10-Minute Walk Campaign
Urban Land Institute National Study Visit

Grand Rapids, Michigan
March 25-27, 2019
URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

**Mission:** Provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide

**Membership:** Over 42,000 members globally, comprised of land use professionals (developers, designers, financial services, public sector)

Convenings | Research | Best Practices | Education
The 10-Minute Walk Campaign

- National partnership with ULI’s Building Healthy Places Initiative, The Trust for Public Land & the National Recreation and Park Association

- Promoting the bold idea that all people in urban America should live within a 10-minute walk to a high quality park.

- Endorsed by nearly 240 mayors in cities across the United States

Photo c/o Long Island City Partnership
Why Parks?
More than just play alone

Image c/o Ryan P. Cambridge
Economic Impact of Parks

▪ **85% of US residents** identify proximity to parks, playgrounds, open space, or recreation centers as an important factor in their decision of where to live. (National Recreation and Park Association)

▪ High-quality parks are **one of the top factors** that businesses cite in relocation decisions. (NRPA)

▪ **79% of surveyed investors** believe open space can act as a “crucial catalyst for economic development.” (ULI)

▪ Residential properties realize a **10-25% increase** in value the closer they are located to a greenspace. (National Association of Realtors and National Homebuilders Association)
Co-Benefits of Parks

- Strengthen community bonds
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Increase physical activity
- Manage stormwater
- Improve air quality
- Provide spaces for community gathering
- Reduce urban heat island effects
- Improve connectivity and mobility

Photo c/o SWA
Study Visit Sponsor
Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department

- 10-Minute Walk Grantee
  - Promote equitable park access
  - Reduce park deficits
  - Address historical inequities
  - Create and maintain inclusive park spaces
  - Enhance park access

- Geographic Focus
  - The southern/southeast portion of Neighborhoods of Focus, in First and Third Wards
  - Neighborhoods include Baxter, Roosevelt Park, Black Hills, Garfield Park, Southeast Community, and Southeast End
National Experts

Chair: Melani Smith
Senior Director, Transit Oriented Communities, LA Metro
Los Angeles, CA

Rachel Banner
Senior Program Manager, National Recreation and Park Association
Washington, DC

Ryan Cambridge
Planning Practice Leader, Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf
Indianapolis, IN

Juan Cano
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Darryl Ford
Senior Management Analyst, City of Los Angeles Rec & Parks
Los Angeles, CA

Doug Hattaway
Senior Project Manager of Florida Programs, The Trust for Public Land
Tallahassee, FL

Erin Lonoff
Principal, HR&A
New York, NY

Jon Trementozzi
Principal, Landwise
Watertown, MA
**Study Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Taking into account the overall park system in Grand Rapids, where are the logical and creative locations for new parkland that would have the most significant impact towards achieving 10-Minute Walk access goals in the neighborhoods of focus (First and Third Wards)?</td>
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<td>Considering projected land values and growth patterns, what types of policies or financing structures and strategies should be developed to allow the city to quickly acquire land in park deficient areas across the city?</td>
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<td>What criteria should Grand Rapids Parks &amp; Recreation consider when building a decision matrix and an equity-based prioritization process to evaluate parkland acquisition opportunities?</td>
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National Study Visit Process

- Briefing materials
- Tour of the study area
- Stakeholder interviews
- Develop actionable recommendations
- Public Presentation
Integrated Strategy: Parks for All in Grand Rapids

**COMMS**
- Transparent Communications
- Dedicated Staff
- Own Your Successes
- Gather Data
- Park Activation
- Building Trust

**ACCESS**
- Connect into the Network
- Integrate Ecology
- Site Accessibility

**ENGAGEMENT**
- Gathering Data
- Park Activation
- Building Trust

**ACQUISITION**
- What & Where
- Land Evaluation Criteria
- Variety of Land Control Methods
- Collaboration

**FUNDING**
- Successful Millage
- Foundations/Corporations
- Align Capital Investment & Equity
- Operations & Maintenance Funding
SUMMARY - WHAT WE HEARD & OBSERVED

The Positives

- Grand Rapids residents love their parks and think parks deserve to be funded
- The Parks Department is doing a lot with little (incredible cost-efficient capital investments)
- The City is providing a framework for how to incorporate equity in all aspects of the City’s services
- There is a group of dedicated partners in Grand Rapids (i.e. foundations) who can be engaged to help acquire future park assets
- General consensus around which parts of Grand Rapids are least served by existing parks
- Some precedent in the City for “piggybacking” planning efforts together as an innovative way to fund priority projects (i.e. combined parks/stormwater/vital streets)
- City recently underwent a Parks Master Plan that engaged a wide variety of stakeholders and neighborhoods and set a framework for future parks planning.
SUMMARY - WHAT WE HEARD & OBSERVED

The Challenges

- Millage funding is primarily for capital improvements and does not fund Operations & Maintenance beyond pool facilities
- Parks and Recreation department is substantially underfunded and understaffed
- Existing park system has a substantial amount of deferred maintenance
- Parks and recreation is not well equipped to acquire new lands for parks and to this point does not have a clear partner organization to assist them
- Neighborhoods with park deficiencies want more ownership over the park planning process
- Historic mistrust between residents and the city
COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT
Communication and Engagement

