

Engaging Communities in Increasing Park-Based Physical Activity

Implementation Guide

January 15, 2016

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Engaging Communities in Increasing Park-Based Physical Activity

INTRODUCTION

This manual serves as a guide for engaging a local community in assessing park use and developing a physical activity intervention based on community input. The tools mentioned here are meant to be adapted to make sure that you are measuring what is most important to and usable by the local community.

This manual is based on a project implemented in a city in which the research team had a relationship with the recreation and parks department, and a park system in which each recreation center had an existing park advisory board. Each recreation center also had an onsite park director and recreation staff. The steps outlined below assume an existing park advisory board, as this was the case for this project, but it is not necessary to have one to implement an intervention similar to the one described here. While the steps recommended here reflect a project spanning numerous recreation centers, they can be adapted to work with a few or even a single recreation center.

KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS

There are five main phases to the project: 1) Community engagement and planning, 2) Baseline park assessment, 3) Data interpretation and intervention development, 4) Intervention implementation, and 5) Follow up park assessment. The components described below will be needed to accomplish the tasks entailed.

- **Park Advisory Board (PAB):** This group of local residents will help to determine how data collection tools should be implemented and develop an intervention based on baseline findings. While it is not necessary to have a PAB to implement this project, an advisory board consisting of neighborhood residents interested in the park can be a great way to get input from park users regarding how to design the intervention. In some cases they might also be able to assist with fundraising if needed for the intervention. If a community board cannot be formed, you might consider involving park staff in a role similar to what is described below for the PAB.
- **System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC):** This adaptable data collection tool allows for the systematic assessment of park use and social variables (e.g., whether there are supervised activities, whether a park area is accessible or usable).
- **Park user and resident survey:** In addition to the SOPARC assessments, surveys are administered to individuals in the park and local residents to obtain information on who is using the park, how the park is used, and desired park improvements.
- **Data collection equipment:** We used mechanical counters to record SOPARC observations, but have since developed a browser-based app to record park user counts. Similarly, we used PDAs to enter SOPARC and survey data, but have since moved to using tablets for this purpose. There are numerous free and paid software packages that allow the user to create data entry forms and manage data.
- **Marketing strategy:** The intervention (e.g., activities, events) should be promoted within the community to increase participation. Banners, flyers, public service announcements (PSAs), email blasts, and social media are all potentially useful marketing tools.
- **Park intervention:** Each intervention is tailored to the individual recreation center based on the baseline findings and input from the PAB. As such, the required materials will vary. Some

might consist of a new physical activity that requires sports equipment (e.g., basketballs, weights, etc.) and others might focus on increased marketing of existing programs and so will need a marketing strategy.

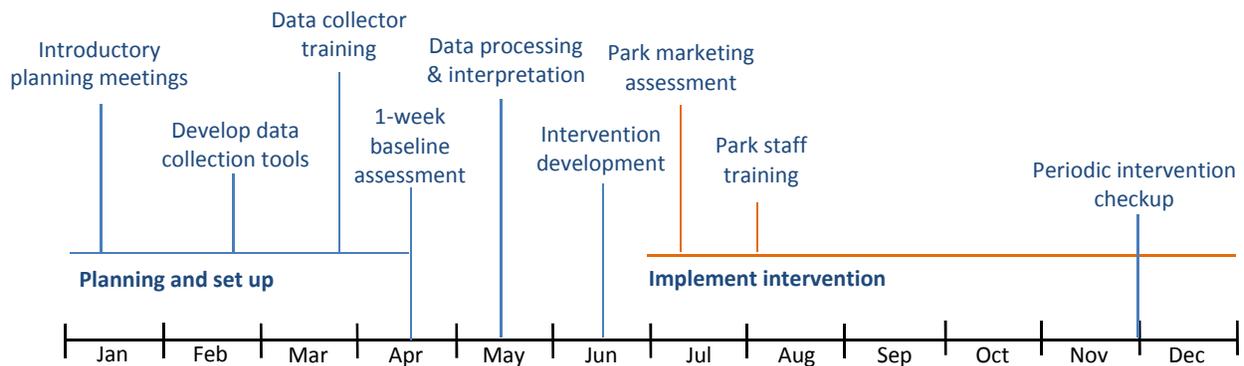
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Community engagement is the first step in this process. If the project is being implemented across multiple parks, the recreation and parks department can play a key role in determining which parks are suitable for the project, and can help to encourage staff participation. At the individual recreation center level, strong community participation increases awareness of and support for the project, improves the data collection and interpretation processes, and results in an intervention that better fits the local context.

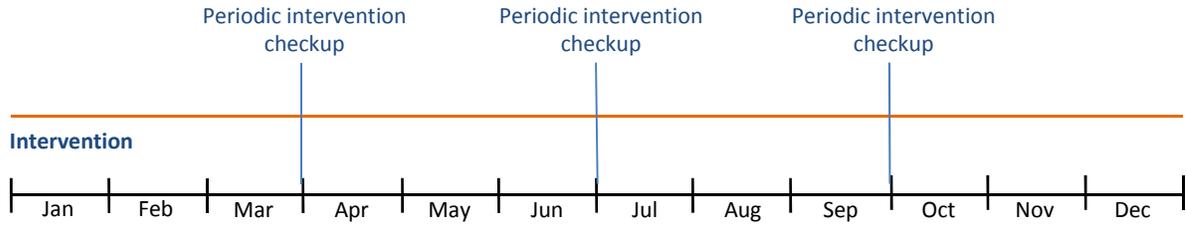
Park advisory boards are designed as a way for local residents to help park staff provide activities and services that meet the needs of park users. They often consist of local residents who may have a specific interest in the park (e.g., a parent whose child attends an after school program, someone who participates in a basketball league), and those who are generally interested in improving the park. The PAB should be involved from start to finish, and can serve this project by advising on if/how existing data collection tools might be adapted (e.g., adding survey questions that get at specific interests), helping to interpret collected data, and designing an intervention based on findings and knowledge of the local community.

The initial meeting(s) with the PAB should focus on discussion of the main project goals: 1) increasing park use, and 2) increasing community physical activity. Near the beginning of the process it is important to develop a timeline for the project since it may run over several years. A sample timeline showing major steps is provided below.

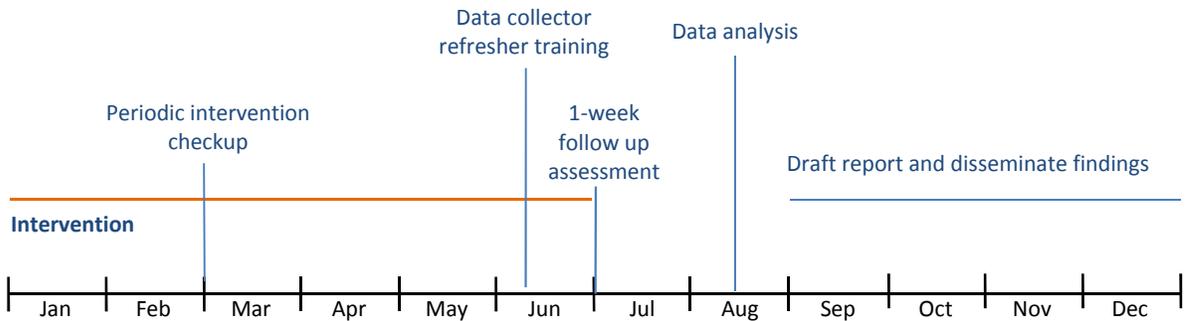
Year 1



Year 2



Year 3



Once the project goals and initial timeline have been laid out, it is time to consider how park use will be assessed (i.e., data collection methods and tools).

BASELINE PARK ASSESSMENT

To assess the impact of the intervention conduct two assessments of park use; one before the intervention (baseline) and another after the intervention period ends (follow up). Allow sufficient time between assessments for the intervention to take hold (e.g., two years).

Park use data were collected using SOPARC (Appendix 1). Parks were mapped prior to observations, dividing the park into distinct target areas ordered so that data were collected in the same systematic manner at each observation (Appendix 2). We used mechanical tally counters to record park use counts, and then data were entered on handheld devices using data entry forms created on third party software (there are many options available from local network to cloud-based, and free or paid)¹. Park observations were scheduled on seven consecutive days, with four observations each day (Table 1) to get a snapshot of park use throughout the day and over the course of a week. In the

¹ Since this project completed we have switched to digital counters loaded onto tablets. There are publicly available options that condense the counter and data entry into a single application (e.g., iSOPARC). The counter you use will depend on what variables you want to collect.

case of inclement weather, observations were rescheduled for the same day of the next week with clement weather.

Table 1: Sample SOPARC observation schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:30am	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	9:30am	8:30am	9:30am
10:30am	12:30pm	11:30am	10:30am	12:30pm	11:30am	12:30pm
1:30pm	3:30pm	2:30pm	1:30pm	3:30pm	2:30pm	3:30pm
4:30pm	6:30pm	5:30pm	4:30pm	6:30pm	5:30pm	6:30pm

We administered a 44-item survey to adult (i.e., 18 years or older) park users and residents living with one mile of the park (Appendix 3). Park user respondents were systematically recruited from the least busy to busiest areas of the park (Appendix 4). Residents were randomly selected from a city database of residential units, and stratified by distance from the park (0-¼ mile, ¼-½ mile, and ½-1 mile) so that we surveyed about 25 individuals in each of the three bands around the park. The resident sample was selected using ArcGIS and SAS, and was based on parcel data obtained from the County Assessor’s office. Addresses were geocoded and the distance bands created, and then all residential polygons were selected within each of these bands. These data were then exported and read into SAS, and a random number generator was used to select the specific addresses for the sample. We made four attempts at each address before replacing it according to an established protocol (Appendix 5). Progress toward survey goals should be tracked to facilitate response rate calculations, and to ensure that recruitment and administration protocols are followed. Sample survey logs are provided in Appendix 6.

We subcontracted a *promotora* (community health worker) program to collect the observation and survey data, which helped to address potential linguistic and cultural barriers to data collection. The *promotoras* participated in two days of intensive training. The first day focused on: systematic observation; summarizing relevant research, methods and instruments; in-depth SOPARC training; and data quality issues, such as reactivity, validity, and reliability. Day two focused on survey administration; reviewing the instrument and recruitment protocols, use of the data entry devices, and human subjects protection protocols. Both days included extensive practice with the study instruments. We conducted a refresher training prior to follow-up data collection in order to assess data collector drift, realign to standards, and review protocols, and ongoing coaching was provided as needed throughout baseline and follow-up data collection. Data collectors who participated in their local parks only attended a shortened version of the training, as their involvement most often focused primarily on surveying.²

INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

Upon completion of the baseline data collection in each park we met with either the park director or the park director and the PAB (depending on study group assignment) to report and interpret the observation and survey data of primary interest to programming and intervention development. After reviewing these data, we discussed how to create an intervention that would respond to items

² See Derosé et al. 2014 *Involving community stakeholders to increase park use and physical activity* for a description of project structure.

found in the data (e.g., neighborhood residents expressing interest in a specific program, need for better advertising). We had two to three additional meetings as necessary to develop the park specific interventions.

