



Cedar Lake & Lake of the Isles Master Plan

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

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PHASE 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During Phase 1 of implementing community engagement for the Cedar Lake & Lake of the Isles Master Plan, there were a number of methods employed in order to gather community input on issues and opportunities that exist around the lakes today. The following is a summary of the events and methods for gathering community input, as well as summaries of the feedback gathered.



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During Phase 1 of community engagement for the Cedar Lake & Lake of the Isles Master Plan (Cedar-Isles), there were a number of methods employed to gather resident input on the vision and opportunities that exist around the lakes today. As outlined in the Cedar-Isles [Community Engagement Plan](#), the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) staff outlined engagement goals to reach a broad range of people and demographics during this phase of the project.

The following report outlines themes, findings, and quotes from the different engagement strategies that were implemented between Winter 2019 and Summer 2021. General demographic information about the audiences reached is shared within each section of the document. Due to the engagement barriers experienced in 2020 during the COVID-19 global pandemic, staff made the decision to extend the original engagement timeline that would have ended in Winter 2020 through Summer 2021. This extension ensured staff could spend additional time speaking engaging with a broad audience of community members about their vision for this area of the park system.

To see a full breakdown of survey demographics from Winter 2020, which drove MPRB's decision to extend engagement, watch our video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmc2gK5xmyU>

Virtual Engagement



When the Cedar-Isles process was launched in Winter 2019, an **online survey** was publicly shared through Gov Delivery, direct emails to community partners, social media posts, mailers to adjacent residents, and signage at MPRB parks around the city.

During the same time period, staff also introduced an **online mapping tool** that allowed residents to share location-specific responses of 'favorite memories', 'things that currently work well', 'concerns', and 'ideas' for the area.

In March 2020, MPRB staff made the decision to add Dean Parkway to the master plan project area. With the addition of this parkland, staff also distributed an **online Dean Parkway-specific survey** through Gov Delivery, direct emails to community partners, mailers, and social media posts.

Additionally, staff hosted a **series of online listening sessions** in 2020 and 2021 where residents could ask questions and share their feedback. The final online event wrapped up in May 2021 and the online feedback tools remained open until July 15th, 2021.

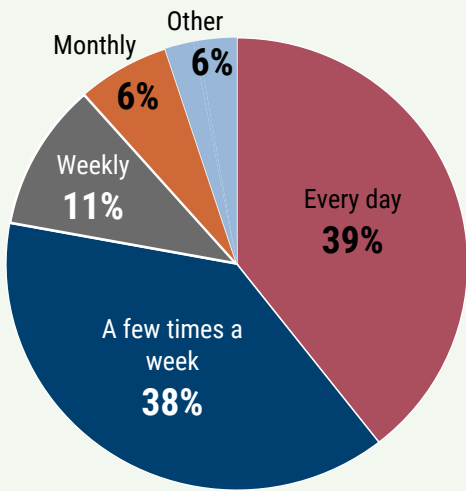


Survey participants who took the Cedar-Isles and Dean Parkway surveys had the option to share demographic information. Six out of ten online survey participants responded to demographic questions. The majority of people who responded reported living in close proximity to the area and visit the park system regularly.

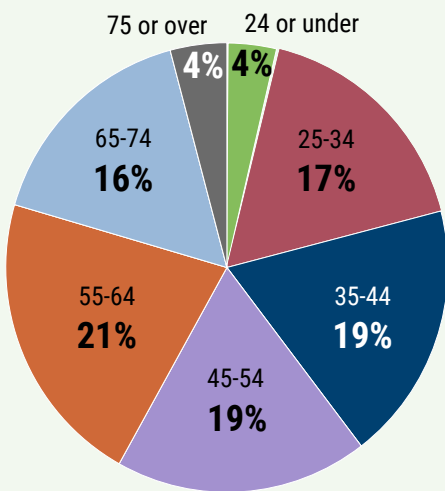
The following is a summary of major **themes** and **comments** collected throughout the online engagement process. Themes in **bold** appeared the most frequently.

General Themes

- » **Appreciation for what is already at these parks**
- » **Appreciation that it is a hidden gem in the middle of an urban area**
- » **Value for it being a place where one can find solitude**
- » Concern that the proposed plans will change too much of an area that doesn't need changing
- » Appreciation for the wildlife that calls this area home



How often Cedar-Isles survey respondents reported they visited the area



Reported ages of Cedar-Isles survey respondents

52% of respondents indicated they received a graduate degree

4 out of 5 of respondents reported owning their own home

Theme 1: Water Quality

- » **Concern with poor water quality in this area**
- » **Interest in improving the water quality of both lakes**
- » Address shoreline erosion
- » Address runoff from surrounding yards and streets
- » Increase removal of aquatic invasive species
- » Concern about future algae blooms
- » Interest in adding more shoreline plantings
- » Interest in improving the storm drainage system

“The JOY of this place is easy access to clean water for all, I hope this is prioritized..!”

“Deterioration of water quality in Cedar Lake presents a public health & wildlife crisis.”

“[Water quality] is my #1 and growing concern. Everything else is secondary.”

Theme 2: Natural Areas

- » **Strong interest in preserving the natural and forested areas**
- » **Interest in expanding the current natural and forested areas**
- » **Preserve the trees, especially the old growth trees**
- » **Add additional trees to balance loss of trees in other areas (Southwest Lightrail (SWLRT) construction, natural events)**
- » **Add more native plants**
- » Protect and increase wildlife and habitat corridors
- » Preserve areas of solitude
- » Preserve the natural paths around portions of Cedar Lake
- » Concern with the health of the current trees and shoreline
- » Address safety in natural areas
- » Restore soil health and remove invasive species
- » Interest in MPRB acquiring “remnant lands” adjacent to the NE woods of Cedar Lake
- » Preserve views to the lakes, especially at Lake of the Isles
- » Concern that overuse of parkland has negatively impacted nature
- » Plant trees that can feed wildlife and people (apples, etc)
- » Concern that the amount of turf grass is not sustainable
- » Request that homeowners on Cedar Lake plant native plants
- » Plan should address climate change



Winter at Cedar Lake.



Summer at East Cedar Beach.

- » Concern about the loss of green space
- » Interest in wetland restoration
- » Create visual/sound barriers between SWLRT and parkland

“We need places like this that allow us to disconnect from the city and be truly surrounded by nature, with the ability to be “alone” in nature. That is rare and hard to find, and so good for our health”

“Keep it natural!”

“A green natural oasis for people and animals to rest and recharge in nature.”

“Vision includes, “expanded marsh and wetlands teeming with wildlife...less lawn, [and] contemporary pathways...respectfully coordinated with restored ecological areas.”

