

April 2021 Addendum modifies Goal 3, Strategies 9-12, see full draft document for details.



PARKS FOR ALL

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Executive Summary



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

The following pages represent our agency policy direction based on shared values with community, agency staff and elected officials.

It will provide guidance in developing policy, establishing or changing programs and services, setting the budget and creating park improvements over the next decade.

The goals and strategies were developed in collaboration with community members, agency partners, thought leaders, MPRB staff and elected officials.

For more information on the planning process and to see the full plan, visit bit.ly/MPRBCompPlan.

The Comprehensive Plan consists of a number of key elements that complement and support each other to provide simple, concise direction.

Each part of the plan has a function. The vision statement describes what the organization hopes to become by 2030. The mission articulates why the organization exists. This is supported by the values, which identify how the organization performs its work. Goals represent incremental steps toward accomplishing the vision, and strategies set specific directions that lead to the goals.



Mission

Why MPRB is here

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 of our region including people, plants, and wildlife.

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

Vision

What is the future MPRB is trying to achieve?

Based on the futures outlined in Chapter 1, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's vision for 2030 is as follows: In 2030, the Minneapolis park system embodies equitable park access balanced with ecological health. It is a premier destination that welcomes and captivates people that live, play, work, study in and visit Minneapolis. Natural, cultural, artistic, historical, athletic, and recreational resources cultivate outstanding experiences that break down barriers to health, enjoyment, fun and learning for all people. The park system is equitable, sustainable, cared for, beautiful and safe. It meets the needs of individuals, families and communities across culture, race/ethnicity, language, ability, geography, generation and gender. Natural areas in the system balance thriving habitat and thoughtful, equitable park access. Through storytelling and experience, MPRB fosters pride in park users and staff and cultivates a new generation of proud stewards and supporters of an extraordinary park and recreation system.



North Mississippi Nature Camp

Values

The ways we approach our work and deliver services



Equitable

An equitable park system is one that provides just and fair inclusion for all people across age, race, culture, ability, and gender, but acknowledges that racial equity needs to be the priority in our work to dismantle systemic racism in our city.

An equitable park system honors the unique qualities and needs of each user and neighborhood in design, programming, registration, customer service and management. An equitable park system is shaped by community and staffed by people who reflect the community.

Sustainable

A sustainable park and recreation system is one that cares for resources, whether natural or financial across generations.

Environmental sustainability and an ecological focus on the preservation of parklands, natural areas, waters and the urban forest as well as management, design, operations and programming of parks through practices that mitigate and adapt to climate change. Economic sustainability is focused on the short-term and long-term financial stability of the park system.



Connected

A connected park and recreation system operates with contextual awareness of the larger community, economic, political, and natural systems.

It keeps a regional perspective on natural resource management and engages communities and other agencies and organizations in decision making. Connection also includes physical connection of ecological systems and equitable access to parks through proximity for all Minneapolis residents.



Independent

Independence allows the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to focus on obtaining, retaining, and providing the resources necessary to accomplish its mission.

MPRB ensures parks for all and fosters and retains partnerships to meet the board needs of the community.



Accountable

An accountable park and recreation system is one that stewards community visions toward implementation.

It sustains long-term relationships with the land and community for the betterment of the park system and all living beings. It is a place that creates avenues for employees to engage in decision making and grow and thrive in their workplace.



Innovative

An innovative park and recreation system continually seeks ways to better deliver park and recreation services. Innovation supports responsiveness to changes in community, globally and locally.

An innovative system and its leadership look to national and international inspiration, strives for excellence in all that it does, and relies on data to inform decision making at all levels.



Goals and Strategies

What and How we will accomplish the Vision

Goal 1: Foster belonging and equity

STRATEGIES

- 01** Recognize parks as a unique venue to support the creative sector and celebrate the diversity of our city.
- 02** Connect the stories of park history with the stories of today's park users, projects and staff, and promote them widely.
- 03** Amplify Indigenous stories, histories, cultural practices and connections to land through employment, language in the parks, partnerships, programming, interpretation and community engagement.
- 04** Provide a wide variety of programs in the parks and activities at events to promote social, multi-generational and cross-cultural interaction.
- 05** Identify and remove barriers to park access as a way of fostering economic, psychological, social and cultural resilience.
- 06** Identify and close gaps in environmental education programming opportunities across the city in order to use environmental education as a vehicle for new users to be introduced to the parks.
- 07** Continually convene conversations between those with different priorities for the parks.
- 08** Prioritize youth and seniors in programming through ongoing research and embedding innovation in our culture and practices.
- 09** Continue to evolve community engagement processes to be more inclusive and representative of the diverse populations.
- 10** Amplify senior and youth perspectives as part of park project process and program development.
- 11** Create and market programs specifically for transgender and gender non-binary park users
- 12** Cultivate long-term relationships with community members, leaders, and community and cultural organizations to inform design and programming of parks.