We provided each of the intervention parks with \$4,000 to purchase items that largely fell into two categories: marketing and promotion, and sports equipment (see Appendix 7 for some sample park purchases). While the funds were initially to be spent largely at the discretion of the park director or the director and the PAB, we strongly encouraged all parks to include a marketing component to ensure that the community would find out about any new programs or amenities resulting from the intervention.

Marketing

As marketing was a reported need by many of the participant parks, we hired a marketing consultant to work with each park to increase and better target their marketing efforts. The consultant made an initial visit to each park and met with the PD to assess the current marketing efforts and identify opportunities for improvement. We also provided five trainings to the intervention park PDs, which covered topics such as outreach, customer service, and how to use special events to market routine activities. Specific marketing topics included point of purchase marketing and using email and social media to market park programs.

The activities outlined in Appendix 8 provide a sample plan to train park staff in basic marketing skills and includes some tools for increasing marketing as well as assessing ongoing marketing efforts.

Programming

The second major component of the intervention was park programming. This largely took two forms: augmenting existing physical activity programs with new/improved equipment and/or creating new programs that responded to data collected in the baseline surveys. In some cases this meant hiring an instructor to teach a physical activity class, elsewhere parks used the funds to purchase equipment such as basketballs and other sports equipment for use in park programs or for use during “free-play” hours. A couple of parks that had well established physical activity programs and limited schedule and instructor flexibility to add programs, used the funds for special events intended to bring more people to the park where they could be introduced to these existing programs. A key requirement was that the purchases must be directed at increasing park use and/or physical activity.

Intervention monitoring

After we had met with the park director and/or PAB to discuss baseline results, we worked with them to determine how the \$4,000 should be spent. Each recreation center completed a proposal form (Appendix 10), which served as an “order form” as well as a guide for the intervention and a reference point for monitoring. Project management staff worked closely with park directors and PABs to ensure that funds were spent and the intervention was implemented as agreed. While we provided guidance on how funds should be spent within the scope of the intervention, we relied upon PABs or park directors to decide what purchases would work best for their park.

To assist with program monitoring the project made all intervention related purchases for the recreation centers. Once items were ordered, project management staff made visits to each recreation center to ensure that all materials were received and were being used as planned.

Periodic visits to recreation centers were made throughout the intervention period to check on intervention progress and to work with park directors to resolve issues as needed.

FOLLOW UP PARK ASSESSMENT

Following the intervention period at each park we repeated the data collection process to assess the impact of the intervention. It is important to conduct the follow up assessment at the same time of year, as close as possible to the dates of baseline, to control for seasonal differences in use (i.e., park use varies from hot to cold seasons).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. SOPARC manual

SOPARC
(System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities)

Description and Procedures Manual

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January 10, 2006

SOPARC **(System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities)**

PURPOSE

SOPARC was designed to obtain direct information on community park use, including relevant concurrent characteristics of parks and their users. It provides an assessment of park users' physical activity levels, gender, activity modes/types, and estimated age and race/ethnicity groupings. Additionally, it provides information on individual park activity areas, such as their levels of accessibility, usability, supervision, and organization.

Relevant Target Areas within a park are first measured, coded, and mapped. Certified assessors then visit the target areas during specific time periods on randomly scheduled days. SOPARC observations will be made throughout the day, and include specified times in the morning, noon, afternoon, and evening (e.g., 7:30AM; 11:30AM; 3:30PM; 6:30PM).

RATIONALE

Physical activity and recreation are positively associated with good health. Investigations of activity participants in "open" environments (e.g., recreation and leisure settings) have been hampered by the lack of an objective tool for quantifying physical activity and user characteristics. Measurement in these settings is complicated because the number of participants and their activity modes and intensity levels change frequently.

SUMMARY

SOPARC is based on momentary time sampling techniques in which systematic and periodic scans of individuals and contextual factors within pre-determined target areas in parks are made. During a scan the activity of each individual is mechanically or electronically coded as Sedentary (i.e., lying down, sitting, or standing), Walking, or Very Active. Separate scans are made for females and males, and for estimating the age and ethnic groupings of participants. Simultaneous entries are also made for time of day, area accessibility, area usability, presence of supervision and equipment, and presence and classification of organized activities. Summary counts describe the number of participants by gender, activity modes and levels, and estimated age and gender groupings. The instrument permits physical activity level comparisons to be made among different environments or within the same setting over different time periods. Energy expenditure estimates (Kcal/kg/min) for a Target Area of park can be calculated based on previously validated constants for each level of activity.

VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

Validity

Validity of the activity codes used by SOPARC has been established through heart rate monitoring (McKenzie et al., 1991; Rowe, Schuldheim, & van der Mars, 1997). These provide support for the initial construct validity of SOPARC. Providing measures of persistent behaviors (i.e., physical

activity) are taken frequently and at random, momentary time sampling techniques have shown to yield valid behavioral samples. Because only brief episodes are recorded, response and recording occur simultaneously with observations occurring at an approximate rate of one person per second.

Reliability

Reliability data for a similar instrument (SOPLAY) were collected during 14 days of field assessments in middle schools. A pair of assessors simultaneously and independently made counts of boys and girls in each activity category in selected target areas. Activity counts from a total of 186 target areas were used in the reliability analysis. Inter-observer agreements for the five contextual variables were 95%, 97%, 93%, 96%, and 88%, for area accessibility, usability, presence of supervision, presence of organized activity, and provision of equipment, respectively. To examine the reliability of activity counts made by different assessors, a series of intra-class correlations were computed. Correlations were high for sedentary girls ($R=.98$) and walking girls (.95), although lower for counts of very active girls (.76). For boys, correlations were high for sedentary (.98), walking (.98), and very active (.97) behavior. It was concluded that all inter-observer agreements and intra-class correlations met acceptable criteria (IOA=80%, $R=.75$) for reliable assessment.

OBSERVATION AREAS

Direct observations are made in designated **Target Areas** that represent all standard locations likely to provide opportunities for park users to be physically active. These Areas will be predetermined and identified for observations prior to baseline assessments. A map is provided to identify areas and a standard observation order for each park. Additional target areas may be added by observers on site and then documented.

During occasions of high user density, Target Areas are subdivided into smaller **Subtarget Areas** (scan spaces) so that accurate measures can be obtained. Observers use standard court or field markings to determine appropriate Subtarget Areas within each Target Area. Data from these smaller spaces are summed to provide an overall measure for each Target Area.

NOTE: A decision to subdivide a Target Area depends upon the (1) number of park users in the area and (2) the type of user activity. Fast moving activities with people clustered together and moving in diverse directions (e.g., during soccer) require smaller scan spaces.

OBSERVATION PREPARATION

1. Prior to leaving for the park, prepare observation materials including: synchronized wristwatch, counter, clipboard, sufficient SOPARC recording forms, target area map, and pencils.
2. Arrive at the park site at least 20 minutes prior to the official start of coding. Review the sequence for observing Target Areas. Visit each Target Area in order and plan how to sub-divide it into Subtarget Areas if necessary. Mentally rehearse by scanning each area a few times.



SOPARC CODES and RECORDING

Date	Enter the date (mm/dd/yyyy) of the observation.
Park ID	Enter the designated Park ID. This is generally a two-letter abbreviation of the park name (e.g., Pecan Park is represented by “PP”).
Observer ID	Enter your ID code.
Period	Check the appropriate box to indicate whether observations were made in the morning, lunch, afternoon, or evening.
Target Area	Refers to the number of a previously designated Target Area (see the park map). If necessary, assign Subtarget Area numbers when you divide the area into multiple scan spaces.
Start Time	Enter the start time of the scan for that designated area.
Area Condition	Check “Yes” or “No” to describe specific conditions for each scan area. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Accessible Code “YES” if area is accessible to the public (e.g., area is not locked or rented to a private party).Usable Code “YES” if area is usable for physical activity (e.g., is not excessively wet or roped off for repair). For example, code “YES” when the space is usable, even though it may be locked. Code “NO” when there is insufficient lighting to use the space (e.g., no outdoor lights permitting play after sunset).Equipped Code “YES” if equipment (e.g., balls, jump ropes) <u>provided by the park</u> is present during the scan. Code “NO” if the only equipment available is permanent (e.g., basketball hoops and climbing apparatus) or owned by park users themselves (e.g., frisbee, ball, or bicycle brought by a family).Supervised Code “YES” if area is supervised by designated park or adjunct personnel (e.g., park rangers, playground supervisors, volunteers, sport officials, teachers). The supervisor must be in or adjacent to that specific area (e.g., available to direct park users and respond to emergencies), but does not have to be instructing, officiating, or organizing activities.Organized Code “YES” if an organized physical activity is occurring in the scan area (e.g., a scheduled sporting event or exercise class is being led by park staff or adjunct personnel).Dark Code “YES” to indicate the area has insufficient lighting to permit active play. Observers should not enter a target area <u>unless</u> there is sufficient lighting.Empty Code “YES” when there are no individuals present during the scan. Also, code “YES” when the area is dark.
Comments	Enter relevant additional information about the condition, people, or activities within the Target Area.
Activity	Write in the most prominent (primary) physical activity that females and males are doing in the area. If applicable, write in the second most prominent physical activity (secondary) that females and males are doing. A space is also provided to write in the most prominent activity attracting female and male onlookers/spectators to the area

(this only applies to organized activities).

During scans of the target area, all people should be accounted for as either participating in the primary activity, secondary activity, or as a spectator.

Some physical activity modes are:

Fitness Related Codes:

- aerobics (dance/step aerobics)
- fitness stations
- jogging/running
- strengthening exercises (pull ups)
- walking

Sport Related Codes:

- baseball
- basketball
- cheer leading
- dance
- football
- gymnastics
- handball
- horseshoes
- soccer
- swimming
- tennis/racquet
- tetherball
- volleyball

Active Game Related Codes:

- climbing/sliding
- jumping (rope, hoops, hop scotch)
- manipulatives/racquet activities
- tag/chasing games

Sedentary Related Codes:

- artwork
- chess/checkers/cards
- lying down
- picnicking (food involved)
- reading
- standing
- sitting

Age Group

Determine age according to the following criteria:

Child = Children from infancy to 12 years of age as children.