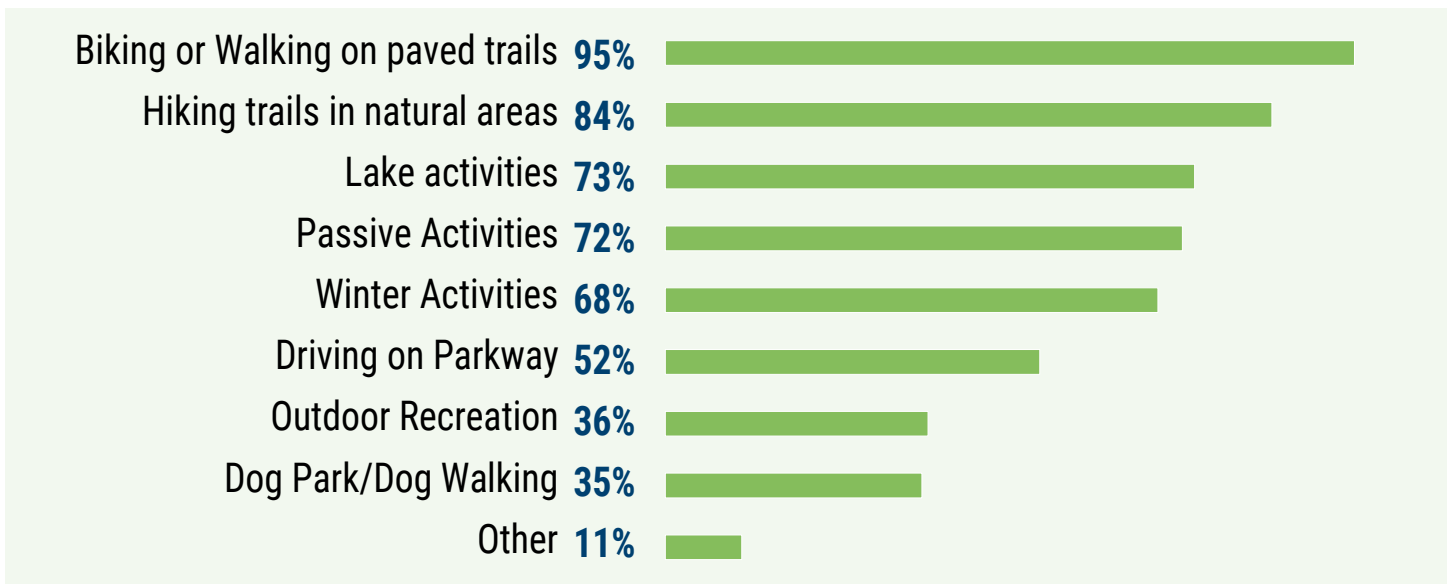
“Maintain what we have and add value to combat the effects of climate change.”

Theme 3: Use of Space

PROGRAMMING

- » **Strong appreciation for current programming and activities**
- » **Appreciation for green and open spaces**
- » **Interest in preserving open spaces to allow for flexible and organic uses**
- » **Concern with current crowding in the parks** ***many note this has been worse since the beginning of COVID-19*
- » Desire to honor past visions with the future plan: ie Dakota legacy, Wirth/Cleveland vision, “Hidden Beach” culture
- » Interest in focusing on activities that don’t need additional

Activities that survey respondents reported doing while visiting the Cedar-Isles area



built infrastructure such as art shows, education nature events, community gardens, exercise classes, walking tours, etc.

- » Interest in adding formalized gathering spaces for outdoor performances, food, etc.
- » New play options for children (playground, nature play areas)
- » Interest in increasing access to water activities (ie more kayak/canoe storage, docks, boat launches, closer boat rental)
- » New activities for people with dogs (dog swimming area, another dog park, etc.)
- » Do not add more activities or programming
- » Add a sand volleyball court near the Lagoon
- » Consider adding more grass areas
- » Do not add more lighting
- » Concern with people jumping off of the bridges
- » Provide winter rentals (snowshoes, skates, etc.)
- » Decrease amount of programming in this area
- » Program the space near the lightrail to prevent overuse of adjacent natural areas

"I am concerned that there will be too much of a human hand involved in designing contemporary spaces. I love community-centered design; however, I hope that the Cedar Lake area in particular is able to maintain its feeling of wildness."

"I envision...camps for underprivileged populations using these parts of these lakes as a learning resource/discovery platform and more community-minded events: larger scale public gardening opportunities...voter registration...book collections...hot-chocolate pop-up..."

"Some park resources, especially bathrooms, water fountains, and kayak storage and access. Clean water, many kinds of recreation for many kinds of people."

"Restore native vegetation, especially around Cedar Lake. Improve picnic areas and create a clearer delineation between recreational areas and preserve areas."

"I hope the addition of the new light rail through Kenilworth won't be too disruptive of that peaceful area."

Built Infrastructure

- » **Strong interest in improving maintenance of trails, roads, beaches, and other infrastructure**
- » **Limit new development**
- » **Interest in adding more amenities at key locations (ie benches, picnic tables, bathrooms, water fountains, food trucks, bike racks)**
- » Interest in maintaining existing or adding new infrastructure for recreation, including skiing, kayaking, swimming, fishing, ice skating, mountain biking, running, walking, fitness equipment
- » Do not build any new buildings; do not add additional pavement
- » Maintain the existing parking as is
- » Remove parking



People with their dogs at Lake of the Isles.



Place of solitude at Cedar Lake.

- » Appreciation of trails for recreation and commuting; roads for commuting
- » Suggest consideration of making warming house on Lake of Isles a permanent year-round amenity
- » Enjoyment in viewing the homes around Lake of the Isles

“There is a need for more bicycle amenities throughout the area. There are few places to lock-up a bike...A bicycle repair station would be a nice addition at key connection point too. Outdoor fitness equipment, like pull up bars, would be nice as well.”

“Racially [East Cedar Beach] is very diverse and is one of the few places where we feel we belong. My only concern is that if this place will be developed it will take all this away. But if development must happen, please make sure it doesn't add restrictions to the users...The natural, undesigned feeling allows this diversity.”

THEME 4: Circulation & Access

Circulation

- » **Strong appreciation for existing walking and biking network**
- » **Interest in improving safety for pedestrians/bicyclists at intersections and improving choke points along paths**
- » **Interest in reducing or slowing vehicle traffic on the parkways**
- » **Consider narrowing or closing parkway to cars (temporarily or permanently)**
- » **Consideration of a walk and/or bike trail around Cedar Lake (paved or natural path)**
- » **Improve trail maintenance**
- » Interest in not changing the parkway, maintaining as is
- » Maintain or enhance trail connections to Brownie Lake and other surrounding areas
- » Acknowledgment of and/or interest in designing for additional visitors due to the future SWLRT
- » Concern with impact to paths near East Cedar Beach due to new SWLRT line
- » Preserve the natural trails
- » Prioritize walk and bike infrastructure over vehicle infrastructure
- » Concern with pollution or congestion from vehicles
- » Concern about camps for unhoused residents
- » Do not build a path around Cedar Lake (at all, or specifically paved)
- » Interest in widening walking and biking trails
- » Limit/remove trails to create less human impact to site
- » Do not add mountain bike trails
- » Appreciation for existing separation of walking and biking paths and infrastructure
- » Add mountain bike trails
- » Consider adding a bridge over the narrow part of Lake of the Isles
- » Expand connections to mass transit
- » Address biker/pedestrian conflict (speeding, not following rules)

“I would hope that there will continue to be seamless access to St. Louis Park and suburbs west of Minneapolis on these wonderful trails”

“Walking and bike paths are upgraded to be contoured in a way to prevent puddles forming and creating ice hazards in winter or needing to go off track around puddles at other times of the year. Also, that these paths are kept in good repair on a yearly schedule.

