy and procedures for establishment of community gardens as an amenity within neighborhood parks to serve the needs of residents and park visitors.

Providing parklands for food production has potential to provide immediate access to healthy foods, improve the city's food security, and benefit the urban environment. Food grown locally reduces air and water pollution related to conventional food production and transportation, and if grown without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, is safer for human consumption.

Currently many individuals and groups forage or glean food from plants on parkland to supplement their diets. The MPRB can legitimize this activity by modifying current ordinance to allow foraging within edible landscapes. Planting new or transitioning existing landscapes to food producing plants, including fruit trees, shrubs, and perennials, will increase food availability and diversify park activities. Park designers should consider areas of low food security, non-motorized transportation routes, and park aesthetics for these landscapes. Other considerations are maintenance requirements and the possible intersection with park programs. Locations selected must consider MPRB integrated pest management (IPM) policy and pesticide application procedures.

The parks should pursue assistance from organizations that promote the use of trees within urban forests for fruit production. Relationships of this type would teach urban residents about the benefits fruit trees provide, expand program offerings regarding maintenance and stewardship, and arrange for donation of gleaned fruit. This strategy aligns with the MPRB sustainability action step of broadening the strategic application of the urban forest and the City goal to increase the number of fruit trees planted annually.

Establishing community gardens within neighborhood parks builds community ties, provides education on healthy food options, increases opportunities for youth education or vocational training, and makes more locally grown food available. Board approval of a policy for community garden establishment will provide clear and consistent direction in response to multiple years of resident requests for this type of amenity. This policy will identify the type of garden allowed, insurance and site requirements, steps for approval, community engagement required, continued maintenance responsibilities and design standards. A community garden amenity must be available to all residents and visitors and not attempt to privatize community owned property for individual gain. For this reason, plot type gardens for individual rent will not be considered within the policy. Adherence to policy and procedures requires staff for program oversight and cooperation from all MPRB divisions for successful establishment of community gardens in the neighborhood parks.

Parks will continue to hold title to tax-forfeited land for community garden use and promote this opportunity through communications channels. Expansion of this program includes annual review of tax forfeited lands available, identification of desired properties, and establishment of a clear procedure, including fees involved, to transfer property title to the parks. This strategy will increase food producing acreage and encourage positive use of vacant land by groups seeking land for food production.

In achieving this goal, food grown on parklands increases availability and food security, and provides environmental benefits such as rainwater absorption, reduced surface temperature, and habitat for birds and insects.



Implementation and Estimated Investment

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STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Modify MPRB Code of Ordinances to allow for public harvest of food produced within edible landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved Code of Ordinances modification 	\$10,000					Operating
Increase edible landscaping; designate park areas where food producing trees, shrubs, and perennials are suitable for public harvest and human consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of park properties with edible landscapes Equitable distribution of designated edible landscapes 		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Capital
Pursue opportunities to promote urban fruit tree growth on parklands and provide for maintenance, harvesting and donation of food produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported amount of food utilized by MPRB programs or donated Number of volunteers involved in cleaning programs 	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000	Operating
Expand and promote the opportunity to establish community gardens on tax-forfeited property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acreage of food producing gardens on tax-forfeited property 	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000				Operating
Develop policy and procedures for establishment of community gardens as an amenity within neighborhood parks to serve the needs of residents and park visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved policy and procedure 		\$15,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	Operating

Potential risk factors for this goal include:

- Lack of desirable tax forfeited lands available for community garden use
- Staff resources necessary to maintain edible landscapes
- Staff resources for policy modification and organization wide procedural changes for compliance
- Conflicting public opinion regarding community gardens as an amenity within neighborhood parks

For this goal, estimated costs are largely operational as park staff would be responsible for developing policy and procedures and supporting programs in which community groups may participate. To fully achieve each strategy of this goal, the MPRB must dedicate staff resources to sustainably coordinate this work organization wide. Opportunities for revenue include administrative fees related to title transfer or grants associated with programs supporting food education or healthy eating initiatives.

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APPENDIX

Community Engagement Summary

Individual and group participants involved in the community engagement process support the adoption of the Urban Agriculture activity plan as a method to promote the community benefits of urban agriculture and contribute to the overall sustainability of the city.