Teen = Code adolescents from 13 to 20 years of age as teenagers.

Adult = Code people from 21 to 59 years of age as adults.

Senior = Code people 60 years of age and older as seniors.

Ethnicity Code whether the primary race/ethnicity for each individual is Latino (L), Black (B), White (W), or Other (O).

Activity Scanning left to right, determine the activity level based on the following criteria:

Sedentary (S) = Individuals are lying down, sitting, or standing in place.

Walking (W) = Individuals are walking at a casual pace.

Vigorous (V) = Individuals are currently engaged in an activity more vigorous than an ordinary walk (e.g., increasing heart rate causing them to sweat, such as jogging, swinging, doing cart wheels).

Participants Include all individuals who are participating in the primary activity in the target area (e.g., baseball).

Spectators When spectators are at an organized event, write in the name of the activity they are watching and describe their characteristics. Spectators can be watching from the sidelines or bleachers.

RECORDING PROCEDURES

1. On the observation form, enter the **Date, Park ID, Observer ID, Period, and Target Area**.
 - Observers are encouraged to complete this section prior to the start of the observation period.
2. If there are too many people to count in any area, divide it into separate **Subtarget Areas** and follow the below procedures for each Subtarget Area separately. Use letters to distinguish the Subtarget Areas (i.e., A, B, C).
 - When people move to a different Subtarget Area while you are scanning, count only those who are present at the time you are scanning. In rare cases you may count people twice or miss them as they change Subtarget Areas. Make sure that all space in each main target area is included within the Subtarget Areas.
3. Enter the **Start Time** for each area scan.
4. Record the conditions for each area (Accessible, Usable, Equipped, Supervised, Organized, Dark, and Empty).
 - When there are people are in the area, continue with action #5.
 - When the area is “dark” or “empty,” complete the conditions and then move to the next Target Area.
5. Determine if there are **Females** within the target area.
 - If no females are located within the target area, write “none” and move to action #13.
6. For **Females**, determine the main activity in the target area and record it under **Primary Activity**. Refer to the codes listed on the SOPARC data form (or this protocol) to determine the appropriate terminology for the activity (e.g., aerobics, baseball, climbing).

- If no females are participating in a primary activity, write “none” and move to action #11.
7. Scan the target area for **Females** who are participants in the primary activity. Use the counter to record the number of females by age and race/ethnicity groupings.
 - Use the top row of the counter to help with age grouping, with children on the left (chartreuse), teens (light green), adults (dark green), and seniors (gray). Use the second row of buttons is race/ethnicity, (tan=Latino, Black= African American, White=Caucasian, Yellow=other). Count age first, and then race/ethnicity, for each person.
 - Always scan from LEFT to RIGHT. Observe each person for each category in the area only once. If an observed person reappears in the scan area, do not record a second time. Do not backtrack to count new people entering the area.
 8. Transfer these data to the SOPARC Observation Form and reset the counter.
 9. Now scan all females participating in the primary activity and record their activity level (sedentary, walking, or vigorous).
 10. Transfer these data to the SOPARC Observation Form and reset the counter.
 11. Scan the entire target area again for **Females** who are Spectators. Describe the activity they are watching and scan for age, race/ethnicity, and activity level (they will typically be sedentary, but could be walking or vigorously involved).
 - If there are no female spectators, write “none” under organized activity and move to action #12.
 12. Repeat actions #5 through #11 for **Males**, scanning first for participants in the primary activity, then secondary activity, and finally spectators.
 13. Move to the next Target Area.

RECORDING PROCEDURES FOR WALKING/JOGGING TRACKS

1. Prior to observing in the park, a research team member will walk the path/track and record the length of time, in minutes, it took to complete one full lap around it (e.g., seven minutes). The path will be observed for this length of each time a scan of the area is conducted.
2. A standard location from which all scans will be made will be identified. This location is referred to as the **Coding Station** and will easily identifiable.
3. On the SOPARC Path Coding Form, enter the **Date, Path ID (i.e., Park ID), and Observer ID.**
 - If possible, complete this section prior to the start of the observation period.
4. Enter the **Start Time** for the path scan on the SOPARC Path Coding Form.
5. Count ALL people as they walk by the *coding station* and record their characteristics on the Path Coding Form. You may count some people more than once (e.g., runners), and some (e.g. slow walkers) may not pass by the area and will not be counted.
 - If the path is busy and there are two observers with counters present during the scan, one may count for females and the other for males.
 - When recording data on the Path Coding Form, place a one (1) in each column that represents the individual characteristics (e.g., male, adult, Latino, walking).

6. Once time has expired, enter the **End Time**.
7. Move to next Target Area.

MORNING OBSERVATION PERIOD

The objective is to obtain an accurate measure of people in the park Target Areas between 7:30AM and 8:30AM. Make sure that you are in Target Area 1 and ready to begin the first rotation of scans at precisely **7:30AM** (07:30 hours).

When there is sufficient time, do a second complete rotation of scans during the time period. The second rotation always begins 30 minutes after the start of the first rotation. For the morning observation, start the second rotation at Target Area 1 at **8:00AM** (08:00 hours).

LUNCHTIME OBSERVATION PERIOD

The objective is to obtain an accurate measure of people in the park Target Areas between 12:30PM and 1:30PM. Make sure that you are in Target Area 1 and ready to begin the first rotation of scans at precisely **12:30PM** (12:30 hours).

When there is sufficient time, do a second complete rotation of scans during the time period. The second rotation always begins 30 minutes after the start of the first rotation. For the lunchtime observation, start the second rotation at Target Area 1 at **1:00PM** (13:00 hours).

AFTERNOON OBSERVATION PERIOD

The objective is to obtain an accurate measure of people in the park Target Areas between 3:30PM and 4:30PM. Make sure that you are in Target Area 1 and ready to begin the first rotation of scans at precisely **3:30PM** (15:30 hours).

When there is sufficient time, do a second complete rotation of scans during the time period. The second rotation always begins 30 minutes after the start of the first rotation. For the afternoon observation, start the second rotation at Target Area 1 at **4:00PM** (16:00 hours).

EVENING OBSERVATION PERIOD

The objective is to obtain an accurate measure of people in the park Target Areas between 6:30PM and 7:30PM. Make sure that you are in Target Area 1 and ready to begin the first rotation of scans at precisely **6:30PM** (18:30 hours).

When there is sufficient time, do a second complete rotation of scans during the time period. The second rotation always begins 30 minutes after the start of the first rotation. For the evening observation, start the second rotation at Target Area 1 at **7:00PM** (19:00 hours).

SAMPLE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Morning observation period

7:15am - Check Target Areas and prepare SOPARC data forms

7:30am - Initiate SCAN in Target Area 1 (following established sequence)

7:50am - Complete SCAN of final Target Area

8:00am - Initiate second rotation SCAN in Target Area 1 (continue established sequence)

KEY WORDS

Coding Station: Identified location from which scans are conducted.

Condition: Descriptive characteristics (contextual variables) of a Target Area.

Counter: Device used to record data during park observations.

Observation Period: A predetermined period of time in which scans are conducted.

Primary Activity: The activity in which a majority of individuals are participating during the observation.

Scan: A single observation movement from left to right across a Target or Subtarget Area. During a scan, each individual person in the area is counted and coded for age, race/ethnicity, and activity level.

Scan Space: The geographical area within a Target or Subtarget Area.

SOPARC: System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities. This research method is used to observe physical activity in area parks.

Subtarget Area: A subdivision of a predetermined Target Area. Subtarget areas are created for a specific observation time and apply only to the scan space during that specific observation period. Activity level and the number of people located in a Target Area determine whether Subtarget Areas are necessary during a given observation period.

Target Area: A predetermined observation area in which park users may potentially engage in physical activity. A number of Target Areas will be established for each park.

SPECIAL CODING CONVENTIONS

Unidentifiable Person: This coding situation applies IF a person is observed sleeping in the area, but cannot be seen directly (i.e., due to blankets or sleeping position).

Gender: Code as "male"

Activity: Code as "Sleeping"

Age Group: Code as "Adult"

Ethnicity: Code based on the "majority" of park users in the neighborhood (i.e., if the community is primarily Latino, code as such).

Activity Level: Code as "Sedentary"

Comments: In the comments section of the data form, write a notation indicating that one or more individuals could not be identified due to sleeping position.

SCORING (FOR DATA ANALYSES ONLY)

Depending on the unit of analysis (gender, area, period, park, etc.), raw counts in each activity level are aggregated (sums or means) according to the variables of interest.

Example: To calculate the most active areas for females and males at a park on a given day

Steps:

1. Reduce data. Calculate mean activity counts from the double-scan data to provide a single count for each activity level of females and males. For multiple scans, sum these counts across periods to compute a single TIME PERIOD count for each level of user activity.
2. Sum across the park observation day. Aggregating by area, calculate a mean for each activity level (females and males separately) across all four periods observed to arrive at single counts for females and males at each level of activity in each area. Repeat for age and gender groupings.
3. Calculate energy expenditure rates. To estimate kilocalories/kg expended, the number of people counted in the sedentary, walking, and very active categories are multiplied by the constants .051kcal/kg/min, .096kcal/kg/min, and .144kcal/kg/min, respectively. Kilocalories/kg from each category can be summed to provide a measure of the total kilocalories/kg expended by park users in a given area. These values can be interpreted as the number of kilocalories per kg of body weight per minute expended in each area during the observed day. These energy expenditure rates are dependent on the number of people observed.