Parks For All and Community Collaborator outreach at the McRae Winter Solstice event.

13

Develop marketing strategies that center outreach to diverse racial and ethnic communities.

14

Expand and create community-led, culturally-specific programming and amenities

15

Leverage the park system's accessibility and community connections as an avenue to uplift and effect social change.

16

Support people's ability to age in place through accessible engagement, programming, facilities and passive, low-impact recreation opportunities.

17

Elevate voices of those most impacted by health disparities to inform policies, programming, activities and services in parks.

18

Embed accessibility and universal design as a fundamental aspect of programming, design of park spaces and facilities, and when making temporary changes to park infrastructure and programming.

19

Grow youth violence prevention efforts, foster collaborative restorative justice, build youth/police relationships and continue building pathways to foster park safety and keep youth from entering the criminal justice system.

20

Create and foster a culture that values gender inclusion, recognizes various gender identities and is respectful and welcoming of transgender and gender nonconforming people through staff, programs, registration and facilities.

21

Provide restroom and other facilities that are safe and welcoming for all visitors regardless of age, ability, gender identity and expression, and religious and cultural identity.

22

Create and support activities and welcoming spaces for tenns and young adults in parks for both programmed and unprogrammed activities

23

Provide meaningful recurring and drop in volunteer opportunities for a variety of abilities that furthers the work of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and fosters connections between neighbors, generations and parks.

24

Empower community to design, create, maintain and steward safe and welcoming parks.

25

Strengthen racial equity as a funding metric across the agency.

26

Improve access to parks and park offerings for a multilingual community.

27

Share narratives and elevate voices beyond dominant cultural context through the development of a public art and memorial collection that reflects the diverse history and current cultural context of our city and park land and that emplots community to increase public art offerings in our parks .

Photo of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board soccer tournament.



Goal 2: Steward a continuum of recreation and nature

STRATEGIES

- 01** **Balance** preservation of historic, cultural and scenic resources with natural resources and contemporary recreational needs in park management and development decisions.
- 02** **Support** both the preservation of higher quality natural areas for ecosystem benefits and access to natural areas for public benefits.
- 03** **Ensure that all water management projects**, including regional stormwater projects, include multiple environmental and recreational benefits.
- 04** **Create, interpret and program** nature-based experiences across the city, especially in parts of the city that don't have access to regional parks, so that all park users are able to recognize the value and benefits of nature.
- 05** **Establish and steward** natural habitat areas in neighborhood parks and prioritize in parts of the city that don't have access to regional parks.

- 06** **Improve overall quality** of multi-use fields and diamonds, including expansion of premier fields throughout the system.
- 07** **Provide** both unprogrammed natural spaces and recreational park amenities throughout the system.
- 08** **Foster a system-wide sustainable trail network** that guides user access to parks, protects core habitat, and curbs erosion.
- 09** **Increase the acreage and quality** of natural landscapes to provide both ecological and recreational benefits.
- 10** **Establish a new vision** for the ecological and transportation potential of the Grand Rounds parkway system.
- 11** **Prioritize new parks** and new park amenities that benefit climate resilience and equitable park access.
- 12** **Invest in nature-centered play** and programming for all ages.

- 13** **Position golf courses** and golf course buildings as welcoming multi-use recreational and ecological facilities.



Children playing on the nature play space at Lake Nokomis.

Goal 3: Provide core services with care

STRATEGIES

01

Balance geographic distribution of programming options to reduce duplication while holding local community preference in balance.

02

Care for existing historic and cultural resources, public art and memorial collection through planning, staffing, inventory, management and conservation.

03

Ensure events remain safe in a densifying city and in the face of violence.

04

Close the loop on park maintenance practices to foster more reuse of park, school, and city generated waste materials.