The community engagement phase for this plan took place from November 2012 through February 2013. Opportunities for participation were divided by geographic sector, with an emphasis on focus group discussions with residents in areas of low food security or specific topic interest. Community members were notified of a public meeting schedule, public survey and opportunity to schedule a focus group discussion with project staff using a variety of public communications.

The following summary is divided by major outreach method and outlines community response in narrative format.

Public Survey and Comment

A survey was made available from November 9, 2012 to January 31, 2013. Survey questions reviewed individual interests and values, community values, rating of values statements, and requests for demographic information. Approximately 300 respondents completed the survey with over 95% indicating they lived within Minneapolis. Respondents lived in all areas of the city, with the majority owning their primary residence, between the ages of 18 to 55, and having attained a bachelor's degree.

Most respondents indicated that the activities they were currently engaged in and wanted to continue were buying local food at markets, growing food for consumption, composting, or supporting restaurants that serve locally grown, healthy foods. In the near future half of all respondents expressed a desire to pursue composting, buy a share in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), grow and preserve their own food, and attend events or restaurants that serve or promote local food.

Urban agriculture helps to meet local food needs while promoting multiple benefits for the community. Respondents were asked to rank the multiple benefits of urban agriculture by order of importance to them. Health and environmental benefits were ranked highest, closely followed by social and economic benefits indicating strong support for healthier food options and improved environmental practices.



When asked what limited their practice of urban agriculture in Minneapolis, the top three responses were lack of land available, lack of time available, and lack of resources. A majority of respondents strongly agreed that the MPRB should support programs and services related to urban agriculture within the park system and explore public/private relationships to assist in performing this function. Less than half of respondents said that MPRB currently meets their needs for urban agriculture. Overall survey respondents indicated that there is interest in being more involved in urban agriculture activities and the MPRB has a role to play by providing opportunities for increased education, supportive facilities, and resources to support urban agriculture activities.

Public Meetings

Community response from five public meetings in which approximately 75 individuals participated is presented below. Observed demographic characteristics of participants were majority ages 18-55, majority Caucasian, with primary residence in all major communities of Minneapolis. Small group sessions asked participants the following questions, and each discussion was moderated and recorded by a staff facilitator and co-facilitator. This public forum provided networking opportunities, a personal connection to MRPB project staff, and a method to record in-person feedback to incorporate into plan development. The responses from these meetings reinforced most of the responses received from the survey and provide more detailed answers and explanations about experiences within the community.

Individuals attending public meetings indicated that many of them were already engaged in urban agriculture activities. Their most common activities are growing food for personal consumption, educational activities, composting, and supporting local food sources. When asked what prevents them or their communities from participating in urban agriculture activities they responded by saying lack of space and land, lack of facilities, and lack of knowledge and resources – all areas where MPRB could offer more support and assistance. They specified that MPRB should place a priority on supporting education through programs and opportunities offered, feeding the community by providing local and healthy food options in park environments, and providing improved facilities and land access via policy changes and increased investment.

The participants also indicated that partnerships would be beneficial especially looking to educators like the Minneapolis Public Schools and higher education institutions. It was important to the participants that the MPRB provide education opportunities, especially to youth, about various urban agriculture activities.



Overall the public meetings indicated that there was strong community support for urban agriculture in Minneapolis and MPRB has an important role to play in incorporating healthy food options into people's lives and making resources for urban agriculture more accessible to the public.

Focus Groups

Staff met with 12 community groups in the months of January and February to explore in depth the major topics, or themes, identified through responses in the public meetings and survey.

Each focus group had an informal discussion about the common activities and interests of the group. As background for each group varied, the discussions revealed particular interest or concern and provided more detailed recommendations and priorities for the MPRB plan. A pattern of similar community needs and recommendations emerged despite the dissimilar characteristics of each focus group type.

Primarily, focus groups supported changes to MPRB land use or land use policy to increase production of local food on parklands providing there was an equitable model to do so. Suggested changes include community gardens or edible landscapes on park properties.

Groups indicated a primary need for communities is increased connection, including education about and access to, healthy locally grown foods at affordable prices. Access to healthy foods is especially important in areas of low food security where the park system operates facilities, hosts programs and provides services.

Focus groups outlined a vision of updated recreation facilities acting as dynamic urban agriculture hubs, where programs, facilities and services combined in the public spaces to support healthy lifestyles, community cohesion, and sustainable practices. Facilities improvements discussed included park kitchens, demonstration gardens, greenhouses, green roofs, composting, hosting of events or farmers markets, and edible landscapes.