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(www.activelivingresearch.org) or the author.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Supported by NIEHS (P50ES012383) to Center for Population Health and Health Disparities, RAND

SOPARC Observation Form

Date: _____ Park ID: _____ Observer ID: _____ Period: Morning Lunch Afternoon Evening

Target Area: _____ Start time: _____
 Target area # Subtarget area #

Conditions of Target Area

Accessible (i.e., not locked or rented to others) Yes No
 Supervised (i.e., park staff is overseeing area) Yes No
 Equipped (i.e., removable balls/items available) Yes No
 Usable (i.e., is not excessively wet or windy) Yes No
 Organized (i.e., team sporting event) Yes No

Dark (i.e., insufficient lighting) Yes No
 Empty (i.e., scan area is empty) Yes No

Comments:

People	Activity	Age Group				Race/Ethnicity				Activity Level		
		Child	Teen	Adult	Senior	Latino	Black	White	Other	Sedentary	Walking	Vigorous
Participants	Primary Activity											
Female												
Male												
Spectators	Organized Activity											
Female												
Male												

Fitness Related Codes:

aerobics (dance/step aerobics)
 fitness stations
 jogging/running
 strengthening exercises (pull ups)
 walking

Sport Related Codes:

baseball horseshoes
 basketball soccer
 cheer leading swimming
 dance tennis/racquet
 football tetherball
 gymnastics volleyball
 handball

Active Game Related Codes:

climbing/sliding
 jumping (rope, hoops, hop scotch)
 manipulatives/racquet activities
 tag/chasing games

Sedentary Related Codes:

artwork
 chess/checkers/cards
 lying down
 picnicking (food involved)
 reading
 standing
 sitting

SOPARC PATH CODING FORM

DATE: _____ PATH ID: _____ OBSERVER ID: _____

START TIME: _____ END TIME: _____

	GENDER		AGE				RACE / ETHNICITY					ACTIVITY				
	Female	Male	Child	Teen	Adult	Senior	Latino	Black	White	Asian	Other	Sed ¹	Walk	Run	Bike	Skate ²
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
10																
11																
12																
13																
14																
15																
16																
17																
18																
19																
20																

¹ Sedentary

² Includes roller-skating, roller-bladeing and skate-boarding.

Observing Play and Leisure Activity in Communities (SOPARC): Reliability and Feasibility Measures

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference, Active Living Research, Coronado, CA, February 25, 2005

Background

While park and recreation settings are viable locations for promoting health enhancing physical activity, investigations of physical activity and associated variables in these “open” environments have been hampered by lack of objective tools. Measuring activity in these environments is challenging because the number and type of users and their activity levels are highly variable and park characteristics change often.

Objective

This paper describes the direct observation instrument, System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC), with specific focus on reliability and feasibility measures.

Methods

SOPARC is based on momentary time sampling techniques in which systematic and periodic scans are made of individuals and contextual factors within pre-determined target areas in community recreation settings. During a scan the activity of each individual was coded as Sedentary (lying down, sitting, or standing), Walking, or Very Active using specialized counters. Separate scans were made for females and males, and simultaneous entries were made for user age and race/ethnicity categories and for park characteristics (e.g., time of day; area accessibility and usability; presence of supervision and equipment; presence and classification of organized activities). Following training, observers used the system to generate data during morning, noon, afternoon, and evening observations in large parks (165 targeted activity areas) in 8 multi-ethnic communities over 56 days. Reliability data were collected during 16 days of field assessment over 4 months in 4 large parks (total=85 different activity areas) by pairs of trained assessors who made simultaneous and independent observations throughout the day. Data from a total of 335 simultaneous measures were used in the reliability analysis.

Results

Inter-observer agreement scores (IOA) for contextual variables were 95% for area accessibility, 91% for usability, 95% for presence of supervision, 95% for presence of organized activity, and 96% for provision of equipment. Intra class correlations for the number of park users were high ($R=.99$ for females; $R=.97$ for males). IOAs for age grouping (89% for females; 85% for males), race/ethnic grouping (80% for females; 82% for males), and activity levels (80% for females; 88% for males) also met acceptable criteria for reliable assessment.

An average of 2,006 users (range=638-4,849) was observed per park over 7 days, with 66% being sedentary (range=49-77%), 19% walking (range=12-30%), and 16% in vigorous activity (range=11-23%). More males were seen (62 vs. 38% of users) and they were nearly twice as likely in vigorous activity than females (19 vs. 10%). One-third were children, 19% teens, 43% adults, and 5% seniors. Most common activities were sitting/picnicking (22%), basketball (15%), observing organized sports (13%), soccer (9%), and using playgrounds (8%).

Conclusions

SOPARC can be used to collect relevant physical activity and contextual data in parks, and trained observers use the system reliably. The utility and generalizability of the instrument were established through its use in generating data throughout the day and in large parks in diverse multi-ethnic communities. Because validity of the activity codes has been established through heart rate monitoring, energy expenditure rates for target areas can be estimated. The instrument will permit physical activity levels and other comparisons be made among different open settings or within the same environment over different time periods (e.g., for intervention evaluation purposes).

Appendix 2. Park mapping guide

Introduction

Direct observations are made in designated Target Areas (see Section 8 for terms and definitions) that represent all standard locations likely to provide opportunities for park users to be physically active. These areas will be predetermined and identified for observations prior to baseline assessments. A map is created to identify areas and a standard observation order for each park. It is important to establish the Target Area map prior to initiating the observations.

During occasions of high user density, Target Areas can be subdivided into smaller Subtarget Areas (scan spaces) so that more accurate measures can be obtained (e.g., separate groups of people using opposite ends of a soccer field provide observation challenges without separating the areas). Observers use standard court or field markings or other environmental features to determine appropriate Subtarget Areas within each Target Area. Data from these smaller spaces are summed to provide an overall measure for each Target Area.

NOTE: A decision to subdivide a Target Area depends upon (1) the number of park users in the area, and (2) the type of user activity. Fast moving activities with people clustered together and moving in diverse directions (e.g., during soccer) require smaller scan spaces.

The goal of mapping is to divide parks into smaller, observable sections (i.e., Target Areas) so that accurate park user counts can be made using the SOPARC Online App. A well-defined Target Area is one that can be scanned from left to right without encountering visual obstructions. They should be a size that makes it possible to count all individuals within the area accurately. Observing parks without clearly mapped Target Areas can result in inconsistent counting and lower quality data.

Preparation

1. Find out if the park or the parks and recreation department has an existing map.
2. Print a satellite image of the park from an online mapping site (e.g., Google Earth, Google Maps).
 - a. The print out should show all areas of the park to be included in the observations.
 - b. Keep in mind that the image may be out of date or missing some features. Additionally, tree coverings may obscure some important features of interest. Nonetheless, this satellite image should provide an outline and general layout of the park and be a good place to start.
3. Get a feel for the layout of the park and how it is used.
 - a. Take a walk around the park and note the general layout and major features.
 - b. Look around to see if there are obvious sections or dividers that can help to define Target Areas.
 - c. Note which parts of the park are the most and least used.
 - d. Make note of any unique park features that may need to be considered for data collection.

Defining Target Areas

1. A target area is a space in which activities may occur. A target area should be large enough to accommodate activity, but small enough to accurately count everyone who may be using the area.

2. Areas of the park that generally are open to the public for use should be observed. Areas not intended for public use or that would be inappropriate for observation (e.g., storage space, staff offices, restrooms) should not be included in SOPARC observations.
3. There is no established minimum or maximum number of Target Areas, nor is there a defined size limit for a Target Area. Parks with large numbers of Target Areas may require more than one observer working simultaneously.
4. Data collectors need to be able to move efficiently from area to area during an observation rotation.
5. Data collectors should be able to observe the entire Target Area from one spot on the ground, and be able to scan from left to right without visual obstruction.
6. If possible, each Target Area should be made up of one primary feature (e.g., Lawn, Sidewalk, Basketball Court, Play area, Gym, Classroom). This permits the aggregation of data for similar Target Areas within the same park or across parks. However, this may not always be possible, and some areas may have mixed characteristics (e.g., Lawn and Sidewalk).
 - a. When you enter Target Areas with mixed characteristics into the SOPARC online app, name it according to its primary characteristic.
7. Existing boundaries (e.g., chalk lines on fields, tree lines, fences) can help determine a Target Area.
 - a. Keep in mind that Target Areas need to remain the same throughout the observation periods and that chalk lines may be temporary and may change from one sport or season to the next.
8. Activity types can also be used to help define Target Areas. For example, a tree-shaded section of a large green space could be divided into a separate Target Area since one might expect to observe people having picnics or being involved in some other sedentary activity, rather than running around or playing a sport as in the open space.

Ordering Target Areas

1. Order Target Areas such that the data collector can move clockwise through the park efficiently.
2. It may be possible to observe multiple Target Areas from a single point – order them accordingly.
3. By convention, begin observation rotations in the gymnasium, auditorium, community center, or comparable indoor space if there is one.
 - a. If there is no gymnasium, begin observations at the most prominent indoor space (or outdoor if there are no indoor areas).
 - b. If there are no indoor facilities intended for public use, begin with the most prominent outdoor area (e.g., basketball court, baseball or soccer field, picnic area).
4. Avoid having data collectors go into dangerous park areas. If these areas are to be observed, do this from a safe distance.

Drawing the Map

These directions assume you have a map printed from a mapping website. If none is available, draw areas of the park by hand, following the same general process outlined below.

1. If a park does not have indoor facilities, begin with the most prominent outdoor park feature (e.g., basketball court, soccer field, picnic area).
2. Proceed from the first outdoor Target Area in a clockwise fashion and continue to add Target Areas until all of the park area to be observed has been included in a Target Area.
3. If the park does have indoor facilities, begin with the main park building. Draw in any targeted indoor areas, as only the exterior of the building will be shown on a satellite image. Indicate all indoor spaces (e.g., classrooms, hallways, lobbies) on the map. As much as possible, they should be ordered in such a way that the data collector can move efficiently through the Target Areas without having to retrace his/her steps.
 - a. When ordering the indoor Target Areas keep in mind the entrances and exits that can be used to reach other Target Areas.
 - b. If a room has more than one entrance, check to see which is most commonly used and accessible.
4. Include non-activity areas on the map to help the data collector locate Target Areas. Number the Target Areas, beginning with the gymnasium (or other prominent indoor space if there is no gymnasium).
5. When all indoor spaces have been added to the map and numbered exit the building through the main entrance and begin to draw in the outdoor Target Areas. Continue to add Target Areas until all park areas are represented on the map.
6. See notes below on how to create Target Areas from common outdoor spaces.
7. Landscaped areas are generally not observed as individual Target Areas (except for gardens with paths or that are designed for use).
 - a. Landscaping may be included in other Target Areas. For example, a green space with landscaped borders might be one Target Area.
8. If there is a walking path or trail it should be marked on the map as a single Target Area, not divided and included as a part of other Target Areas.
 - a. Refer to the SOPARC manual for instructions on how to observe walking paths and trails.
9. Choose a single point from which the walking path will be observed during every observation. It should be unobstructed, shaded if possible, and in a spot from which you will likely see all individuals using the walking path.