Engaged Community is a Connected Community is a Happy Community

- Customer Service
  - Relationship Building
  - Communicate about Successes
- Transparent Communications
- Data Gathering
  - Citywide Survey
  - GIS / Mapping
- Activation
- Evaluation
  - Develop a Process

Parks and Recreation 2017 Strategic Masterplan,
Photo c/o City of Grand Rapids
Communication and Engagement

Customer Service

- **Dedicated Staff for Community Engagement**

- Established Point(s) of Contact to enable Relationship Building

Parks and Recreation 2017 Strategic Masterplan, Photo c/o City of Grand Rapids
Communication and Engagement

Transparent Communication

- “The City defines equity as the condition achieved when people have the **tools, resources and connections necessary to be fully engaged** and prepared to benefit from the opportunities they seek.”

  *2/26/2019 Equity Statement for Strategic Plan*

- Community Engagement is a “Tool”
- Community Engagement is about establishing “Connections”
- Community Engagement is about Trust Building
- **Own your Successes**

*Photo by Lisa Maria Garza*
Communication and Engagement

Data Gathering

- **Annual Citywide Survey**
  - You don’t know what you don’t know
  - You won’t know what you don’t ask

- **GIS and Mapping**
  - Map Activities
    - Survey Responses
  - Identify Gaps

Photo c/o City of Orlando
Communication and Engagement

Activation

Engagement

Good Information

Community Supported

Park Activations
Communication and Engagement

Evaluate and Develop a Process

- Customer Service Focus
- Sustained Community Engagement
- Ongoing & Continuous Input
- Building Trust
PARK ACCESS
Park Access
What We Heard

- Entries to some parks or between parks and other community networks or amenities are blocked, invisible, hard to access
- Connections between parks could be strengthened (e.g. between Roosevelt and Clemente)
- Events/programming are draws into the parks, so need better lighting to encourage attendance and perception of safety
Park Access
Destinations + Walk

- 10 Minute Walk Campaign – a national movement working to ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality park within a ten-minute walk of home.
- Access = Destination (Parks) + the up to ½ mile walk.
- In order for people to make the walk, the destination needs to be there, and the walk needs to be welcoming.
- Must ensure:
  - Safety: Lighting, Crossings, Traffic Calming
  - Barrier Free Access
  - Comfort
  - Accessibility by Multiple Modes
Park Access

Macro – Multimodal Access

- Integrate into/coordinate with the City’s Network Planning
Park Access
Macro – Create New Green Features

- Coordinate with ecological features larger greenway/park connections
Park Access

Micro – Universal Access, Neighborhood Context

- Connections and visibility to/from adjacent community
- New mobility options & services: bike share
- Signage and wayfinding
- Intuitive pathways
- Barrier free access within the space, and on the way to it
- Site lighting
- Access for a wide range of populations, e.g. spaces for seniors, gender neutral restrooms, wheelchair accessible picnic tables
- Restroom access generally

Photo c/o City of Raleigh
Park Access

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Photo by Kelly Wilkinson, IndyStar
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Photo c/o ROMTEC Inc.
ACQUISITION
ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Baseline

- What is Needed and Where
  - Focus on Park Deficient Geographic Areas
  - Proactive discussions with the residents and businesses
  - Need/wants will guide acquisition tactics
  - Existing land uses and limited or non-existent vacant land
  - Small pocket parks also have value
Where to Find the Opportunities

There are limiting factors of the physical environment

- (Mostly) Built Landscape
- New Parks and Expansion of Parks
  - Existing Land Asset Holding Institutions
  - Tax Delinquent Parcels
  - Underutilized or Vacant Sites
- Connectivity
  - Utilities – power, sewer, water lines
  - Railroads – rail w/trail
  - Natural Features – waterways
  - Intermodal – bikeways, greenways, transit

Photos by Doug Hattaway (top, right)
Land Evaluation Criteria

Nominated and Voluntary

- Neighborhood Support
  - Size, uses, buy-in
- Broad Community Access
  - Intermodal Connectivity
  - Biking, Walking, Busing
- Furthers other City Vision/Goals
- Income Indicators
- Health Indicators
- Visible Locations
- Natural/Historical Features
- For Sale?
- Joint Uses
  - Funding Partners, Complementary Uses

Photos by Annie Bang, Karen Clarke, The Trust for Public Land, and Allana/Wesley White (left to right)
Land Control Methods

It is not all or nothing

- Fee Simple
- Easements
- Licenses, Leases
- Land Swaps
- Right of First Refusal

Photos c/o The Trust for Public Land
Acquisition Collaboration

You’re not alone in land needs

- Economic Development
- Land Rich Institutions
- Shared Use Agreements
- Utility Companies
- Land Banking
- Land Trusts

Photo by Peter Dooling
Example Case Study

KCDC Drainage Basin - 4.6 acres
Example Case Study

KCDC Drainage Basin - 4.6 acres

Flex Lawn w/ Subsurface Stormwater Storage
Bioswale
Rain Garden (pre-treatment)