“I think that Cedar Lake Parkway should be closed to traffic and eventually be turned into a green space for walking/biking/non-motorized traffic only.”

Access

- » **Strong appreciation for existing recreation and activities available in the area**
- » **Concern with safety, at night and/or in the forested areas**
- » **Concern that parkland on the eastern shore of Cedar Lake is not currently accessible to the public**
- » Noted lack of parking, specifically related to kayak/canoe access points
- » Increase paved access points around parkland for seniors
- » Interest in having access between the lakes along the Kenilworth Channel
- » Add wayfinding or educational signage
- » Increase access to area for people who don't already visit

"I am most concerned that it be kept open, accessible, well-maintained and safe as a community resource for everyone. It GREATLY enhances the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhoods and whole city!"

"Safety has become a big concern recently. I am also concerned the rail line will dramatically change the area for the worse"

"Adequate lighting on trails for safety (especially at night), some areas are quite dark."

I would like good signage to accompany the new 21st street light-rail to point people to swimming and walking paths. This station is an opportunity to make our parks more inclusive. I also strongly hope we will nurture and our wild woods and plant as many new trees as possible.

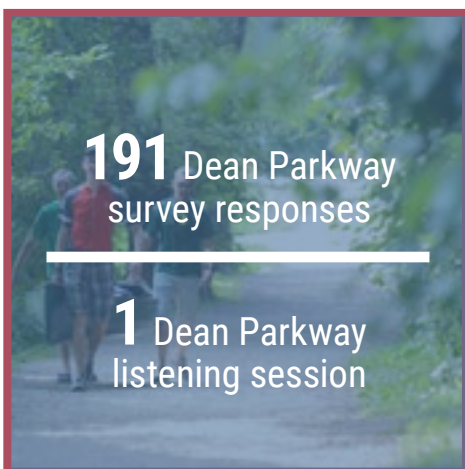
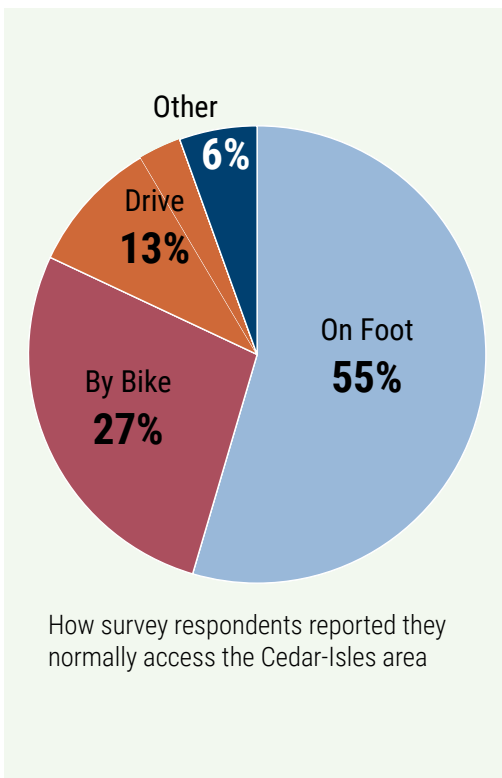
Miscellaneous Comments

- » Hope that MPRB "doesn't mess this up"
- » Design to center Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities
- » MPRB doesn't listen to community
- » Invest in less affluent parts of the city instead of this area

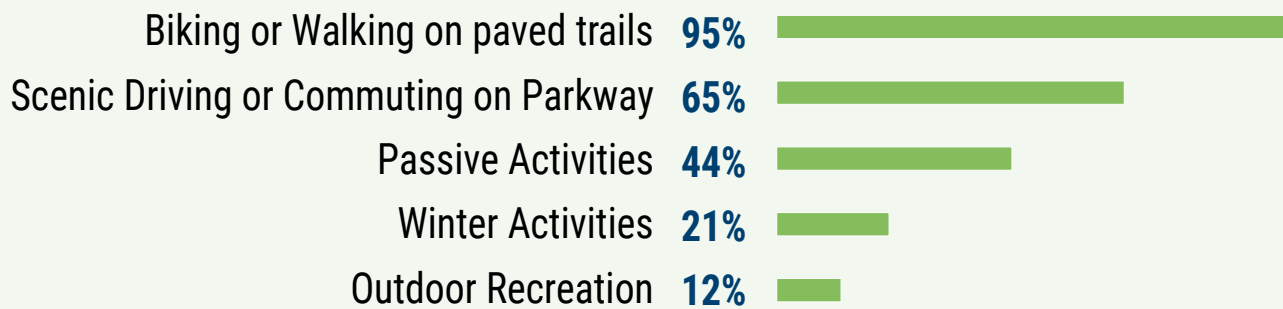
Dean Parkway

Dean Parkway was added to the master plan project area later in the engagement process in March 2020. Due to this update, staff implemented a Dean Parkway-specific survey, listening session, and communication. For this reason, feedback has been compiled and shared separately.

Similar to the Cedar-Isles online survey demographics, the majority of folks who responded to the Dean Parkway survey reported living in close proximity to the area and/or is a regular visitor of this part of the park system.



Activities that survey respondents reported doing while visiting Dean Parkway



The following is a summary of major **themes** and **comments** collected throughout the online engagement process. Themes in **bold** appeared the most often throughout the survey results.