Below are notes on common, individual park areas:

Lawns and Other Undefined Green Spaces

People can use green space for diverse purposes (from sleeping to running) and in varying numbers (one to hundreds of people). Since these areas are of mixed use it can be difficult to obtain an accurate count if they are too large. It is generally best to divide them into smaller, more manageable Target Areas, even though they may be vacant frequently.

1. Use natural boundaries to delineate these Target Areas as much as possible.
2. In the absence of obvious boundaries (e.g., fence), use trees, bushes, light posts, tables, and other immovable objects to help create boundaries.

- a. In addition to defining Target Area boundaries, these objects can help a data collector determine where he/she is on the map, but can also clutter the map unnecessarily. Be judicious in what is included on the map.
3. If the area is hilly, it may be necessary to further divide it so that the space can be observed without obstruction.
4. Use shade to help define Target Areas.
 - a. If one section of a large green space often is shaded and another is not, try to keep them separate as the amount of shade available often affects usage.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks generally are used for traveling from point A to B. Keeping these areas separate from a typically sedentary area such as a lawn or picnic area will help to more accurately count how many individuals are involved in the primary activity and at what activity level. You may find sidewalks that encircle a play area, basketball court, or other area designed for a specific activity. These sidewalks can be their own Target Area or may be included with the sport or activity specific area. Some things to consider in making this decision is whether a Target Area including the sidewalk would be too large to accurately observe, and whether the sidewalk might be an expected spectator area (remember that spectators only exist during organized activities, so this most often would not apply to play areas).

1. Decide if there is a route that often is used as a walking or jogging path. If so, consider doing a walking path scan for this Target Area.
 - a. If you choose to do a walking path observation using sidewalks as the walking path, do not include these sidewalks as additional Target Areas.
2. As sidewalks are normally well-defined, simply divide them into manageable sections so that they can be observed accurately.
3. When deciding how much of a sidewalk to include in a Target Area, keep in mind that people often will be moving in two different directions.

Play Areas

These areas are usually well-defined, so unless they are unusually large or have structures that obstruct vision keep them as a single area. It can be helpful to identify markers (e.g., lampposts, benches) so that data collectors can create Subtarget Areas on the fly if needed.

Sport Related Courts and Spaces

Mapping a sport related court or space depends largely on the size and kind of court. Unless separated visually, multiple tennis courts potentially can be grouped together as one Target Area as not many individuals play at one time. Unless they are rarely used, neighboring basketball or volleyball courts usually should not be combined, as they may involve many more people and vigorous activity levels than can be easily counted.

Sport and Multi-use Fields

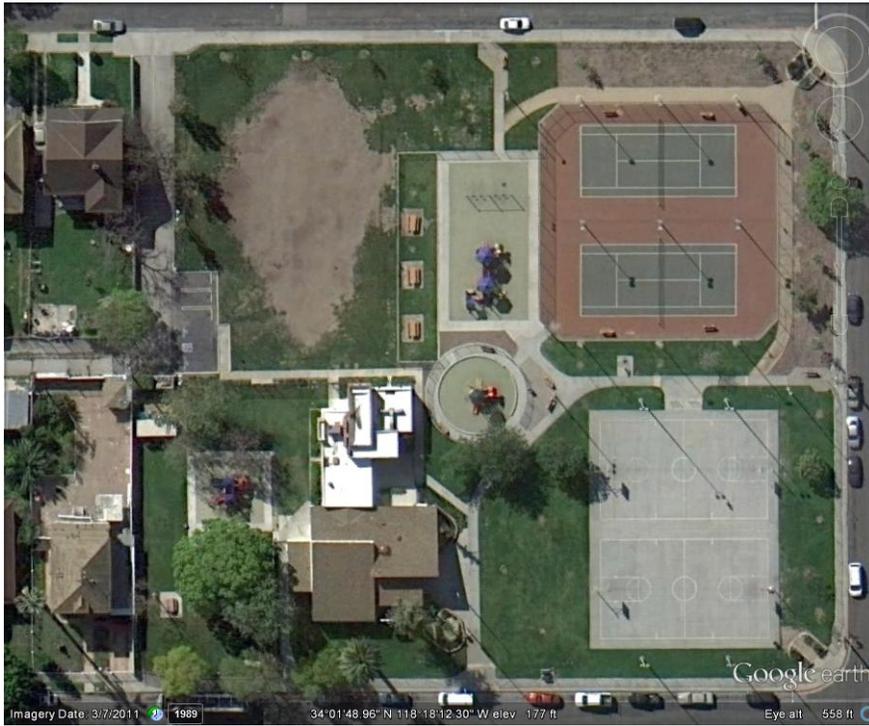
As the name suggests, multi-use fields might be used for soccer, baseball, football, and other activities. Depending on the season, a multi-use field might be lined for a different sport or activity, and these chalk lines can be used to help determine Target Areas. Check with park staff to see if the lines are likely to remain in place throughout the planned observation period.

1. Individual baseball fields often can be left intact as there are usually only a few individuals moving at any one time during a game.
 - a. Bleachers can be included as part of the baseball field Target Area or observed separately. If bleachers are included, individuals in the bleachers watching an organized game would be counted as spectators.
2. If a park has numerous sport facilities neighboring one another that might all be in use simultaneously during tournaments or other larger organized activities, each field or court should be an individual Target Area, and the map should indicate where Subtarget Areas are likely to be made.
3. Soccer or football fields may be divided in halves to make them easier to count, or they can be left whole but with instructions and markers for division into Subtarget Areas as needed.
4. It is not uncommon to see soccer played on baseball fields and vice versa. So keep in mind the season during which you will be observing as this may affect how the area should be defined.
5. Areas surrounding fields may contain benches or grass that is often used by spectators. Before beginning to observe the park, determine which part of a Target Area is considered the spectator area (remembering that by definition spectators only exist during an organized activity).

Finalizing the map

When the park map has been drawn, you may choose to create a digital copy using common software that allows you to use shapes to create or add to images, such as Microsoft PowerPoint. Other, more sophisticated mapping software is also available if desired. A computer generated map is not necessary, but may be helpful as it will likely be clearer and easier to read. The images below show three different methods of creating a park map starting with a satellite image of a park.

Satellite image of a park printed from online mapping tool



SOPARC map created using Microsoft PowerPoint



Satellite image of a park printed from online mapping website



SOPARC map using shapes overlaid on a satellite image



Satellite image of a park printed from online mapping tool



Hand-drawn SOPARC map



Appendix 3. Park survey

Park Survey

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ AM / PM (Circle one)

Participant type: Park user ¼ mile resident ½ mile resident 1 mile resident
 Station ¼ mile Station ½ mile Station 1 mile

Gender: Male Female Age: _____

INTERVIEWER TO READ STATEMENT: This survey is mainly about _____ [Insert name of park]. Please think about this park when you answer the questions.

1. How do you describe yourself in terms of race or ethnicity?

- Latino
 - White
 - Black
 - Asian / Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Other _____
-

2. We surveyed park users and residents about this park two years ago. Do you remember participating in this survey about two years ago?

- Yes
- No

3. We are interested in park use by both adults and children. Do you have a child under the age of 18 years?

- Yes
- No [skip to #9]

4. What is the age of your oldest child who is under 18 years old?

(Insert number)

5. What is the gender of your oldest child under the age of 18?

- Male
 - Female
-

Please think about the child you have just described when answering the following 3 questions.

6. For what purpose does your child usually come to this park? (Check all that apply)

- Child does not use park
- Baseball/softball
- Basketball (indoors)
- Basketball (outdoors)
- Celebrations, picnics
- Frisbee
- Gymnasium activity
- Gymnastics equipment
- Handball
- Meet friends
- Playground
- Sitting in park (relax)
- Skating
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Walking with dog
- Other _____

7. Has your child ever participated in a program sponsored at this park? (Check one)

- Yes No

8. Have user fees ever prohibited your child from participating in a program offered at _____ [park name]?

- Yes No

The remaining questions are about your use of the park.

9. How often do you come to this park? (Check one)

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once per week
- A couple times per month
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- This is the first time
- Never [*skip to #17*]

10. How many times did you visit this park within the past SEVEN days?

_____ (insert number)

- I don't know

11. On a typical day when you go to the park, how long do you stay there?

(Check one)

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- > 1 hour, but < 2 hours
- 2 – 3 hours
- > 3 hours, but < 5 hours
- 5 or more hours

12. When was the first time you came to this park?

(Check one)

- Today
- This month
- In the past 6 months
- Between 6 - 11 months ago
- Between 1 - 2 years ago
- More than 2 years ago

13. How do you usually get to the park?

(Check one)

- Walk
- Bike
- Car
- Bus or other public transportation
- Other _____

14. What do you usually do while at this park?

(Check all that apply)

- Aerobics
- Baseball/softball
- Basketball (indoors)
- Basketball (outdoors)
- Celebrations or picnics
- Frisbee
- Gymnasium activity
- Gymnastics equipment
- Handball
- Meet friends
- Playground
- Sitting in park (relax)
- Skating
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Walking with dog
- Other _____

15. When you visit this park who do you usually go with? *(Check all that apply)*

- Adult family members
- Child family members
- Child for whom I provide care
- Friends
- Team or league members
- I go alone

16. When you are at this park, do you run into people you know? *(Check one)*

- Yes, often
- Yes, sometimes
- Rarely
- No, not at all

17. If you do not visit this park, why not?

(Only ask this question if the respondent answered "Never" to question 9)

18. How easy is it for you to get to the park?

(Check one)

- Very easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Impossible

19. How would you grade the park staff with respect to their helpfulness, friendliness, and professionalism? *(Check one)*

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F
- Don't know the staff

20. In general, how safe do you feel the park is?

(Check one)

- Very safe *[skip to #22]*
- Safe *[skip to #22]*
- Not very safe
- Not safe at all

21. If you don't feel it is safe, why? *(Check all that apply)*

- Safety hazards
- Crime or violence
- Other _____
- I think it's safe

22. How often do you go to other parks? (Check one)

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once per week
- A couple of times per month
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Never

23. Which other park do you go to most often?

(Write name of park or neighborhood of park)

24. Which of the programs and events offered at _____ [park name] are you aware of?

- Aerobics or fitness classes
- After school program
- Arts or crafts
- Holiday events
- Martial arts
- Music and dance
- Senior classes
- Sports programs or leagues
- Other _____
- None

25. How do you usually find out about the programs and events that are offered at this park?

(Check all that apply)

- Banners
- Email
- Flyers at park
- Flyers from child's school
- From park office
- Mailing
- Word of mouth
- Other _____
- Don't find out about programs

26. Have you ever participated in a program sponsored at this park? (Check one)

- Yes
- No *[skip to #29]*

27. When was the last time you participated in a program at this park?

(Check one)

- Today
- In the past month
- In the past 6 months
- Between 6-11 months ago
- Between 1-2 years ago
- More than 2 years ago

28. In which programs have you participated within the past twelve months?

(Check all that apply)

- Adult sport league
- Dance classes
- Fitness / aerobics class
- Organized walks / hikes
- Park events (e.g. fair)
- Other _____

29. Have user fees ever prohibited you from participating in a program offered by _____

[park name]?