Programs that would be valuable for individuals include hands-on training to grow, cook, process and compost local foods. Participants highlighted the fact this city is one of diverse food cultures in which vast individual knowledge and resources exist that could be shared with the larger community. Since the MPRB provides multiple programs each year at a low fee or free of cost, participants indicated a higher amount of these programs should be offered or partnerships could increase program availability.

Staff and Technical Advisory Committees

Staff and technical advisory committees met monthly during plan development. These advisory groups volunteered their time and expertise, and played key roles within plan development phases. Individual members represented various community interests and helped to define the broad scope of this topic area to manageable goals and strategies for the park system.

The staff advisory committee was comprised of individuals able to provide insight into how the organization can sustainably address community interests. The technical advisory committee was comprised of individuals engaged in urban agriculture related organizations and pursuits, and provided information about current urban agriculture conditions, trends, and projected demand citywide.

The professional expertise and experience of members within both committees provided valuable information throughout each project phase. Committee members worked to direct outreach, produce and distribute communications, and assist with visioning and prioritization of community themes. They were instrumental in developing the framework of the activity plan including the goals, strategies, evaluation measures and estimated investment necessary for plan implementation.

Related Policy Documents

MPRB Code of Ordinances - Chapter 2, Section 2

Molesting vegetation: No person not an employee of the board shall pick or cut any wild or cultivated flower, or cut, break or in any way injure or deface any tree, shrub or plant within the limits of any park or parkway; nor carry within or out of any park or parkway any wild flower, tree, shrub, plant or any newly plucked branch or portion thereof, or any soil or material of any kind. (Code 1960, As Amend., § 1010.030)

MPRB Board Action

Approved December 18, 2002

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD WOULD LIKE TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF COMMUNITY GARDEN EFFORTS IN MINNEAPOLIS. SUCH SUPPORT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR MISSION OF PROVIDING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS IN OUR CITY, PROMOTES THE USE OF UNDERUTILIZED LAND AS GREEN SPACE, AND PROVIDES A PLACE IN WHICH NEIGHBORS CAN CONGREGATE.

WE, THEREFORE, INITIALLY AUTHORIZE STAFF TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM ON PROPERTY ACQUIRED FROM AVAILABLE SOURCES SUCH AS THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, HENNEPIN COUNTY AND/OR THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS. ACQUISITION OF EACH SUCH PROPERTY WILL BE APPROVED BY THE BOARD. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THERE WILL BE NO NEW NET COST TO THE MPRB.

COMMUNITY GARDEN REQUESTS BY CITIZEN GROUPS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS, AND THE DISTRICT PARK COMMISSIONER. REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE THROUGH THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR PLANNING. APPROPRIATE USE OF SUCH PROPERTY AS A MAINTAINED COMMUNITY GARDEN WILL BE IDENTIFIED THROUGH A USE AGREEMENT WITH THE MPRB.

INSURANCE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GARDEN ACTIVITIES ON SUCH PROPERTY WILL BE PROVIDED BY A SUPPORTIVE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND WILL NAME THE PARK BOARD AS AN ADDITIONAL INSURED.

MPRB Healthy Food Policy

Approved June 5, 2013

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) will provide residents and park users, especially youth, with increased access to healthy foods. The MPRB will actively work to provide a healthy food environment for youth, residents and park users experiencing programs or services within facilities owned and operated by the MPRB. Residents and park users will have access to affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that accommodate various dietary needs and food cultures.

The MPRB has designated three food environments, Healthiest, Healthier and Healthy, to allow flexibility in implementing increased access to healthy foods within recommended nutritional guidelines. All employees responsible for ordering and serving food are required to follow the food environment guidelines when procuring food with MPRB funds.

The criteria standards for these food environments are:

Healthiest Criteria

All foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the recommendations from the USDA Dietary Guidelines and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

Healthier Criteria

Fifty (50) percent of all foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the USDA Dietary Guidelines and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

Healthy Criteria

Fifteen to twenty-five (15-25) percent of all foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the USDA Dietary Guidelines and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

Programs or events serving youth exclusively ages 0-17 years are required to provide a food environment following the Healthiest Criteria.