General Themes

- » **Appreciation for what currently exists here**
- » **This area already works as is, no need to change anything**
- » Enjoyment in viewing the historic homes around Dean Parkway
- » Concern that too much change will destroy current vibe of area
- » Appreciation that it is a quiet area away from busy city life
- » Design more spaces like this in the park system
- » Preserve quietness

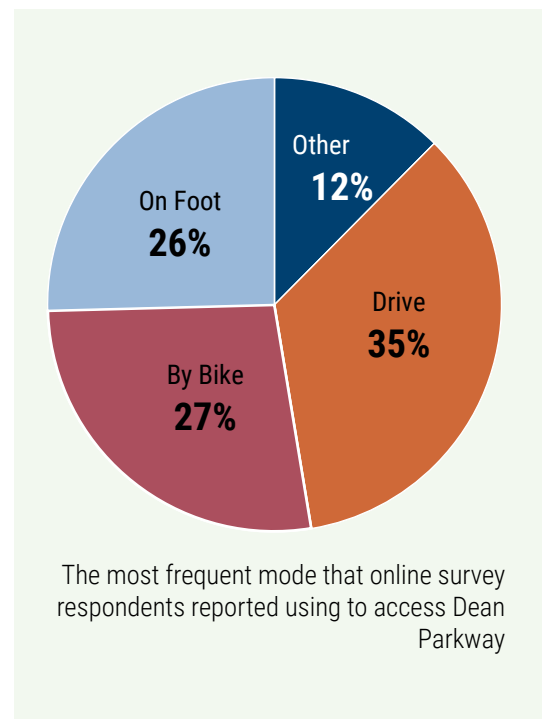
THEME 1: Water Quality

- » Address stormwater runoff
- » Improve shoreline maintenance

THEME 2: Natural Areas

- » **Appreciation for the existing old growth trees and shade**
- » **Appreciation for the green space along the parkway**
- » **Increase amount of trees and shade**
- » **Maintain the open green space**
- » **Add more wildlife habitat and natural or wild areas**
- » **Add native & pollinator plants**
- » **Add gardens/flowers**
- » Open views to the Kenilworth Channel and bridge
- » Provide less areas of mowed grass
- » Remove invasive species
- » Diversify tree species
- » Education about tree species

"The boulevard trees along Dean Parkway and in the 2 lobes of the Dean Green are deeply valued."



“Less mowing, more native plants. Wider, better paced paths”

“A naturalized, wildlife corridor with limited hard surfaces.”

THEME 3: Use of Space

Programming

- » **Support for outdoor programming (farmers market, yoga, movies, food trucks)**
- » **Concern with safety of area (user conflict, lighting, winter maintenance)**
- » Concern about camps for unhoused residents
- » Add a community garden (for renters in the area)
- » Concern with impact from SWLRT

Built Infrastructure

- » **Add more amenities (picnic tables, benches, water)**
- » **Do not add additional infrastructure (buildings, pavement)**
- » Minimize development/don't overbuild
- » Do not add rentals (bike, canoe) or additional signage
- » Add a water feature or other central feature for aesthetics
- » Improve lighting along bike/pedestrian paths
- » Add recreation amenities (pickleball, courts, fitness equipment)
- » Add more parking
- » Remove parking
- » Fix blind corner at Midtown Greenway and parkway connection

“I love the flow of Dean Parkway and the amazing bike and walking paths it has. It is great to go through the middle of the beautiful neighborhood.”

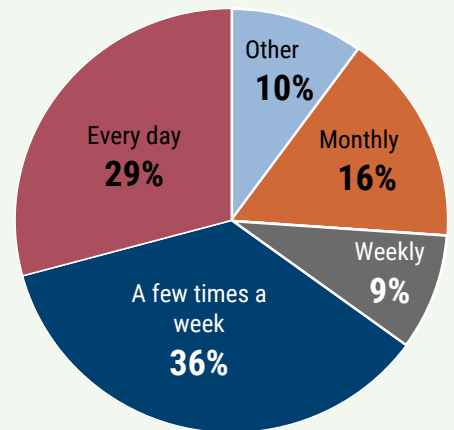
“Add more amenities -- picnic tables, benches, etc.”

“please make more biking and walking improvements. better water management with rain gardens, native perennials. calmer traffic. Also all of our parks should be more accessible to communities of color and those communities that have been purposefully excluded from planning processes historically.”

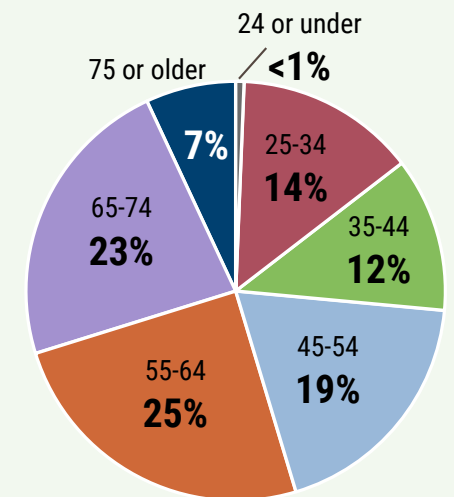
THEME 3: Circulation & Access

Circulation

- » **Enjoyment of trail network**
- » **Appreciation for separation of walking and biking paths**
- » **Address flooding on paths**
- » **Prioritize walking and biking modes**
- » **Reduce or reroute vehicle traffic**



How often online survey respondents reported they visited Dean Parkway



Reported ages of Dean survey respondents

- » **Improve crossings/intersections for all modes**
- » **Improve trail maintenance**
- » Maintain and improve safety for all modes (walk, bike, car)
- » Keep vehicle speeds low/slow down vehicles
- » Widen pedestrian and bicycle paths
- » Reduce crossings for bicyclists
- » Do not allow cars on parkway
- » Keep parkway as is, retain traffic access
- » Improve vehicle access
- » Reduce amount of trails/roads/pavement
- » Increase walk time on traffic light across Lake Street
- » Make bicycle paths one-way like Lake of the Isles

Access

- » **Appreciation for connection to lakes and other regional trails**
- » Appreciation that modes can share space together
- » Retain existing parking
- » Increase security in area
- » Do not make this area busier
- » Add a connector bus to the lightrail
- » Concern this area is exclusive and leaves some people out

“Being able to bike safely on the paths between the 3 lakes. Also drive thru there several times a day.”

“Keep it as is.”

“Ability to easily access Cedar Lake from Lake of the Isles.”

“In pre-pandemic times, the traffic often backed up extensively. Additionally, the narrow traffic lanes prompt many people to drive over the white stripe, which is apparently for bicycles (despite the center path in the space between lanes), but there doesn't seem to be adequate room along the lanes for both bikes and motor vehicles.”

“fewer cars, slower car speed, expanded green space.”