- Yes
- No

30. Are you familiar with the Park Advisory Board (PAB) at _____ [park name]?

- Yes
- No *[skip to #31]*

a. How effective do you think the Park Advisory Board is? (Check one)

- Very
- Moderately
- A little bit
- Not at all
- I'm not familiar with the PAB

31. Have you ever participated in individual or community efforts to influence what programs are offered by _____ [park name]?

- Yes
- No

32. What is the nearest intersection to your home?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: Please indicate complete street name (i.e., 49th Place or 49th Street). Also verify that these streets intersect!)

Major street: _____

Cross street: _____

33. How long have you lived at your current address? (Check one)

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 2 years
- > 2 years, but < 5 years
- Between 5 - 9 years
- 10 years or more

34. Where do you usually exercise? (Check one)

- Park
- Home
- Private health club
- Streets and sidewalks
- Other _____
- I don't usually exercise

35. In general, would you say your health is: (Check one)

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

36. During the past 4 weeks, were you limited in the kind of work or other activities you ordinarily do as a result of your physical health? (Check one)

- Yes
- No

37. What is your height and weight?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: Remind respondent that the survey is anonymous)

Height _____ Feet _____ Inches
 _____ Meters _____ Centimeters

Weight _____ Pounds
 _____ Kilograms

38. How many exercise sessions do you usually do in a week?

- 0 [skip to #40]
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- Don't know

39. Is the usual length of your physical exercise sessions less than 15 minutes, between 15 and 30 minutes, between 31 and 60 minutes, or more than 60 minutes? (Check one)

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- More than 60 minutes
- Don't know

40. Do you engage in physical exercise as part of your work on a regular basis? (Check one)

- Yes No

41. How much time outside of work do you spend watching television, DVDs or videos, playing video games, or using a computer on an average day? (Check one)

- 0 – 60 minutes
 > 1 hour, but < 2 hours
 Between 2 and 4 hours
 > 4 hours, but < 5 hours
 5 hours or more
 I don't know

42. We would like to know how we can improve the park. What additional activities, programs, or facilities would you like to see in your community park that would cause you to be more physically active?

(Check all that apply)

- Bicycle paths
 Walking paths or trails
 Adult sports leagues
 Adult dance classes
 Fitness classes
 Youth sports leagues
 Organized adventure walks
 Park events/fairs
 Park concerts/dances
 More trees/landscaping
 Garden area
 Other _____

43. What specific things do you like about this park?

Horizontal lines for writing answers to question 43.

44. Do you have any additional comments to share about this park?

Horizontal lines for writing answers to question 44.

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for participating.

Appendix 4. Park interview recruitment guide and interview protocol

Park User Sample

****Interview only those over age 18.** No exceptions! Before conducting an interview, verify the age of the person. You are *not* permitted to speak to children even if a parent is present!

*Interviewing Teams must conduct four to six interviews during each shift (7:30am-1:30pm and 1:30pm-7:30pm). The interview “quota” is based on the number per day, NOT the total number per week.

If the park is busy during a given shift, try to conduct additional surveys. However, conducting additional interviews on one day does not reduce the number of interviews required for the next day.

Try to interview people that are representative of the people using the park on any given day. Take into consideration activity level (active/sedentary), gender (men/women), and race.

Survey Introduction

When inviting perspective participants to answer the survey, explain that you are working with [your company/project] to evaluate how well the parks are serving the local community. Explain that getting opinions from Park Users is critical. Tell prospective participants that the questionnaire will take only a few minutes of their time, and that the results will be given to the Department of Recreation and Parks to help improve local parks. When requested, give interviewees a flyer, which explains more about the project.

Selecting Participants

In order to obtain a representative sample, follow the protocol below to select participants:

1. Go to the Target Area with the most people over age 18. Approach two people and invite them to participate:

Person 1: Scan for **sedentary persons**. Approach the first sedentary person on your left and ask him/her to complete a survey. If that person refuses to participate, ask the next person on your left. Continue until one person agrees to complete the survey.

- Record the outcome for each person you ask to participate (survey completions and refusals) on the Park User Interview Log.

Person 2: Scan the area for **active persons** (i.e., walking or vigorous activity). Approach the active first person that stops for a break and asks him/her to participate. If that person declines, continue until a person agrees to complete the survey. Be cautious about interrupting those who are exercising.

- Record the outcome on the Park User Interview Log.

2. Go to the Target Area with the second most people over age 18 and interview one sedentary and one active person (persons 3 and 4). If both people surveyed in the first selected Target Area were of the same gender (e.g., males), look for people of the other gender (e.g., females) to interview in the second Target Area. If you interviewed one male and one female in the first Target Area, do not be concerned about the gender of the people you interview in the second area.

Person 1: Scan for **sedentary persons**. Approach the first one on your left and ask him/her to be interviewed. If the person refuses to participate, ask the next person to your left. Continue until one person agrees to complete the survey.

- Record the outcome on the Park User Interview Log.

Person 2: Scan the area for **active persons** (i.e., walking or vigorous activity). Approach the active first person that stops for a break and asks him/her to participate. If that person declines, continue until a person agrees to complete the survey. Be cautious about interrupting those who are exercising.

- Record the outcome on the Park User Interview Log.

3. Go to a quiet Target Area (an area with few people over the age of 18) and interview one sedentary and one active person (persons 5 and 6). Select these people by gender, to balance out the number of females and males interviewed today. Conduct the interviews, even if it does not balance out as 3 women and 3 men.

Person 1: Scan for **sedentary persons**. Approach the first one on your left and ask him/her to be interviewed. If the person refuses to participate, ask the next person to your left. Continue until one person agrees to complete the survey.

- Record the outcome on the Park User Interview Log.

Person 2: Scan the area for **active persons** (e.g., walking or vigorous activity). Approach the active first person that stops for a break and asks him/her to participate. If that person declines, continue until a person agrees to complete the survey.

- Record the outcome on the Park User Interview Log.

Appendix 5. Household interview recruitment guide and interview protocol

Household Sample

Interviewers will survey residents living at designated addresses within one-quarter mile (1/4 mile), one-half mile (1/2 mile), and one mile (1 mile) of the park. Project staff will identify 25 residential addresses within each of these three distance areas (n = 75 residences), and provide them to interviewers by the first day of each park observation.

The interviewer (you) will need to determine if those addresses are appropriate. In some cases, multiple residences may be associated with a single address (e.g., apartment buildings) or the address may not be valid (e.g., commercial buildings, vacant lots, condemned home). You must follow the established protocols to ensure that the interviewing methods meet scientific research criteria.

Selecting Apartments

When the provided address is for an apartment building, individual units are determined as follows:

1. The **1st time** you encounter this scenario, take the stairs to the **second floor** of the building. Approach the **first apartment to the left**. This protocol should be followed for all odd numbered subsequent occurrences (3rd time, 5th time, 7th time, etc.). [If the apartment building is a single story, follow the directions in #2.]
 - On the Household Interview Log, enter the apartment number next to the printed address AND note that the apartment is on the second floor.
2. The **2nd time** you encounter this scenario, select the **first apartment to the left** on the **first floor** of the building. This protocol should be followed for all even numbered subsequent occurrences (2nd time, 4th time, 6th time, etc.).
 - On the Household Interview Log, enter the apartment number next to the printed address AND note that the apartment is on the first floor.

Selecting Freestanding Units

When there is more than one freestanding unit at the provided address, determine which unit to approach as follows:

1. The **1st time** you encounter this scenario, select the **first unit** you approach when walking onto the property. This protocol should be followed for all odd numbered subsequent occurrences (3rd time, 5th time, 7th time, etc.).
 - On the Household Interview Log, enter the unit number (e.g., Unit A or front house) next to the printed address.
2. The **2nd time** you encounter this scenario, select the **second unit** you approach when walking onto the property. This protocol should be followed for all even numbered subsequent occurrences (2nd time, 4th time, 6th time, etc.).
 - On the Household Interview Log, enter the unit number (e.g., Unit B or back house) next to the printed address.

Selecting Replacement Addresses

It is important that you attempt an interview at each address on the list. If, however, an address is invalid or a residence is not occupied (e.g., a condemned building or vacant lot), select a replacement residence as follows:

1. Replace a **single-family residence** by identifying the property located to the immediate **left** of the original address. [If there is more than one residence at the identified address (e.g., apartment), skip to Action #2.]
 - A. If the property to the left is a **single-family residence**, note the replacement address under the “Replacement address” column on the Household Interview Log. It is also necessary to indicate why the alternative address was selected under the “Reason for replacement” column on the log.
 - B. If the building to the left is an **apartment building or multiple freestanding units** follow the protocol outlined in the *Selecting Apartments* and *Selecting Free-Standing Units*. Note the replacement address under the “Replacement address” column on the Household Interview Log. It is also necessary to indicate why an alternative address was selected under the “Reason for replacement” column on the log.
 - C. If there is a **vacant lot or commercial building** to the left of the original address, continue to search for a residential property as follows:
 - i) Continue walking to the left of the original address. If you come to the end of the street without identifying an appropriate replacement address, return to the original address and follow the same protocol by walking to the right.
 - ii) If you come to the end of the street without identifying an appropriate replacement address, return to the original address. Then follow the same protocol starting at the address located immediately across the street (first walking right and then left, if necessary).
 - If no residential replacements are identified, note this on the Household Interview Log by writing “no replacement located” under the “Replacement address” column. If, however, a replacement address was determined, indicate the address on the log. It is also important to write in the reason for selecting an alternative address on the log.
2. Replace an **apartment** by selecting the first occupied unit to the **left** of the original unit. This scenario only applies if the apartment identified when following the protocol outlined in the *Selecting Apartments* section yields an unoccupied unit (no people currently residing in it).
 - A. If you come to the end of a hallway, return to the original unit and continue searching for an occupied unit to the right. If no occupied units are identified, note this on the Household Interview Log by writing “no replacement located” under the “Replacement address” column. If a replacement address was determined, indicate the unit and floor number on the log. It is also important to write in the reason for selecting an alternative address on the log.
3. Replace a **freestanding unit** by selecting the first occupied unit encountered while walking beyond the original unit. If no occupied units are identified, note this on the Household Interview Log by writing “no replacement located” under the “Replacement address” column. If

a replacement address was determined, indicate the unit and floor number on the log. It is also important to write in the reason for selecting an alternative address on the log.