05

Evaluate all equipment replacements with sustainable technology alternatives in mind.

06

Mitigate urban heat and climate change in park design, planning, programming and management based on industry best practices and innovations.

07

Implement programming that sets the standard for all other youth-serving organizations in the city, and strategically align youth programming to fill gaps in city and other partner agency offerings.

08

Explore avenues for participatory governance and co-creation with community groups.

09

Prioritize acquisition of parkland that completes the Grand Rounds system including Above the Falls Regional Park and Grand Missing Link, park gaps and park expansion areas identified in the Service Area Master Plans to ensure park access for all residents by providing parks within an easy walk from their homes, and to achieve a ratio of .01 acres of parkland per household.

10

Ensure parcels considered for disposition meet at least one of the following listed criteria: removing the parcel does not diminish recreation or environmental function of the park system the parcel is not accessible by the public, the parcel is not part of an adopted park plan or the parcel is specifically identified for disposition in an adopted master plan.



Lake Hiawatha Listening Vessel sculpture

11

Prioritize options of parkland disposition that perpetuate public benefit and financial sustainability, with a focus on other park agencies; public good, such as affordable housing; and Indigenous communities.

12

For disposition of parkland outside of the city, prioritize capitalization that benefits the Minneapolis park system.

13

Position park police practices, equipment, vehicles and language to reflect a community-first relationship.

14

Design and implement parks that are welcoming, playful, beautiful and safe as they age.

15

Increase park staff, safety, programming, operations and design capacity to meet increased demands of park system expansion, including new park acquisition, development, new facilities, increased programs and increased events.

16

Foster excellence in daily maintenance of parks including best practices in waste management, facilities maintenance, and landscaping services.

17

Preserve a dedicated and independent park police department to ensure accountability to park safety/ crime priorities, MPRB-supported policies, and community policing principles.

18

Foster community and staff safety through informed decision-making around crimes and emergencies.

19

Ensure that youth athletics are supported equitably throughout the system through a combination of partnerships, activity councils, and MPRB-led programs.

20

Strive to achieve equitable levels of service across the system

21

Strengthen the specialization of parks throughout the system through the six program pillars and link the system as an interwoven network of facilities and programs.

22

Build and renovate recreation centers with versatility of use as the core principle, large room sizes, ample storage, technology enhancements, sustainable building methods, and comfort in summer heat..

23

Create a vibrant, welcoming and safe environment in recreation centers, through aesthetic upgrades, organization and de-cluttering, enhancing maintenance, a carefully designed entry experience and sight lines, lots of light and windows, and staff customer service training.

24

Encourage, document and reward collaboration and resource sharing between recreation centers and neighborhood and regional parks across the city, as a citywide web of programs and expertise rather than providing all services to all people at all locations.

25

Prevent violence and mitigate impacts on public health, perceptions of safety and safety in the park system.

Youth basketball in Minneapolis Parks



Goal 4: Work from our strengths and determine our role in partnerships

STRATEGIES

- 01** Establish well-defined partnerships with clear goals, evaluated through an equity lens, to increase the MPRB's level of service.
- 02** Increase awareness of and maximize access to MPRB resources, facilities and programs by connecting with schools, libraries, non-profits, businesses and arts organizations
- 03** Leverage partnerships with businesses, sponsors, agencies and nonprofits to fill financial and service gaps in facilities, programs and staffing.
- 04** Establish funding partnerships to subsidize program, permit and rental costs to reduce and eliminate barriers for those with limited financial resources.
- 05** Seek partnerships and sponsorships to support citywide volunteer projects and events.

- 06** Expand educational and programming partnerships with a focus on: environmental and water quality programs; youth education and leadership around climate justice; experiential nature-based programs; culturally relevant programs and events.
- 07** Partner with other government agencies and non-profits to maintain and improve water quality, manage regional and park stormwater, achieve required Clean Water Act standards, and restore natural systems.
- 08** Create a system-wide connections to and through parks for pedestrians and cyclists based on master plans and in collaboration with agency partners.

- 09** Partner with other agencies and leverage agency relationships to further anti-displacement approaches, mitigate the harmful effect of community development projects and capital improvement projects and advocate for housing availability.



High School Girls Hockey at Parade Ice Garden

10

Strengthen relationships with experts and partner organizations who can deliver services for those experiencing homelessness.