Miscellaneous

- » Concern that there are too many large housing buildings adjacent to park
 - » Concern about Dean Parkway becoming part of a regional park
- Please note: Dean Parkway is currently part of the Chain of Lakes Regional Park system. Adding it to the master plan project area does not change its regional park status.*

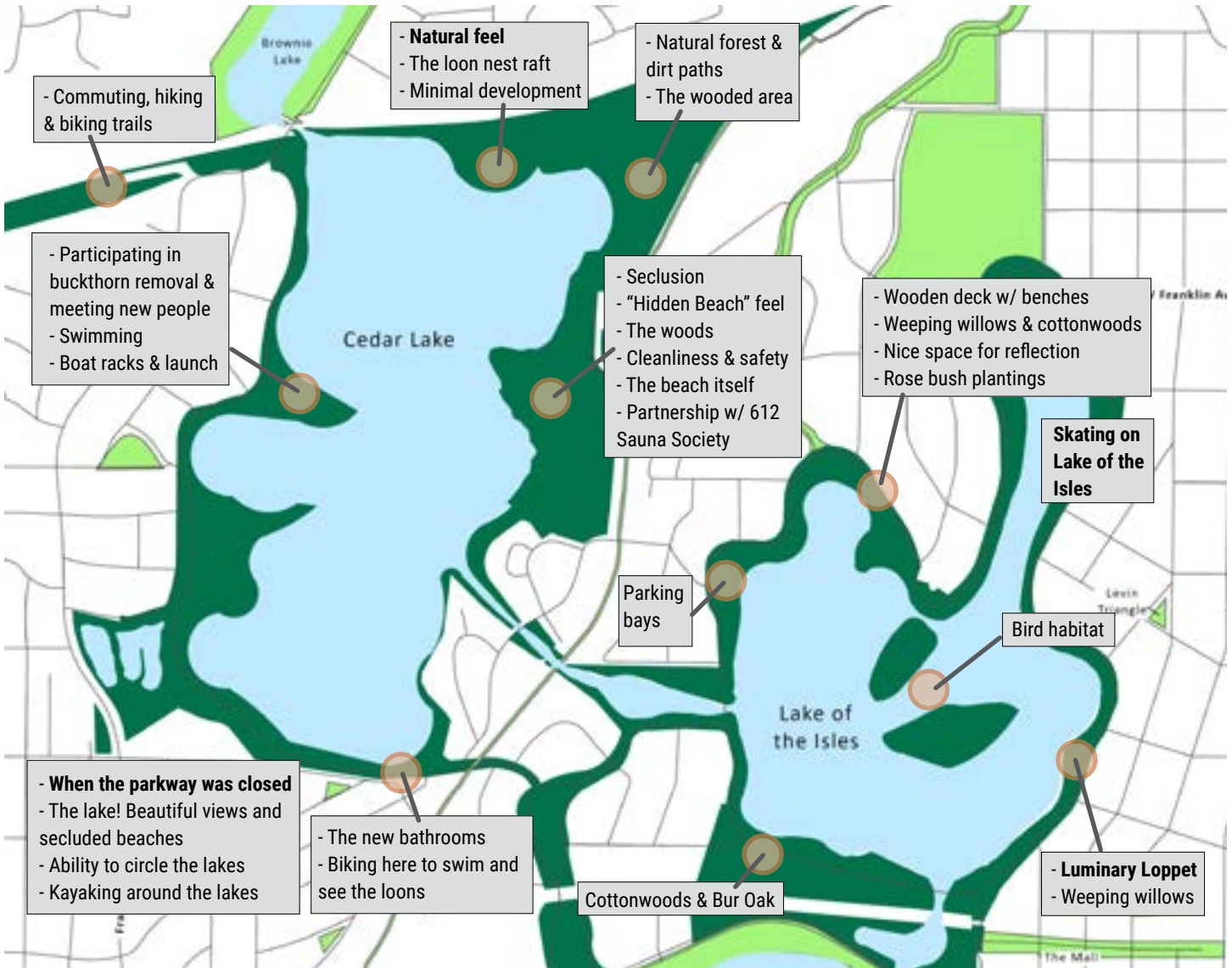
51% of respondents indicated they received a graduate degree

87% of respondents reported owning their own home

LOCATION-SPECIFIC COMMENTS

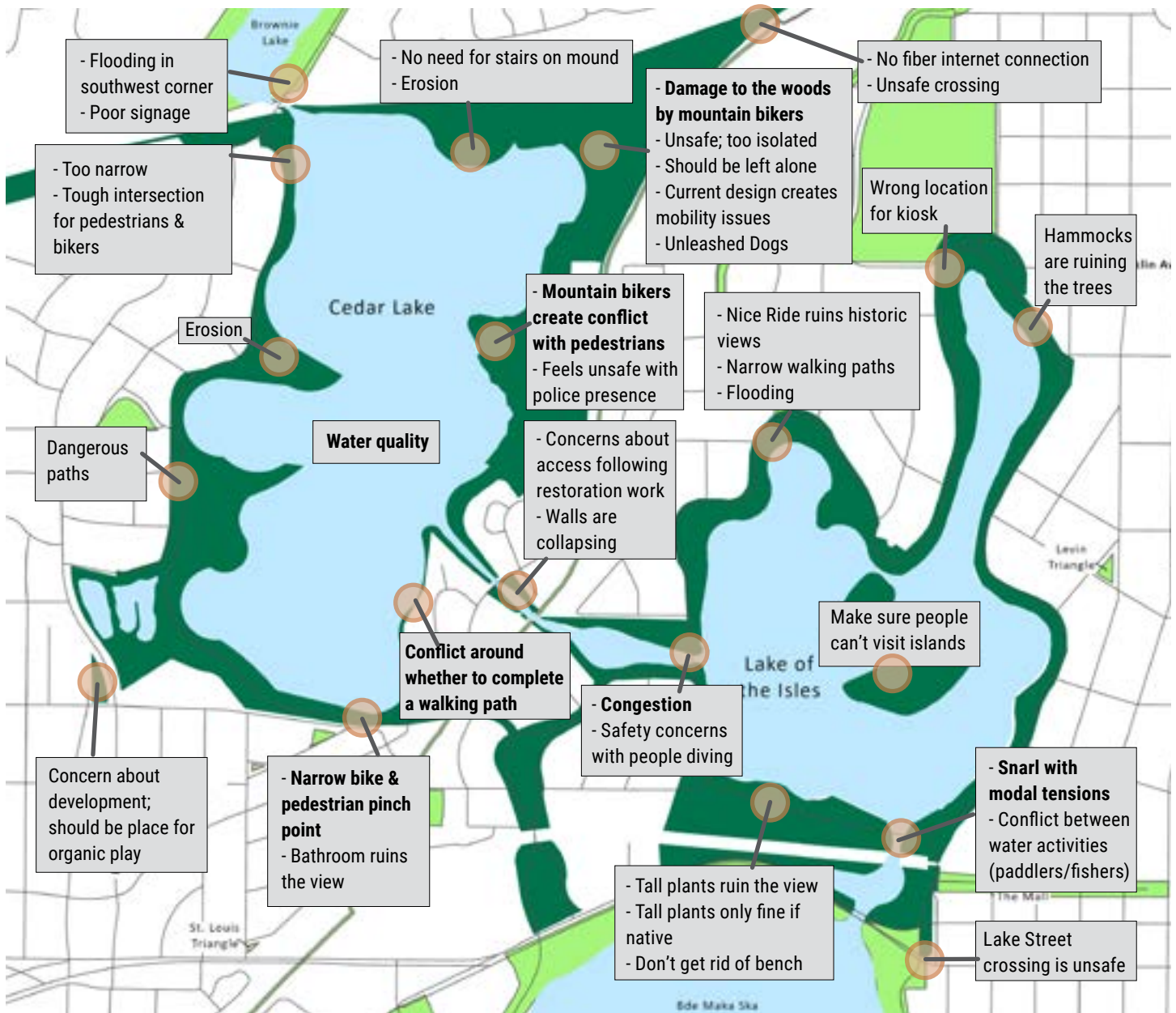
What people appreciate about the area

199 location-specific comments were compiled results from the online mapping tool that was open to the public from Winter 2019 through summer 2021. The circles on the map indicate the general area where community members shared a comment and the grey boxes include comments compiled at each location. If something was mentioned more than once, it has been **bolded**.