Selecting Interview Participants

When the appropriate residential address has been identified, knock on the door or ring the doorbell. When the door is answered, immediately explain who you are and why you are there. Proceed by asking to speak with the person who is **over 18, currently at home, with the next birthday**. Ask this person to participate in the interview process and notify him/her of the incentive. If this person declines, continue asking for participation until someone agrees to participate or all people refuse participation.

Attempted Interviews

Make a total of four attempts to interview a person at each selected address. When returning to an address, always approach the same door as your initial attempt (e.g., front door or same apartment number). If no one answers the door, check the appropriate box (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th) in the "Attempts" column to indicate how many attempts have been made.

If a minor answers the door and indicates there is no one over the age of 18 available, follow the procedure outlined above AND indicate that a child was home by writing "minor" above the box you check for this attempt.

Conducting Interviews

For safety, always conduct surveys in the presence of another interviewer. You should never enter a residence when talking with survey participants. Rather, conduct all interviews at the door. After you complete an interview, mark the appropriate box (e.g. PDA, Form, or Refuse) in the "Outcome" column of the Household Interview Log to indicate that the person agreed to participate in the interview.

Participants have the right to stop an interview at any time. If this happens, mark the appropriate box in the outcome column to indicate the interview was initiated. In addition, write "stopped" in the "Reason for replacement" column. Replace this address as directed below in the *Refusals* section.

Refusals

When residents (over age 18) indicate that they are unwilling to participate in the interview, note the refusal on the Household Interview Log by marking "Refuse" in the "Outcome" column. When residents decline to participate, DO NOT attempt to conduct another interview at this address.

For the first five refusals within each area distance, select a replacement address from the "Alternate Address" list. Attempt to conduct an interview at each alternative address following the procedures outlined in this protocol.

No Contact

If no contact was made with a resident (over 18 years of age) after four attempts, circle the "N" under the "Outcome" column.

Safety Considerations

If you become concerned about your health and/or safety (e.g., drugs, violence, dogs) while attempting to conduct interviews, leave the area immediately. Make a notation on the Household

Interview Log to indicate the situation (e.g., Stopped due to safety). When possible, select a replacement address by following the procedures outlined in this guide.

Appendix 6. Data management log

PARKS DATA LOG

___ of ___

Park: _____

Name	Date & Day of week	Park interviews		Household interviews	
		<i>PDA</i>	<i>Paper</i>	<i>PDA</i>	<i>Paper</i>
Sub-total					
TOTALS					

Park User Interview Daily Log

Park name: _____

Date: _____

Data collector name: _____

#	Target Area	Gender M = Male F = Female	Race/Ethnicity L = Latino B = Black W = White O = Other	Age Group Ad = Adult Sr = Senior	Activity Level S = Sedentary A = Active	Outcome P = PDA F = Form R = Refuse	Comments
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2		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
3		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
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3		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
4		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
5		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
6		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
7		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
8		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
9		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
10		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
11		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
12		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
13		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
14		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
15		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
16		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
17		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
18		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
19		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	
20		M F	L B W O	Ad Sr	S A	P F R	

Data Management and Park User Interview Daily Log Instructions

The forms included above make up a single packet, with the Parks Data Log being the first page followed by 8-10 copies of the Park User Interview Daily Log. A seven day data collection schedule only requires seven copies of the daily log, but we included extra copies to account for weather and other delays.

The data management log tracks overall survey work in a park, while the park user interview log tracks just the park user interview progress. Each data collector should get a packet consisting of one data management log and enough park user interview logs to provide one per day (and extra days if desired). Every day data collectors should record each park user they approach to conduct an interview. It is important to record both people who respond and those who do not so that you can track refusal rates.

The first person approached will go in row one and subsequent interview attempts will be recorded in the rows that follow. The characteristics to record are listed below and will assist in tracking who is included in your survey sample and if any biases exist.

Target area: The number of the target area in which the person was approached. This will give an indication of what part of the park this person was using (e.g., in the gym, using the play area, etc.)

Gender: Based on data collector observation of person.

Race/Ethnicity: Based on data collector observation of the person approached if an interview is not completed, otherwise record what the respondent says.

Age group: Based on data collector observation of the person approached if an interview is not completed, otherwise record what the respondent says.

Activity level: This is the activity level of the person when s/he is approached.

Outcome: We recorded whether the interview was completed on paper or on the handheld device, or if the person refused to participate. If just one administration mode is used (e.g., paper surveys only), you can replace these codes with Yes and No. The important thing is to track whether the person approached participated in the survey or not.

Comments: This can include any other information that might be useful. For example, you might want to record if a respondent stopped the survey midway through.

Interview outcomes should be recorded immediately following an interview or refusal so that data collectors do not forget these characteristics. At the end of the day the park user interview counts should be summarized on the data management log. These packets are designed such that they can be used by multiple people in a single park, as our schedule required that data collectors work in one park on one day and possibly a different park on the next. As such, these logs are park specific, not data collector specific.

Household Interview Log

Appendix 7. Household interview log

#	1/4 mile - Primary			Replacement address	Attempts	Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
									Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
P1	4005	N	GOODALE BLVD		1 2 3 4		Y N					
P2					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P3					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P4					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P5					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P6					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P7					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P8					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P9					1 2 3 4		Y N					
P10					1 2 3 4		Y N					

Household Interview Log

#	1/4 mile - Alternates			Attempts				Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
											Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
R1	950	W	MIRAMAR DR	1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R2				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R3				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R4				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R5				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R6				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R7				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R8				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R9				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R10				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R11				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R12				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R13				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R14				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R15				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R16				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R17				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R18				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R19				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R20				1	2	3	4		Y	N				

Household Interview Log

#	1/2 mile - Primary			Replacement address	Attempts				Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
												Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
P1	901	N	BROAD ST		1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P2					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P3					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P4					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P5					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P6					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P7					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P8					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P9					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P10					1	2	3	4		Y	N				

Household Interview Log

#	1/2 mile - Alternates			Attempts				Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
											Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
R1	924	W	MAIN ST	1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R2				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R3				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R4				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R5				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R6				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R7				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R8				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R9				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R10				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R11				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R12				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R13				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R14				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R15				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R16				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R17				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R18				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R19				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R20				1	2	3	4		Y	N				

Household Interview Log

#	1 mile - Primary			Replacement address	Attempts				Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
												Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
P1	3256	N	FIRST AVE		1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P2					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P3					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P4					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P5					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P6					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P7					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P8					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P9					1	2	3	4		Y	N				
P10					1	2	3	4		Y	N				

Household Interview Log

#	1 mile - Alternates			Attempts				Contact date	Survey completed		Survey NOT completed			
											Refused	No contact	Doesn't exist / Other	Not accessible
R1	4800	W	NORWICH AVE	1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R2				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R3				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R4				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R5				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R6				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R7				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R8				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R9				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R10				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R11				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R12				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R13				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R14				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R15				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R16				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R17				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R18				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R19				1	2	3	4		Y	N				
R20				1	2	3	4		Y	N				

Household Interview Log Instructions

The household interview log is what the data collectors use to track progress on household interviews. This log is park specific and all data collectors working in a single park will track their work here. This should be easy since data collectors work in pairs, and only one of them could interview a person at a given address. The log consists of six pages, one page of 10 primary addresses within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the park, a second page of 20 alternate addresses within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the park, two similar pages for addresses $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the park, and two similar pages for address $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 mile from the park.

In the sample forms above we have included a fake address in the first row to show how we arranged the form for our project. The first column is a simple indication of whether the address is primary (P) or an alternate (R), and will help data collectors know where they are on the form. The second column is the street number, followed by direction (if there is one), and the street name. These could all be listed in a single column, but our randomization output was separated in this manner and these forms reflect that. The attempts column is where data collectors track how many times they have attempted an interview at each address. Data collectors will enter a date for completed interviews or refusals in the next column. If after four attempts they are unable to reach someone at the address, the contact date column will be left empty. The survey outcome column is used to track if an interview was completed or not. If N is circled in that column then they should indicate why in the final four columns. It is important that all refusals are recorded as such in order to calculate response rates, and the final three columns are used to indicate other reasons why an interview could not be completed.

Appendix 8. Intervention park purchases

Marketing materials



Sports equipment and motivational signage around walking paths



Appendix 9. Sample marketing training plan

This project contracted a marketing consultant to provide professional marketing training and materials to the intervention park staff. Some of these materials have been supplied here, and others are available by contacting the vendor directly at <http://www.littleredsbigideas.typepad.com/>.

Marketing pre-assessment

The first step is to assess existing marketing efforts, and determine the marketing background and experience of park staff. We emailed a brief form to parks requesting that each respondent describe his or her personality traits that relate to marketing and promotion, and to rate their marketing skills and experience.



BAM-ITI!

Greetings from the world of Benefits Activated Marketing! You are about to embark on an exciting and innovative journey to increase participation, credibility, appreciation and awareness of your programs, products, services, facilities and events. As a marketing trainer, my goal is to customize the workshop to your requirements. But, I need your help! Please take 5-10 minutes to complete this survey and quiz designed to measure pre-training marketing skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Thank you for your help!
Jodi L. Rudick, MAS

Marketing Assessment

Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation 2009

Section One: Your Marketing Skills

Name: _____
 Name of Park: _____
 Current position or job title? _____

What is your responsibility related to marketing communications?

What do you need to take away, gain or learn from this "process" to consider it a success? Be as specific as possible.

Please check the best response to each statement:

I consider myself to be	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
...a much better leader than a follower.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...quicker than most to process and apply ideas and information to my own circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...more creative than most.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...an extrovert who loves meeting new people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...more open to new ideas than most.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...a "People Person."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...more "self-motivated" than most.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...more analytical than most.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...enthusiastic about better marketing my parks/programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...extremely well-organized and detail-oriented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being "no experience" and 10 being "extremely experienced") rank your proficiency in each of the following areas related to marketing communication. If you are not familiar with the term – leave blank. Please to explain your response:

____ Graphic Design _____

- ____ Writing _____
- ____ Strategic Planning _____
- ____ Web Site Design _____
- ____ Web 2.0/Social Netorking (Facebook/You Tube) _____
- ____ Marketing Plan Development _____
- ____ Making Speeches and Presentations _____
- ____ Networking with Groups within my Organization/Department _____
- ____ Networking with Groups or Individuals Outside My Organization _____
- ____ Advertising/Media Placement _____
- ____ Marketing Research/Documentation _____
- ____ Leadership/Project Management _____
- ____ Programming _____
- ____ Special Event Coordination _____
- ____ Sales _____
- ____ Media Relations _____
- ____ Video Production _____

Please list any other skills or talents that could contribute to your marketing success...