DEFINITIONS

1. Food Environment: Refers to the three different nutritional criteria standards that are applied to various programs or services provided by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

2. Youth Programming: MPRB provided programming and activities targeted to youth 17 years and younger. Examples include: Youthline, teen nights, Night Owlz, Recreation Plus, and preschool classes.
3. Adult Programs or Community Meetings: MPRB provided programs where participants are 18 years of age and older and MPRB hosted community meetings for adults.
4. Community Events: Any MPRB sponsored meeting, event or gathering where MPRB is procuring and selling food.
5. Snack bars: Food for sale at MPRB owned and operated golf courses and pools.
6. Beverage Vending: Refers to the current contract with beverage vendor.
7. 3rd Party Vendors and Concessionaires: Businesses granted permission to sell food on MPRB property or at events.
8. All other: Refers to any food purchased with MPRB funds not covered above.

PROCEDURES

A. Application

1. This procedure is to be followed by all full and part-time employees and volunteers throughout the MPRB.

B. Employee Responsibilities

1. All Staff responsible for ordering and serving food are required to follow the food environment guidelines when procuring food with MPRB funds.
2. Superintendent: Shall execute administrative procedures that ensure the implementation of and compliance with the Healthy Food Policy. These procedures shall include adoption of current guidelines and the designation of management level and site-based staff responsible for policy implementation.
3. Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents and Directors: Guide and direct policy implementation and compliance.
4. Managers and Supervisors: Establish food environments for their program and service delivery areas if not identified in these procedures under section D following the approved Healthy Food Policy and Procedures.

C. Food Environments/Guidelines

1. The MPRB has designated three food environments to allow flexibility in implementing increased access to healthy foods within recommended nutritional guidelines.
2. All employees responsible for ordering and serving food are required to follow the food environment guidelines when procuring food with MPRB funds.
3. Employees are to identify, under the direction of their Supervisor, which food environment their program/service delivery area falls under.
4. The three environments are as follows:

a. Healthiest Criteria

All foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the following recommendations from the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines (<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/ExecSumm.pdf>) and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

- I. **Foods and Food Components to Reduce:** (Food selection and meal planning ideas can be found at <http://PBLntra> on the Recreation page.)

- i. Sodium
- ii. Saturated fatty acids
- iii. Trans fatty acid consumption
- iv. Solid fats and added sugars
- v. Foods that contain refined grains, especially refined grain foods that contain solid fats, added sugars and sodium

- II. **Foods and Nutrients to Increase:** (Food selection and meal planning ideas can be found at <http://PBLntra> on the Recreation page.)

- i. Servings of fresh vegetables and fruits
- ii. Variety of fresh vegetables, especially dark greens and red and orange vegetables and beans and peas
- iii. Whole-grain intake by replacing refined grains with whole-grains
- iv. Servings of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products such as milk yogurt, cheese or fortified soy beverages
- v. Variety of protein foods including seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts
- vi. Potassium, dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D

b. Healthier Criteria

50% of all foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the USDA Dietary Guidelines <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/ExecSumm.pdf> and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

c. Healthy Criteria

15-25% of all foods procured with MPRB funds will meet or exceed the USDA Dietary Guidelines <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/ExecSumm.pdf> and will strive to meet portion sizes as stated on all pre-packaged foods.

D. Food Environment by Program/Service Delivery

Service Delivery/Program Area	Food Environment			TBD
	Healthiest	Healthier	Healthy	
Youth Programming (Children 17 and under)	X			
Community Events	X			
Recreation Center Concessions	X			
Snack Vending	X			
Adult Programs		X		
Community Meetings	X			
Co-Sponsored Events/Partnerships		X		
Snack Bars – Golf Courses			X	
Snack Bar – Pool		X		
All other areas			X	
Beverage Vending				X
3rd Party Vending				X
3rd Party Concessionaires				X

E. Procurement

1. The MPRB adheres to all applicable State of Minnesota Statutes related to procurement of goods and services as well as all applicable City of Minneapolis procurement policies unless otherwise stipulated by Board policy.
2. Healthy food purchases must follow MPRB Procurement Policies and Procedures.
3. MPRB staff that purchase healthy food from an on-line vendor will have pre-set grocery lists available for their planning needs. When available and if provided with the necessary invoicing/receipting, staff are encouraged to use local farmers markets or local food vendors for procurement. Resources for substitutions, shopping lists for local grocery stores and menu planning tools can be found on the MPRB intranet (PBINTRA, on the Recreation page) to assist staff in navigating the food environment criteria.