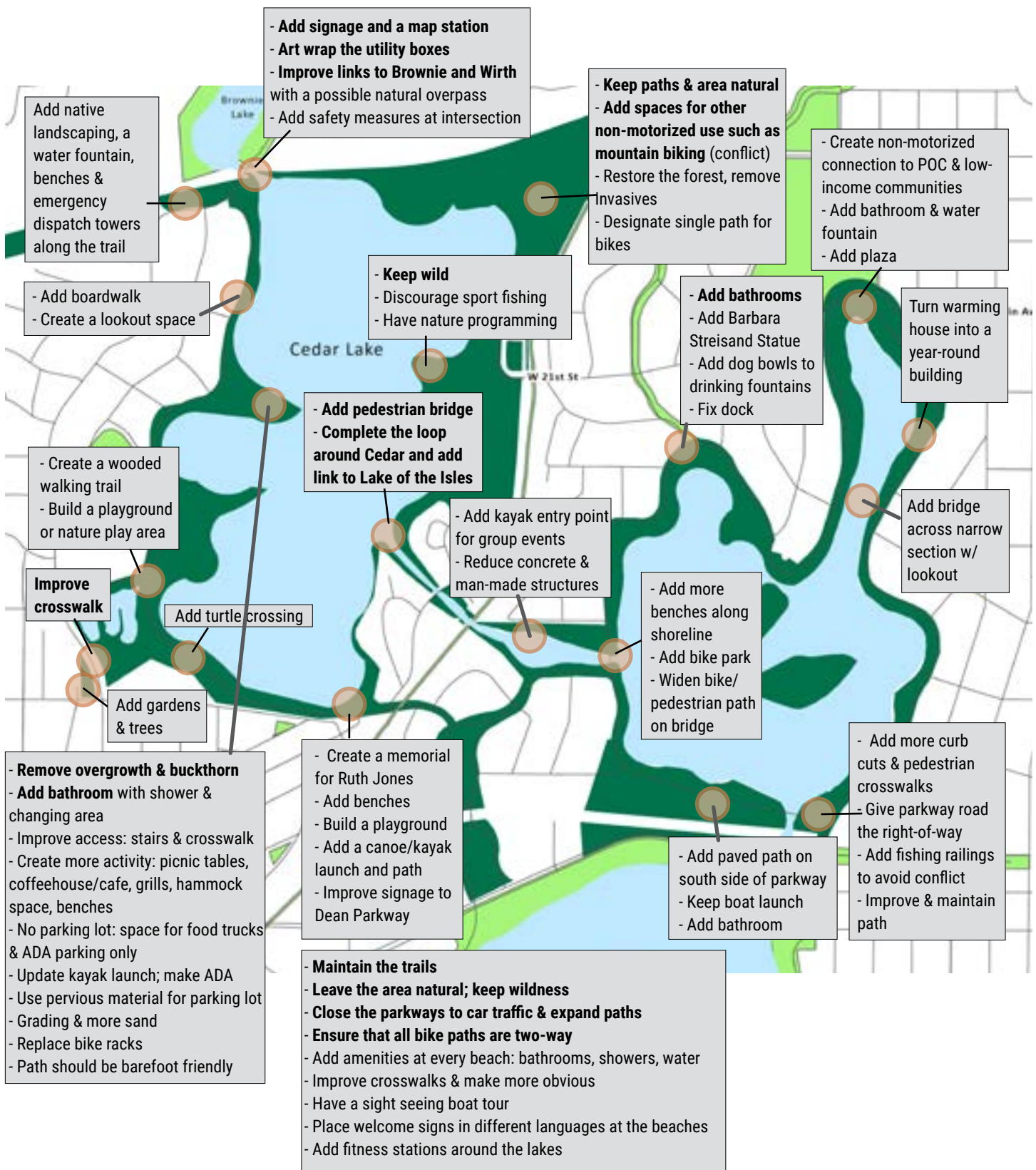
Concerns people have about the area

The circles on the map indicate the general area where community members shared a comment and the grey boxes include comments compiled at each location. If something was mentioned more than once, it has been **bolded**.



Ideas people have for the area

The circles on the map indicate the general area where community members shared a comment and the grey boxes include comments compiled at each location. If something was mentioned more than once, it has been **bolded**.



Input from MN Tribal Nations

MPRB is working with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) from Lower Sioux Indian Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Upper Sioux Community who are providing guidance to protect sensitive aspects of the landscape and improve accessibility for the Dakota. This is an ongoing process. The list below reflects this guidance and has been approved by Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Samantha Odegard and Director of Cultural Resources Leonard Wabasha.

Water

- » Access to bodies of water for ceremonial or other practices is important
- » Interest in preventing pesticides on parkland, education for adjacent residents about how pesticides on their property impacts parkland

Natural Areas

- » Support for preservation of current natural areas
- » In favor of limiting access to natural areas to help preserve what's there
- » Interest in maintaining areas of seclusion
- » Acknowledgment that adding more paved trails in natural areas does not feel consistent with preservation
- » Support for preserving and restoring more parkland within master plan area
- » Add plants that were on site pre-colonization
- » Add plants that Indigenous communities foraged

Access

- » Area, in general, does not feel accessible to Indigenous community due to the fact that mostly white and/or wealthy people currently visit the area
- » Debit card machines at parking sites a barrier for some in the Indigenous community – free parking could be seen as one form of reparations and put actions behind the words of land acknowledgments
- » Many Indigenous community members who are originally from this land and were forced to leave

find it difficult to connect with this area

- » Interest in making natural areas accessible to elders without adding more pavement
- » How do we make this area more welcoming to Native youth? What do they want to do here?

Programming/Use

New Amenities

- » Adding more pavement will bring more people, but is that what we want?
- » Consider natural trails instead of paved trails
- » Reflection spaces and ceremonial spaces have different and separate design needs
- » Minimize signage – parks can often feel cluttered with too many signs

Education

- » Share Indigenous site history through signage and/or online education
- » Highlight why tribes/Native community members may not know the history or original names. Forced displacement contributed to lack of historical knowledge.
- » Education around plants and foraging. If people cannot forage due to chemicals/pesticides, make sure to communicate that adequately.
- » Consider the Indigenous community in both historical and contemporary context; both are important
- » Include the story of tribal removal in the master plan narrative
- » Designate zones for foraging or harvesting for Indigenous communities

Community Collaborators

In order to broaden the voices heard through engagement efforts, project staff sought Community Collaborator services from businesses, institutions, nonprofits, and cultural organizations to design and implement an engagement project that helped MPRB build relationships and gather community feedback. The Community Collaborator initiative is a paid opportunity for groups across the region to convene their own conversations about parks and recreation to inform the design and priorities for the Master Plan. A selection committee (made up of MPRB staff and CAC members) evaluated proposals looking for collaborators with existing relationships with identified underrepresented communities; and creative, innovative ways to engage community through digital and/or socially distanced platforms.