11

Continue to enhance partnerships for emergency operations and reinforce staffing and partnership standards that consider safety and maintenance needs before, during and after events.

12

Establish partnerships to provide training and knowledge around public health and human rights issues in the parks such as substance use, mental illnesses and human trafficking so that MPRB staff can recognize and navigate complex issues and know where to access resources.

13

Collaborate with other agencies to share best practices in parks and recreation, governance, community engagement and public service.

14

Advocate for an increase in city, regional and state funding for park, parkway and trail infrastructure.

15

Advocate for new laws, penalties, prevention, intervention around gun violence, including advocating for a ban on guns in park buildings.



Naturalist at Bottineau Park

Goal 5: Expand focus on health equity

STRATEGIES

01

Increase safety at parks through multiple strategies, specifically: master planning and design; activation, including by community partners; lighting; security cameras, with consideration of the balance between safety and identity protection; and enhanced technology for crime prevention, intervention and investigation.

02

Improve the health and well-being of older adults through parks and recreation including chronic disease prevention, food security access and opportunities to establish social connections.

03

Support non-motorized access to parks, including the Grand Rounds.

04

Fill gaps and complete links in bike and pedestrian infrastructure in and around parks, including the Grand Rounds, to provide access and limit conflicts with motorized vehicles.

05

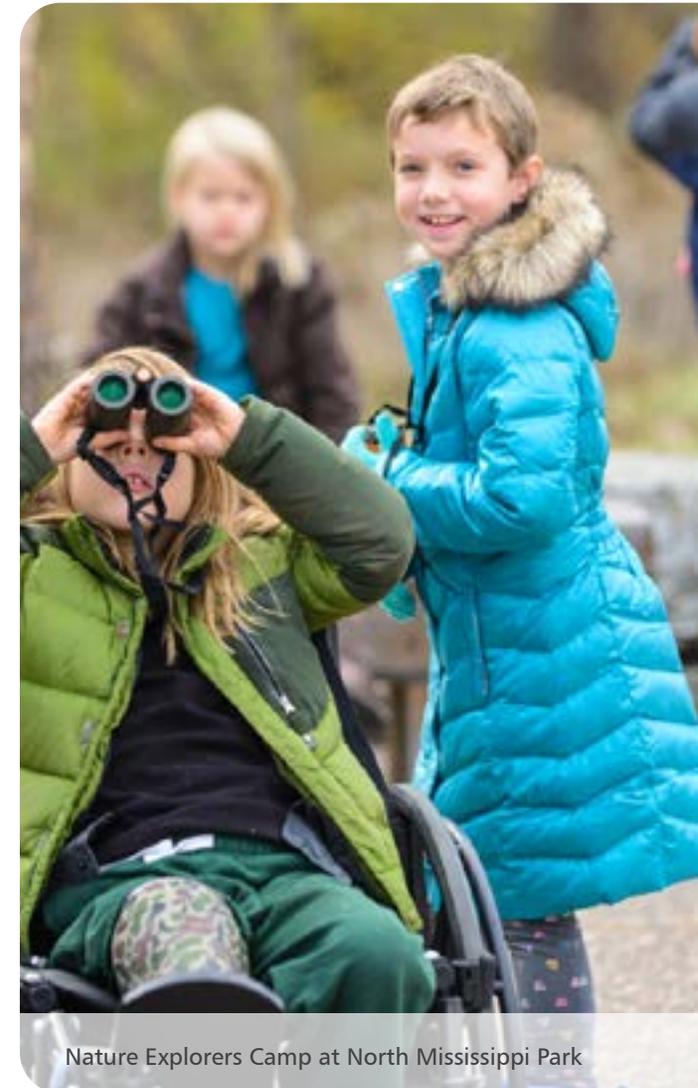
Position parks as a trusted information source on health and wellness by improving links between traditional healthcare organizations and parks and recreation, focusing specifically on: increasing access to public health professionals and support; connecting families and individuals to housing resources; working with partners to address substance abuse disorders and mental illnesses; fostering social connection and mental health; partnering to provide education and techniques on stress relief and management; integrate customized health and wellness options into recreation centers.

06

Support initiatives of park adjacent communities to address crime while respecting surrounding communities and cultures.

07

Examine programming, facilities and accessibility through a health equity lens.