F. Miscellaneous

1. Annual monitoring of the USDA guidelines with appropriate recommended updates to the Healthy Food Policy will be done by the Director of Recreation Centers and Programs. Approved changes to the nutritional requirements will be incorporated into new and refresher training sessions Program and participation evaluations will be used to gather public feedback
2. Managers and supervisors are responsible for on-going monitoring of policy adherence.
3. If a food environment has not been established prior to an event/program, procuring staff should follow the Healthier Criteria for their food environment.
4. All contracts where food is served and MPRB funds are used will include Healthy Food Policy compliance requirements.

G. Evaluation

1. The MPRB Recreation Division, in conjunction with the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, will assess the healthy food policy success, nutritional trends and other related issues for three years from the date the policy is adopted.

MPRB Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy

Revised July 24, 2008

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a pest management strategy that focuses on long-term prevention or suppression of pest problems with minimum impact on human health, the environment and non-target organisms. In most cases, IPM is directed at controlling pests that have an economic impact on commercial crops; however, in the instance of mosquito control, IPM is used to control nuisance and potentially dangerous mosquito populations. The guiding principles, management techniques and desired outcomes are similar in all cases.

A number of concepts are vital to the development of a specific IPM policy goal:

1. Integrated pest management is not a predetermined set of practices, but a gradual stepwise process for improving pest management.

2. Integrated pest management programs use a combination of approaches, incorporating the judicious application of ecological principles, management techniques, cultural and biological controls, and chemical methods to keep pests below levels where they cause economic damage. (Laws of MN, 1989)
3. Implementing an integrated pest management program requires a thorough understanding of pests, their life histories, their environmental requirements and natural enemies, as well as establishment of a regular, systematic program for surveying pests, their damage and/or other evidence of their presence. When treatments are necessary, the least toxic and most target-specific plant protectants are chosen.

The four basic principles of IPM used in designing a specific program are:

1. Know your key pests.
2. Plan ahead.
3. Scout regularly.
4. Implement management practices.

Selection of Management Strategies

Selection of Management Strategies pest management techniques include:

- Encouraging naturally occurring biological control.
- Adoption of cultural practices that include cultivating, pruning, fertilizing, maintenance and irrigation practices that reduce pest problems.
- Changing the habitat to make it incompatible with pest development.
- Using alternate plant species or varieties that resist pests.
- Limiting monoculture plantings where possible.
- Selecting plant protectants with a lower toxicity to humans or non-target organisms

The criteria used for selecting management options include:

- Minimization of health risk to employees and users.
- Minimization of environmental impacts (e.g. water quality, non-target organisms).
- Risk reduction (losses to pests, or nuisance/threshold level).
- Ease with which the technique can be incorporated into existing management approaches.
- Cost-effectiveness of the management technique.

Posting of Plant Protectant Applications

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board complies with the city of Minneapolis ordinance regarding pesticide application posting.

At MPRB Golf Courses, posting of applications occurs at the clubhouse check-in so that golfers can make the decision to proceed with their round of golf. Additional posting will be done on the course at the first area treated.

Recordkeeping

MPRB staff will produce and maintain the necessary records of all pest management activities as required by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Yearly paper records will be kept by the District or Golf Course office. Electronic records of all applications began in 2008.

Golf Course Integrated Pest Management

Goal: To develop and implement environmentally sound, integrated pest management for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) golf courses.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and staff members recognize the need to develop and use strategies that effectively manage turf pests on park golf courses and manage those pests in an environmentally sound manner.

Each area will have a turf quality threshold level set for diseases, weeds, insects and other pests. The threshold level will be a percentage figure of turf loss for each defined area on an individual basis. The percentage figure for each defined area is a minimum amount of turf loss that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has agreed to tolerate before plant protectants (i.e. fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, and algaecides) are applied to these defined areas.

Under no circumstances will plant protectants be applied to the golf courses 12 hours prior to or during Junior Golf Programs. These programs include Junior Golf Leagues, Junior Golf Camps, First Tee Programs and other Board approved golf programs geared towards participants 17 years of age and younger. Fast-spreading turf diseases such as Pythium that develop prior to or during scheduled Junior Golf Programs and require immediate attention may necessitate the cancellation of the scheduled Junior Golf Program or moving the program to an alternative play area that will not be treated.