Round One of the Community Collaborator, whose work took place from October 2020 through the June of 2021, is included in this report. The second round of applicants was recently selected in April of 2021. Round 2 results will be shared later in the master planning process.

For more information about the Community Collaborators program, check out the call for proposals, and the RFP document on our [project page](#). To view videos and additional photos from the Community Collaborator engagement, visit: bit.ly/cedar-isles



Harper Steinbach - Steven Square Photo Project

Over the course of several months, Harper worked with the Steven Square community to document, collect, and interview experiences surrounding the way folks interact with neighborhood and regional parks. Community members were given disposable cameras and asked to take photos of how they interact with free, public spaces around them. At the end of this documentation process, they were asked to give feedback either face to face or electronically about their thoughts surrounding the Cedar Lake & Lake of the Isles area or the neighborhood parks in general.

Photos were developed by West Photo in Minneapolis and then 10 selected photos were scanned, uploaded to [@stevensquarephoto on instagram](#) with selected quotes taken from interviews.



These photos were taken by Olive who thinks, “infographic posters at local parks discussing what plant life is present in the park would give people a reason to explore their local parks.”

More Quotes and Photos from Steven Square Photo Project

"I tried to take pictures of what residents see everyday. Trees being cut down, parking tickets, and transit systems. One thing I noticed that made Steven square feel welcoming- is it's dedication to art. The allowance of people contributing to spaces. Public murals, donated chairs, and neighborhood maintained pollinator gardens. Everyone can contribute and add on." - Harper

"There were things I didn't expect to notice. I took pictures of completely cleared off sidewalks with a thumbs up. I partially use a wheel chair and having the sidewalk half shoveled makes it really inaccessible to me. What makes parks accessible to me is having a good, walkable path" -KM

"I can't just walk to Lake of the Isles. It's hard to get to unless I drive. I love going there though..." - Betsy

Themes From Steven Square Photo Project

- » Emphasis on the value of free spaces to gather with others and the desire for more public seating (especially for RENTERS)
- » Desire for more walkability and accessibility
- » Accessibility in programming
- » Desire for more attractions and amenities (public art ; more interactive components to the parks)

Who the Project Engaged

- » Youth (The majority of participants were under 30 years old, with 2 participants under the age of 18)
- » 1 participant disclosed a physical disability
- » 5 participants identify as LGBTQ+
- » 2 participants identify as BIPOC
- » Participants from South Minneapolis, Whittier, Loring Park & Stevens Square
- » 4 participants live outside of Minneapolis but frequent the area or have previously lived there.



Photos by Miles - Their film focuses on the connection that humans have in shared spaces. People were allowed to leave their mark on a space. Their film focuses on these aspects as well as shooting from a perspective of admiring natural resources.



Abdimalik Mohamed - Bryghtside LLC

Abdimalik, during the winter of 2020, recorded and produced [a video of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles](#). The video was recorded in Somali, with English captioning, in order to educate the community about the parks and increase awareness for these spaces.

During the Summer of 2021, Abdimalik hosted a community engagement event where he invited community members to watch the video and respond to some questions about the video and the parks. Many of the community members were surprised at the number of activities that the lakes had to offer, and they realized they were not utilizing this park space. Abdimalik notes that “spreading awareness of the value of the parks is one of the major steps needed to help with bringing Somali people to visit the parks.”



Themes From Abdimalik’s Project

- » A desire to see more diversity in the parks / more people involved / more communities of color engaged / stronger sense of welcome and community / would like to see community elders welcomed and reflected in space
- » Desire to see more programmed activities and amenities (field sports, basketball)
- » Enjoy connecting with the water
- » Enjoy the peace and quiet of the area
- » Concerns about the homes around the lakes that make the area seem more private than public
- » Noted that some of the other lakes in the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes are MORE accessible than Cedar and Isles
- » The majority of respondents access the parks by car/driving



Photos above are stills pulled from the video created by Abdimalik

Who the Project Engaged

- » Somali Community Members
- » Folks who don’t visit the parks on a regular basis

Amanda Vallone - ARTrageous Adventures

Amanda Vallone engaged resident youth (ages 10-17) in a series of workshops that included the visual arts, theater, and dance. The goal was to provide a creative forum to gather ideas and visions of what this younger generation would like to see transform in their neighborhood parks and lake areas.

Youth Visioning Ideas for Cedar Lake & Lake of the Isles

Lake of the Isles

- » More trees planted and shaded areas
- » Butterfly Garden planted with native plants
- » More picnic tables to enjoy the area
- » Public art sculptures using natural materials
- » Hammock Hooks
- » Strolling Ice Cream Cart
- » Restroom
- » Fountain Feature in the Lake

Cedar Lake

- » Continue to plant native species for wildlife
- » A play fort structure made from natural or recycled materials
- » Diving Raft and Water Slide in Lake
- » Picnic Tables
- » Community Bulletin Board made from recycled materials
- » Hammock Hooks
- » Fresh Sand
- » New and Improved Mud Pit
- » Public Art Sculpture that also serves as a bike or towel rack

Who the Project Engaged

- » Youth: Each event had at least 9 participants between the ages of 7-18 years old
- » All youth participants lived within the Kenwood Neighborhood and Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood with two Southwest High School Students living in the Linden Hills Neighborhood



Visual Idea submitted: Public Art Sculpture made from natural materials



Visual Idea submitted: Log chairs for sitting and enjoying natural spaces.



Visual Idea submitted: Labyrinth Walk in the Park Concept

2021 Summer Engagement

To help broaden voices during Phase One's engagement period, MPRB staff hosted a series of events and conversations to gather feedback from current and future park visitors. Staff worked both independently and with community partners to hear from community about the vision for this area. A total of **26 events** were held.

A number of strategies were implemented to gather feedback, including one-on-one conversations, experiential canoe, hiking, and biking events, group conversations, and administering surveys. Staff also hosted pop-up conversations with visitors completing specific activities at specific locations, such as fishing at Lake of the Isles, swimming at East Cedar Beach, and canoeing through the Kenilworth Channel. Events were implemented on weekdays and weekends in the morning, afternoon, and early evening hours. Translators were used during two of the events.

Audiences reached over the summer includes:

- » Regional visitors
- » Youth
- » Families
- » Communities of Color
- » Cultural communities
- » Low-income seniors
- » Folks who do not have access to a vehicle
- » Folks who live in the adjacent neighborhoods



Youth experiential event on Cedar Lake

The following is a summary of **general themes** community shared over the summer of 2021. Some results have been broken into their own category to better share out feedback from specific demographics or locations.