Nature Explorers Camp at North Mississippi Park

08

Provide affordable and desirable programs and activities that promote health and wellness, including bicycle safety training for all ages, pathways for participation in multiple sports, including specialty sports, and connections between youth and safety professionals.

09

Develop a response and intervention plan for mental health crises including suicide in parks.

10

Enhance learn-to-swim opportunities and facilities across the city, especially in under-served communities, by expanding programming and lifeguard training, and promoting youth jobs in aquatics.

11

Manage trails and parkways for both non-motorized recreational and commuter uses.

12

Provide culturally-specific options for health and wellness, considering language, culture, race, age, ability and gender identity.

13

Provide resources in underserved areas of the city for access to public health services and infrastructure, including hygiene facilities.

14

Remain knowledgeable and implement best practices around safe and non-toxic material options for artificial turf fields.

15

Connect a diverse and multi-generational audience to the benefits of urban natural areas, through education, programming and accessible facilities.

16

Encourage and support healthy play for all ages and abilities.

17

Increase opportunities for year-round activity in indoor athletics venues, outdoor recreation offerings and season-extending facilities.

18

Expand healthy food access through increased programming, updated kitchens and additional community gardens, especially where access to food growing space is limited.

19

Address hot weather health risks and invest in cool-down activities and amenities in parks for use during summer heat waves.

20

Enhance connections between the public transit system and the park system, through station placement, promotion, and linking trails.



Logan Park Wading Pool Grand Opening in Northeast Minneapolis

Goal 6: Strengthen ecological connections

STRATEGIES

01

Support a healthy urban ecosystem.

02

Expand natural area protection, restoration and management beyond the nine identified remnant landscapes.

03

Preserve, protect and restore natural areas in parks for the dual purposes of wildlife habitat and human respite and refuge.

04

Enhance habitat and green space connectivity and reduce habitat fragmentation, recognizing the interconnection between street trees and parks.

05

Utilize regional, future-facing, ecological understanding in preserving, stewarding, and improving natural areas, enhancing habitat connectivity, and improving and managing park infrastructure.

06

Preserve and protect animal and plant species, including resident and migratory birds and pollinators.

07

Develop a city-wide, equity-driven tree canopy preservation and enhancement program to mitigate urban heat island effects and improve air quality, ecological connections and the pedestrian experience.

08

Implement strategies to remove and reduce trash and plastic in parks and water bodies.

09

Establish baselines and annual targets for reduction of greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.

10

Increase amount of energy generated from renewable sources.

11

Reduce the acreage of mown turfgrass in the system.

12

Foster meaningful connections to natural spaces in our park system through education, programming, interpretation, experiences, volunteerism and facilities.



JD Rivers Childrens Garden Farmers Market

Goal 7: Connect through communications and technology

STRATEGIES

01

Inspire the next generation of park stewards through education and outreach.

02

Create platforms that showcase positive community stories about the parks.

03

Create and disseminate an inclusive expectation of park use that amplifies the expectation that all communities are welcome.

04

Develop public-facing resources to share data, maps and resources relating specifically to: accessibility of parks and park features; public art and arts programming and events in parks; natural areas; multi-generational park facility and program options; park historical resources; volunteer recruitment; park safety.

05

Educate staff and the community on critical issues facing the city and region, specifically: health and wellness benefits of parks; the benefits of and threats to the urban tree canopy; invasive species management and prevention; climate change impacts and resiliency; shared public responsibility for water quality; indigenous history, rights, culture and perspectives; park safety and security.

06

Create a transparent, centralized process for external partners to interact with MPRB, specifically: artists wishing to teach, work or perform in parks; non-profit and community partners; and volunteers.

07

Expand and evolve historical understanding of parks, park features and the park system through multiple perspectives.

08

Focus communication strategies on connecting and partnering with community rather than informing community.

09

Improve accessibility of print and online communications with the public, including up-to-date use of digital media.



Minnehaha_Chief Little Crow Mask Sculpture

10

Invest in feedback from program users and community members on the creation and implementation of programs that continually reflect community needs.

11

Create a sustainable method for community engagement and outreach to foster awareness of and build trust in the park police.

12

Improve outreach to multilingual communities through interpretation, wayfinding and digital technology.

13

Foster sustainable communications platforms and strategies to better connect and communicate with youth and communities of color.