MPRB Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy – continued

Greens

On all regulation putting greens, practice putting greens, practice target greens, and nursery greens, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold range of 0% to 2% percent for turf disease pressure. When it is determined that this threshold percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative fungicide treatment will be applied. In the case of Pythium (a very rapidly evolving turf disease that is triggered by high temperature, high humidity, and high soil moisture), a preventative fungicide treatment will be applied on a 14-to-21 day schedule or until weather conditions change.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 0% for broadleaf and grassy weeds. Since annual blue grass (*Poa annua*) is a high percentage of MPRB putting surfaces, we continue to maintain annual blue grass with the same cultural practices as our bentgrass. Weeds on putting surfaces are spot sprayed as necessary. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold range of 0% to 5% for turf insect pressure. When it is determined that this threshold percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative insecticide treatment will be applied. In the case of insects such as grubs that develop over a cycle of several years, treatment will be applied when the insect is most receptive to control.

Tees

On all regulation tee and practice tee areas, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 25% for turf disease pressure. When it is determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative fungicide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed. In the case of Pythium (a very rapidly evolving turf disease that is triggered by high temperature, high humidity, and high soil moisture), a preventative fungicide treatment will be applied on a 14-to-21 day schedule or until weather conditions change.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 25% for broadleaf and grassy weeds. When it is determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, a post-emergent herbicide will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed. A better option for annual weeds will be to apply a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring to prevent the weeds seeds from successfully sprouting.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 35% for turf insect pressure. When it is determined that this threshold percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative insecticide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed. In the case of insects such as grubs that develop over a cycle of several years, treatment will be applied when the insect is most receptive to control.

Fairways

On all regulation fairways and practice fairway areas, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 30% for turf disease pressure. When it is determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative fungicide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed. In the case of Pythium (a very rapidly evolving turf disease that is triggered by high temperature, high humidity, and high soil moisture), a preventative fungicide treatment will be applied on a 14 to 21 day schedule or until weather conditions change.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold limit of 30% for broadleaf and grassy weeds. When it is determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, a post-emergent herbicide will be applied on a spot spray by location basis, as needed. A better option for annual weeds will be to apply a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring to prevent the weed seeds from successfully sprouting.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 40% for turf insect pressure. When it is determined that this threshold percentage has been reached or exceeded, a curative insecticide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis, as needed. In the case of insects such as grubs that develop over a cycle of several years, treatment will be applied when the insect is most receptive to control.

Roughs

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have set a threshold level of 100% for turf disease pressure on all rough areas. No fungicide applications will be made in rough areas.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 50% for broadleaf and grassy weeds. When it is determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, a post-emergent or pre-emergent herbicide will be applied on a spot spray by location basis, as needed. Noxious weeds will be controlled with either herbicide applications or biological control if available. Weeds listed on the State of Minnesota's Noxious Weed List must be controlled as per state statute.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 100% for turf insects. No insecticides will be applied to rough areas.

Clubhouses and Surrounding Areas

On all turf areas around clubhouses, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 30% for turf disease pressure. When it is determined that this level has been reached or exceeded, a curative fungicide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 40% for broadleaf and grassy weeds. When it is determined that this level has been reached or exceeded, a post-emergent herbicide will be applied on a spot spray by location basis as needed. A better option for annual weeds will be to apply a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring to prevent the weeds from emerging.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 60% for turf insect pressure. When it is determined that this level has been reached or exceeded, a curative insecticide treatment will be applied on a spot spray by location basis, as needed. In the case of insects such as grubs that develop over a cycle of several years, treatment will be applied when the insect is most receptive to control.

Natural Areas/Wildlife Habitat, Out of Play/Perimeter Play

On all out of play/perimeter areas, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold level of 100% for turf disease pressure, 100% for broadleaf and grassy weeds, and 100% for insect pressure. No chemical applications will be made in these areas. However, noxious weeds will be controlled with either herbicide applications or biological control if available. Weeds listed on the State of Minnesota's Noxious Weed List must be controlled as per state statute.

Natural Lakes and Ponds, Artificial Ponds, and Creeks

On all natural/artificial lakes, ponds and creeks, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 100% for aquatic weeds. No chemical applications will be made to these aquatic areas. The exception to this rule will be the case of exotic species whose control is required by state law. In these instances, control measures used will be determined and directed by the Environmental Operations Section.