General themes

- » Appreciation for the beauty of the area and nature
- » Feels like you're not in the city (which is a good thing)
- » Desire to return
- » This area doesn't always feel welcoming to folks of color

THEME 1: Water Quality & Natural Areas

- » Keep the trees
- » Provide more shade trees for seniors to rest under
- » Plant native plants
- » Water access for paddleboards and kayaks on Lake of the Isles
- » Lake of the Isles is more for traveling to another destination - it is a pretty lake but we don't stop (for canoeing).
- » Don't allow motor boats

THEME 2: Use of Space

Programming

- » Need more amenities (ie port-a-potties, grills, benches, picnic tables)
- » Beaches are nice and not too crowded
- » Like how the beaches are hidden in the forest
- » Need more spaces for large and multi-generational events
- » Enjoyable areas for to skipping stones

Art & Signage

- » Would like to see more community-driven artwork by locals, youth, BIPOC (ie murals, sculptures, pop-up projects)
- » Notifications about fish that are stocked in the lake.
- » Create a map for in canoe/kayak wayfinding so you can see where you are currently at and where you can go.
- » Improve wayfinding
- » Couldn't find map with a specific boat launch only the beaches. In general it was hard to find canoe/kayak info online whether it be tours or a map



Summer at Cedar Point Beach



Fishing on Lake of the Isles

THEME 3: Circulation and Access

Access

- » Seniors struggle with accessing the park – transportation to the park system a large barrier
- » Seniors need to feel safe to want to visit a park system
- » Community policing vs police policing
- » Great trails in the area

“When [seniors] say we need transportation, no one ever finds a solution for us to get to the parks.”

“This feels like a quiet park. I feel like if I came here to play music with my friends, people would stare at me because we’re being too loud.”

“I come [to East Cedar Beach] because there are like minded individuals, it is more relaxed, feels hidden. For non-traditional people, this beach feels more comfortable as a non-binary person.”

“It’s normal for my community to host large, multi-generational gatherings. I love Cedar Lake, but it’s not currently designed for me to bring my family here.”

THEME 4: Indigenous Legacy

- » Add some sort of acknowledgment of the Dakota people (ie original names). need to respect the area because it is not just a public space there is cultural relevance.
- » Indigenous signage in the area that shares the history, legends (cotton woods), plant respect (they are alive - need respect), and other educational material for kids.
- » Allow foraging for Indigenous community members
- » Partner with indigenous groups

East Cedar Beach



Lily pads near the Kenilworth Channel

Many we spoke to about East Cedar Beach reported that they traveled from different parts of the city or suburbs to visit due to the unique vibe of this beach compared to others in the MPRB system and other cities.

Likes

- » The beach the way it is, no new development
- » The trees and the shade
- » Lower traffic compared to other beaches
- » Seeing and connecting with wildlife
- » The hiking trails
- » The relaxed vibe, music, and the people
- » The park police presence

Concerns

(list includes concerns about the beach and concerns about the outcome of the master plan)

- » The park police presence doesn't feel safe
- » Impact of more visitors with new light rail
- » Overdevelopment and the increase in amenities
- » Loss of the natural, woody feel
- » Increased pavement and traffic
- » Parking lot would increase traffic

Ideas

- » Small, unassuming bathroom - some suggested showers, diaper and/or clothes changing area
- » More trees and habitat
- » Small-scale programming to coincide with the mood of this beach - public instruments, hula hoops, etc.
- » More and improved bike racks
- » Continued cleaning of the area - community clean-up?
- » Acknowledgment of the Dakota people's use of this land
- » Things for youth to climb on - water or land play structures

"A lot of people have been coming here for a long time and are mindful of the space and cleanliness."

"I like the eclectic mix of people - there is always something goofy or weird happening."

"Love the green space - can be in the woods, prairie, marshy space. Often bike here, walk a little, hammock, sit on the beach, and sometimes mountain bike. Liked when there was a little more woods from the road to the beach. The movable chairs are phenomenal."

"One of our favorite beaches. Like the shade and trees. Hosted a pop-up adventure playground in front of mudhole (good spot for playground?) and we like how this place welcomes programming like this"

People who fish the lakes

MPRB staff spoke to people who were fishing at both Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. We learned there were different needs for people who fished in boats versus on shore. Folks fishing in boats often reported that the area already worked well for them; they did not have additional needs or ideas for improvement specific to fishing. Folks who fished from shore had more ideas for improvements – some of these people reported they did not have access to a boat and/or took public transportation to access the area.

Likes

- » Fishing this area is great, especially Cedar Lake
- » Lily pads create a lot of places for fish to hide
- » Dock on Cedar favorite spot
- » Sufficient parking, it's ok that it's paid
- » No need for additional restrooms, water fountains, it's great as it is
- » Fishing in this area is really fun!
- » Shoreline currently works for informal fishing



Fall along the parkway.

Concerns

- » People jumping off of current dock because it scares the fish
- » Move movable dock away from fishing areas

Ideas

- » Dedicate docks to fishing-only
- » Add docks that are longer, wider, further into the lakes
- » More restrooms, water fountains
- » More canoe/kayak launches
- » More benches on the docks

South Cedar Beach

MPRB did not complete engagement at South Cedar Beach, but some ideas came up during conversations at other locations.

Likes

- » Like how there is a steep grassy slope there where you can sit anywhere and see your kids
- » Appreciate the shade next to the beach area
- » Keep the grass, it is used often
- » Beach is clean
- » Appreciate the bathroom and water fountain

Concerns

- » Unleashed dogs are a problem



Experiential events with youth.

Feedback from Youth

Likes

- » Beaches (nice, secluded)
- » Lake and the tunnels
- » Animals (birds, fish)
- » Natural areas, but grassy spaces could be utilized better
- » Tons of trees in the area
- » Trails were nice
- » Nature, scenery and the view
- » No trash
- » Good as is

Ideas

- » Keep it natural
- » Clean up the weeds in the lake
- » Dean Parkway: Pollinator garden and stormwater feature to address flooding/runoff
- » More gardens (Ornamental, community, pollinator, wildflower)
- » Plants at both lakes
- » Add more trees
- » Host events, especially in the fall
- » More affordable boat rentals
- » Provide public canoes
 - Welcoming advertising
 - Cultural events
 - Cultural food
 - Different housing
- » Guides
- » Signage in different languages (Spanish, Somali, Hmong, English)
- » Ice swimming
- » Street performers, vendors
- » Intergenerational spaces
- » Stock the lakes with fish

Dislikes

- » Lack of shade
- » That there aren't forests or prairies around Lake of the Isles
- » A lot of buckthorn at Cedar Lake
- » No welcome center or gathering space
- » Small beaches
- » Small stops signs (while biking)