14

Provide support for tourists and visitors to experience the park system by bike, foot and public transit.

15

Improve communications and promotion of hiring and job opportunities in areas most impacted by gentrification

16

Collect system-wide park user data to aid in decision-making.

17

Clearly communicate to the community the reasons behind safety, operational, technical and budgetary decisions.

18

Streamline internal information sharing, enhance technology access and resolve the internal digital divide to ensure consistent staff access to information and data.

19

Enhance branding of staff uniforms, vehicles, equipment and documents to build public awareness and trust, including in park police.

20

Improve wayfinding between and within neighborhood parks and the regional system, including the Grand Rounds

21

Improve education around trail speed limits, protocols and etiquette.

22

Invest in computer technology hubs to support computer skill building, creative projects, digital and remote programs and job access.



Parks For All and Community Collaborator outreach at the McRae Winter Solstice event.

Goal 8: Cultivate a thriving workforce

STRATEGIES

01

Increase racial diversity among volunteers and seasonal staff by improving communications about and access to opportunities.

02

Incentivize and reduce barriers for minority-owned businesses to provide services to and partner with the MPRB.

03

Create pathways for local hiring surrounding parks, including youth, community organizations and small businesses.

04

Create welcoming and safe workspaces and an inclusive culture for all MPRB employees.

05

Recruit a diversity of staff across all departments and at all levels of leadership that represents the rich racial, cultural and economic diversity of the city.

06

Implement youth programs across the agency that support deliberate career pathways towards full-time employment with livable wages.

07

Recognize community members for their wisdom, insight, and feedback when seeking community input.

08

Improve opportunities and remove barriers to jobs for people experiencing homelessness.

09

Invest in recruitment of aquatics staff who represent the cultural and racial diversity of surrounding neighborhoods and develop learn-to-swim programs to inspire water safety and comfort in diverse communities.

10

Build relationships between youth and park staff across all departments to foster youth employment, development and safety.



Mosaics at Bryant Square Park



Youth tennis at Linden Hills Park

11

Dedicate resources and trained staff to support best practices-driven emergency management planning and implementation.

12

Connect environmental education programs to leadership development and sustainable job opportunities.

13

Grow expertise toward longterm stewardship of natural areas in our parks.

14

Ensure a proactively safe workplace through systems of accountability, training and support.

15

Foster a positive and supportive work community that values work/life balance and creates flexibility in opportunities.

16

Utilize a diverse pool of volunteers to support and strengthen the work of MPRB staff across the organization.

17

Develop and train staff and commissioners on native acknowledgment practices that incorporate the complexities of treaties, tribal differences, personal experience and layered place-based histories.

18

Draw exceptional internal and external employment candidates to MPRB as a celebrated employer.

19

Develop a culture of gender, cultural, racial, generational and linguistic inclusion in a customer service approach across the agency.

20

Prioritize youth leadership and innovation through hiring, shared decision-making, technical training and involvement in community engagement processes.

21

Build agency-wide capacity for self-care and emergency response around public health crises, mental health, violence in parks and trauma.

22

Build capacity for learning and teaching where MPRB park and recreation professionals set the standard of industry excellence locally, nationally, and internationally.

23

Foster equitable park care and programming through staff assignments.



Park users sitting at Bohemian Flats Park

Goal 9: Operate a financially sustainable enterprise

STRATEGIES

01

Research innovative approaches for payment options in order to reduce costs to the community.

02

Develop avenues for community engagement and ownership in Park Board spending.

03

Develop permanent spaces and infrastructure that support safe and economically efficient events within the park system.

04

Consistently apply an equity lens along with a market-driven approach to concessions in parks.

05

Grow ice operations and major athletic venues as enterprises with clear market-driven management.

06

Encourage all staff to take an entrepreneurial approach to MPRB operations and facilities.

07

Explore opportunities for small, local, and minority owned businesses at all parks in the system.

08

Diversify funding streams to leverage existing funding with grants, site-specific revenue generations, sponsorship, and public/private partnerships through an equity lens.

09

Deepen philanthropic relationships to include program support and system-wide park improvements.

10

Create flexible funding and budgeting that always prioritizes core aspects of the agency and supports innovation and expansion.

11

Reimagine Enterprise Fund programs and facilities across the system based on market-driven approaches that balance ecology and recreational uses.



Ice skating at Lake of the Isles