Garden Integrated Pest Management

Goal: To develop and implement environmentally sound, integrated pest management for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board display gardens and neighborhood park and parkway gardens.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and staff members recognize the need to develop and use strategies that effectively manage pests in gardens and to manage those pests in an environmentally sound manner. Therefore, plant selection and design plays a major role in Integrated Pest Management by putting the right plant in the right place. Careful selection of plant species or cultivars that show resistance to pests will eliminate the need for plant protectant applications.

Within the Minneapolis Park system, both large display gardens and smaller landscape gardens can be enjoyed by the public. Climate bears a strong influence on the presence of pests. For example, during drought seasons, foliar diseases are rarely a problem, but insect populations may be severe. Staff gardeners monitor the gardens for pests and response to these pests is based on the time of the season, existing weather conditions and the presence or absence of natural predators.

Two specialty gardens:

Rose Garden: When large gardens feature a monoculture of plants, such as the Rose Garden, there will be larger populations of pests to control. Timing of biocontrols and low toxicity plant protectants are scheduled in order to prevent intrinsic damage to the roses caused by insects and/or diseases. Currently the two major insect pests dealt with yearly are Japanese Beetle and Rose Midge. If these are not controlled, the insects will effectively destroy the rose blooms. On a regular basis, research with University of Minnesota staff and/or Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff has attempted to release natural predators for these insect pests. Black Spot is the major disease that if not controlled can defoliate and severely weaken the plants. The use of biocontrol agents and lower toxicity insecticides and fungicides is based on weekly monitoring of the garden. The choice of plant protectants to be used will be based on the method of alternating products to avoid pest resistance. The Rose Garden is posted and roped off from public access during any plant protectant applications.

Cowles Conservatory: This is one site where predatory insect controls can be applied, although they may not always be successful. Containing plants in a structure with little air flow can result in ideal conditions for the development of disease and insect pests. To

minimize that, ceiling fans have been installed in all conservatory houses to keep the air moving. Predators, plant protectants with lower toxicity issues and newer biocontrols are the main choices of control in the conservatory and will be used on a spot spray basis. The arches may require occasional preventative control treatments for root rot. Any treatments required are scheduled on Mondays when the conservatory is closed to the public.

Plant Selection for Environmental Design:

Garden plants are selected and/or replaced in order to provide the most disease and insect resistant plantings, thereby reducing plant protectant applications.

Disease Control in Gardens

During wet, humid seasons, diseases can be problematic. However, the incidence of disease issues will vary at the gardens depending on the air flow. Regular monitoring of the gardens is critical in order to locate and handle disease issues promptly. Pruning to increase air flow and adjusting mulch levels are the first control methods. Then, if necessary, biocontrols or low toxicity plant protectants will be applied only a spot spray basis. It is critical to keep updated about disease pests and be ready to respond with the current recommendations from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Insect Control in Gardens

Insect problems can vary from season to season. Gardeners will regularly monitor their gardens for insect pests. Release of predatory insects into an outdoor garden is rarely successful as they naturally disperse from the site. All attempts will be made to control insect pests using biocontrols and lower toxicity plant protectants. Global climate change is causing the introduction of more insect problems into our state that were previously found further south. It is critical that our staff keep updated about these insect pests and be ready to respond with the current recommendations from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Weed Control in Gardens, Shrub Beds and Around Trees

In all gardens, trees and shrub beds, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 100% control of weeds. Weed Control in gardens and shrub beds is primarily handled through mechanical or manual means. However, due to global climate change, increasing populations of tap-rooted and other perennial weeds are being transported into our gardens by birds and other means. Pulling or digging of these weeds is usually not successful. Spot spraying of these tap-rooted weeds with a low toxicity herbicide will help prevent flowering, seeding and further dispersal of these pest weeds. Currently the most critical tap-rooted invasive weeds are Canada Thistle and Mulberry. Appropriate mulching of gardens, trees and shrub beds will help decrease the number of pest weeds. If control of annual weeds in pathway or mulched areas is required, the proper pre or post emergent low toxicity herbicide will be applied on a spot spray basis. Posting of any plant protectant applications occurs at all garden or shrub bed sites prior to the application.