Site Plan by Ryan Cambridge
Example Case Study

KCDC Drainage Basin - 4.6 acres

Flex Lawn w/ Subsurface Stormwater Storage

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Rain Garden (pre-treatment)

Site plan by Ryan Cambridge
Example Case Study

Trails and Tails Park
(Doral, FL)

- 9 acres of undeveloped, privately owned greenspace in underserved area
- Full of invasive species (and refrigerators)
- Beneath major transmission line w/ easement (FPL)
Example Case Study
Trails and Tails Park
(Doral, FL)

- Holds stormwater runoff from over 200 homes to the north
Example Case Study

Trails and Tails Park
(Doral, FL)

- 2.3 acres of subsurface stormwater storage, totaling more than 2,500,000 gallons

Photo c/o City of Doral, FL
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
Capital Funding

The millage has been successful in creating a new and significant funding stream.

- Approximately $3M (75%) go to capital park projects, providing much needed investments throughout the city.
Capital Funding

The City may be able to tap into other sources for more capital dollars, namely foundations and corporate sponsorship.

- Today there are already key partnerships between foundations and parks.
- In order to appeal to a foundation/corporation, the ask needs to be:
  - Specific
  - Align with the foundation’s mission
  - Visionary to inspire donations; cannot be a run-of-the-mill City project
Today, capital funds are allocated across the city loosely based on a per/acre basis. This results in less than “fair-share” funding going to Ward 3.

Minneapolis Alternative: Clear equity metrics to guide capital investments.

Looking to the future, there is an opportunity to align capital investment decisions with equity.
Most of the millage funding goes to capital investments, with ~$1M (25%) going to operate and maintain pools.

Today, the Parks Department does a lot with very little.

- Parks O&M is underfunded by $3.25M.

The Parks Strategic Master Plan sets a goal of enhancing operations and maintenance across parks, growing the percentage of parks at maintenance levels of service of A and B grades.

- National average spending/acre of cities pop. 100K-250K: $5.4K
- GR systemwide average spending/acre: ~$4K
- Martin Luther King Park spending/acre: $7K
- Plaster Creek Family Park spending/acre: $2.4K
- Campau Park spending/acre: $2K
Operations and Maintenance
How can the City grow its parks operating revenue?

- Earned Income
- Contributed Income
- Value Capture
- Public Funding
Operations and Maintenance

Beyond a revenue source, earned income is often tied to important activation strategies that enliven parks and open spaces.

- Concessions
  - Are there parks that have needs today?
- Events
  - Opportunity to rotate large-scale events so parks across the city are being activated?
- Parking?
  - Does the State’s nexus requirement limit opportunity to leverage these funds?

**Key Consideration**: Need to consider ramifications of increasing fees, ticketed events, pricing of concessions, etc. with creating a welcoming space for all socioeconomic levels.
Operations and Maintenance
Today, Friends of Grand Rapids is a great resource; other philanthropic sources may be limited.

- Opportunities:
  - Specific programs that tie to a foundation’s mission (e.g. an environmental education class)
  - Corporate sponsorship for events or seasonal uses (e.g. ice rink)

Key Consideration: It is challenging to make a compelling story to donors to cover general maintenance costs.
Operations and Maintenance

Parks spur growth and create value; how can Grand Rapids capture value from these investments?

- Value capture most often relates to real estate value, but could leverage other benefits (e.g. increased retail sales)
- Today, State law does not allow for park impact fees
- Are there other developer incentives that could be leveraged?
  - Neighborhood Association Fee
  - BID/PID
  - TIF
  - Density bonuses for community benefits

Key Consideration: The City needs to balance economic development and inclusive growth.
Operations and Maintenance

Given the relative limitations of other sources, public funding will need to be a significant driver for operating revenue sources for parks.

- If there is broad public support:
  - Grow the millage for operation and maintenance
  - Create flexibility in the millage split between capital and O&M funding
Key Action Items

- **Promote Accomplishments & Own Successes**
- **Secure long-term funding** for operations, maintenance and general staff capacity
- **Hire a Community Engagement Specialist** to develop a community listening process
- **Create strong partnership** for land acquisition and capital improvements
- Prioritize acquisitions for **long-term, inclusive economic development but work with partners** and other city agencies to accomplish goals (e.g. Land Banking)
Integrated Strategy: Parks for All in Grand Rapids

COMMS+
ENGAGEMENT

ACCESS

ACQUISITION

FUNDING

Transparent Communications
Dedicated Staff
Own Your Successes
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Connect into the Network
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What & Where
Land Evaluation Criteria
Variety of Land Control Methods
Collaboration

Successful Millage
Foundations/Corporations
Align Capital Investment & Equity
Ops & Maintenance Funding
Questions and Comments?
Thank You
POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

Acquisition Mapping Effort

We recommend geolocation mapping of the following items:

- Land Values (assessor’s data and land sales transactions)
- Future population and household growth (5-year projections)
- Major land owners (e.g. institutions, universities, churches, utilities, etc.)
- Growth Corridors, planned major infrastructure projects
- Household car ownership by census tract