Display Gardens Turf Areas

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 20% for broadleaf and/or grassy weeds in turf areas adjoining display gardens. When it has been determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, the appropriate post emergent or pre-emergent herbicide may be applied, preferably on a spot spray basis. Selection of the appropriate herbicide of choice will be determined by trained staff after evaluating the site, the hazard rating of the product and the specific location. A threshold of 20% for insect and diseases will apply to these turf areas. When that threshold has been reached, spot spray applications with the appropriate plant protectant will be applied.

General Parks and Parkways Integrated Pest Management

Goal: To develop and implement environmentally sound, integrated pest management for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's general park and parkway areas.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and staff members recognize the need to develop and use strategies that effectively manage pests in our general park areas and to manage those pests in an environmentally sound manner.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 50% for broadleaf and/or grassy weeds in turf areas. When it has been determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, the appropriate post emergent or pre-emergent herbicide may be applied, preferably on a spot spray basis. Selection of the appropriate herbicide of choice will be determined by trained staff after evaluating the site, the hazard rating of the product and the specific location. Staff is required to use turf cultural practices other than herbicide applications if weeds and/or other vegetation must be controlled or removed from areas within 100 feet of wading pools or playgrounds. Insect and disease infestations are currently managed on a spot spray basis, as they are usually a rare occurrence.

Further, application of any plant protectant within parks must be timed to minimize contact with park users. Posting of the park site (according to City of Minneapolis posting regulations) to be treated must occur just prior to application and if this park includes a recreation center or building, posting of a sign must occur at the entrance doors.

Natural Lakes and Ponds, Artificial Ponds, and Creeks

On all natural/artificial lakes, ponds and creeks, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 100% for aquatic weeds. No chemical applications will be made to these aquatic areas. The exception to this rule will be the case of exotic species whose control is required by state law. In these instances, control measures used will be determined and directed by the Environmental Operations Section.

Victory Memorial Parkway

This parkway was designed as a memorial drive for the Hennepin County soldiers who lost their lives in service to this country during World War I. Victory Memorial Parkway is maintained at a different threshold for pest control than other parkways. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold of 20% for broadleaf and/or grassy weeds. When it has been determined that this percentage has been reached or exceeded, the appropriate post emergent or pre-emergent herbicide may be applied, preferably on a spot spray basis. Selection of the appropriate herbicide of choice will be determined by trained staff after evaluating the site, the hazard rating of the product and the specific location. Posting of the parkway will occur just prior to the application and neighbors will be notified by postcard a week prior to the scheduled treatment.

Neighborhood Parks Athletic Field Integrated Pest Management Policy

Goal: To develop and implement environmentally sound, integrated pest management for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board athletic fields.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and staff members recognize the need to develop and use strategies that effectively manage turf pests on park athletic fields and to manage those pests in an environmentally sound manner. The MPRB wants to maintain its athletic fields so that park users have a safe and stable site for athletic activities. However, multi-use of these fields and the intensity of their use and lack of turf recovery time will affect the quality of turf. Currently, due to compaction from over use, many of our general park athletic fields have a high population of knotweed, dandelions and annual grassy weeds.

Each athletic field area will have a turf quality threshold level set for diseases, weeds, insects and other pests. The threshold level will be a percentage figure of turf loss for each defined area on an individual basis. The percentage figure for each defined area is a minimum amount of turf loss that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has agreed to tolerate before plant protectants (i.e. fungicides, herbicides, insecticides) are applied to these defined areas. Currently the threshold at our athletic fields is about 70%.

Specialty Sports Turf Complexes

[i.e. Fort Snelling, The Parade, Northeast Athletic, Excel (NSP) Energy Fields, Bob Casey Field at Stewart Park, Bryn Mawr, Bossen, and Pearl Park]

At the Specialty Sports Turf Complexes, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has set a threshold range of 20% for turf insects, weeds or diseases. Once this threshold has been reached, appropriate spot or field wide applications of plant protectants will be made as determined by the manager.

Future Pest Control Issues

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board recognizes that with changes in climate, the environment will be subject to many changes, including the arrival of additional pests within our park system. Following IPM principles, the MPRB trained staff will determine the best management of new pests. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will provide the necessary update training to staff to keep them informed of ongoing pest issues and best IPM practices. Tolerance levels for each pest will be dealt with on a case by case basis. MPRB will work with the appropriate local, state or national agencies to determine the best control approach for these new pests.



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411

612-230-6400 *phone*
612-230-6500 *fax*

www.minneapolisparcs.org

DRAFT