Please use the space below to add any other comments, concerns or information that will help me understand your special needs, circumstances or challenges:

Training Sessions

After the parks had completed the pre-assessment we held a series of five training workshops, which were attended by either the park director and/or recreation coordinator. Members of the PABs also were invited, but were mostly unable to attend as the workshops were held during business hours and most held full-time jobs. Trainings can be conducted in person or via webinar depending on attendee availability, session content, and access to required technology. We found that some participants were not comfortable with webinars and preferred in-person interaction, while others appreciated the opportunity to learn new communication techniques and the time savings resulting from the webinars. Training sessions were supplemented by email exchanges to expand on topics covered in training sessions and distribute related materials and tools.

The workshops are described below in the approximate order in which they occurred. However, content and agendas were adjusted as needed to ensure that all attendees were able to participate. Each session also included time for park directors to report on how the various activities were working and any challenges they had encountered.

The marketing professional contracted to conduct the trainings visited as many of the parks as possible before the trainings began in order to get a sense of how parks currently marketed themselves.

Session 1

In the first session we described the marketing component of the intervention, set expectations (e.g., participation), and identify points of contact at individual parks. We then introduced some basic marketing principles and how they could be applied to park programs.

- Review the pre-assessment with park directors to identify existing strengths and marketing assets, and opportunities for improvement.
- Review intervention structure and budget.
- Review key marketing concepts (e.g., product, price, placement, promotion, people).

Session 2

The second session focused on customer service, as it was a noted area for improvement.

- How to answer phones.
- How to make the park more presentable and welcoming.
- How to make staff more easily identifiable and available to the public.

Session 3

In the second session we began to develop standardized “point of participation” marketing tools that could be used across parks. We also began a discussion of less traditional marketing techniques.

- Draft slogan and logo for the marketing component, and discuss how they could be presented and utilized (e.g., banners, doormats, t-shirts, etc.).
- Create sub-committee to continue logo design work.
- Discuss email as a program marketing tool (e.g., Constant Contact).

Session 4

This session continued the conversation of the standardized marketing tools, and expanded to how those should be used in conjunction with other activities such as special events.

- Discuss how to use special events (e.g., Halloween, winter and spring holidays) as marketing opportunities.
- Provide a special event marketing plan worksheet (see below).

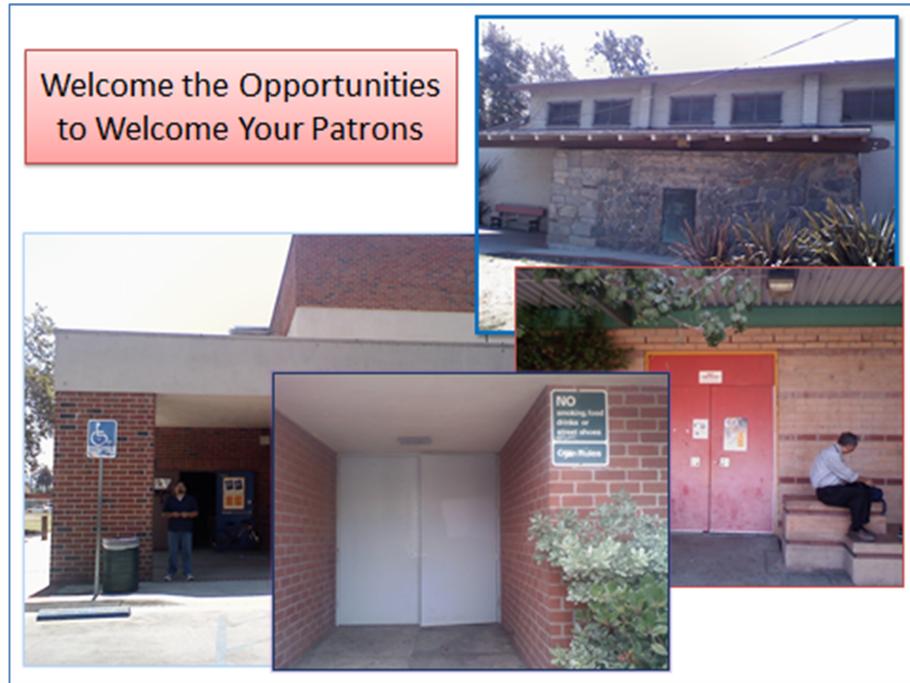
Session 5

This session covered how to use “gatekeeper strategies,” that is, how to utilize other community resources to help promote the park.

- Realtors can help sell parks to house buyers.
- Teachers can help promote programs to their classes.

Marketing workshops often emphasized some relatively low cost marketing activities. Such as...

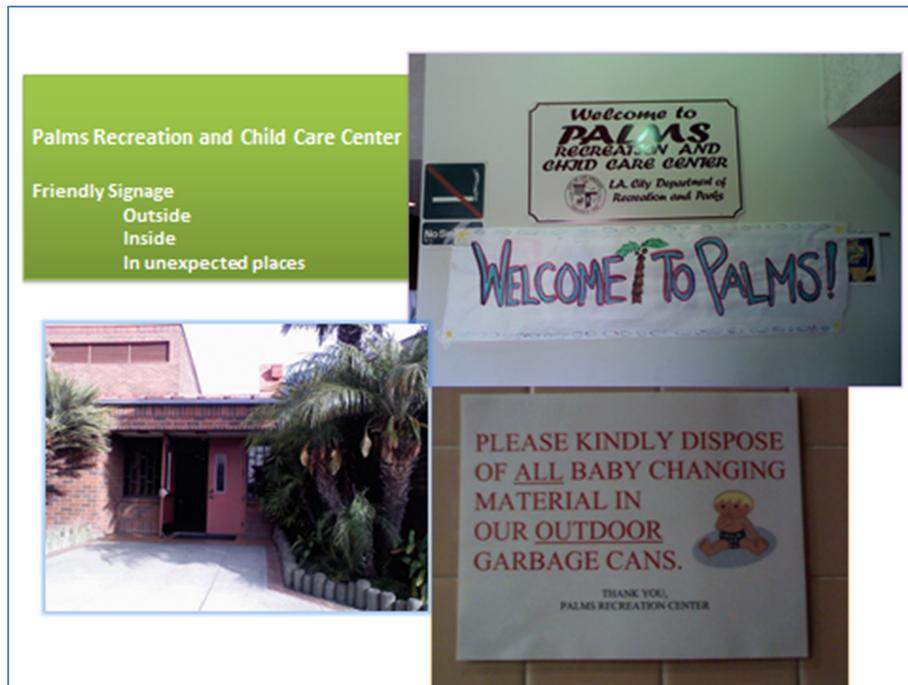
Take advantage of opportunities to make park patrons feel welcome...



Locate signage where it can be seen by park patrons...



Make park signage welcoming and friendly...



Get the most out of bulletin boards by consistently presenting useful information...



Using email to spread the word about park programs...

Constant Contact Metrics Real Time Marketing Feedback

Here is the summary information for this email. To see the email, click the Preview button. If you would like to create a new email based on this one, click the Copy button.

For emails sent less than 95 days ago you can refresh these statistics by clicking the icon, and you may resend the email by clicking the Resend Options button.

Share your emails with more people. Archive it with Email Campaign Archive.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[Back](#) E000ENL0000

Email Details

Spring EGGstravaganza & Open House [Resend Options](#) [Copy](#) [Preview](#)

Status: **Sent**

Template: Holiday - Easter Event

List Selection: General Interest Delivery Date: Friday, April 2, 2010 at 7:45 PM EDT

Email Run History

[See All Email Reports](#)

Sending Type	Sent	Run Date	Status
Original Send	788	4/2/2010 7:45 PM EDT	Successfully Sent

Email Statistics

[See All Email Reports](#)

Sent	Bounces	Spam Reports	Opt-outs	Opens	Clicks	Forwards
788	1.4% (11)	0	0.1% (1)	37.9% (297)	9.1% (72)	0

Click-through Statistics

Email Link	Unique Click-throughs	Click-through Distribution
http://www.silverlake.org/EGGstravaganza	20	100.0%
http://www.silverlake.org/EGGstravaganza	20	100.0%
Total Click-throughs	20	100%

Constant Contact Email Marketing

Silver Lake Recreation Center engages customers online

- *Invitations
- *Newsletters
- *Announcements

From: Silver Lake Recreation Center <silverlake.recreationcenter@cityofsl.org>
 Subject: You're Invited to Our Spring EGGstravaganza & Open House
 Reply: silverlake.recreationcenter@cityofsl.org

Received: email by Silver Lake Recreation Center

Forwarded by Silver Lake Recreation Center

Silver Lake Summer Camp

Let your child enjoy a variety of recreational, social and cultural activities in a safe and fun environment. Our staff is well trained and experienced in camp activities, child supervision, and emergency procedures.

Our Summer Camp program includes:
 GAMES / ARTS & CRAFTS / SPORTS / SINGING / DANCING / COOKING AND FIELD TRIPS to various locations throughout Los Angeles.

Ages: 5-11 (Must have attended kindergarten)
 Camp Dates: Monday, June 28th - Friday, August 27th
 Registration Begins: Sunday, May 16, 2010
 Fee: \$90/week 12am-4pm
 Extended Care: \$25/week 8am-10pm and/or 4pm-6pm

Field Trip fees are extra and vary by location.

Mandatory Parent Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 2010 @ 8:30am

Parents will receive a parent handbook outlining all of the information that you and your child will need for an enjoyable summer. This is also your opportunity to meet our staff and ask any questions that you may have.

Please note that attendance of the Parent Meeting is required as part of the registration process. No one will be allowed to register without having attended the Parent Meeting first.

[Join Our Waiting List](#)

Forwarded by Silver Lake Recreation Center

Received: email by Silver Lake Recreation Center



Special Event Marketing Plan

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks

What type of event will you “produce?” _____

Who is the target audience most likely to attend this event? _____

Who might you partner with to increase your event’s reach, effectiveness or value? _____

Who might want to share the planning and development of the event? _____

<p>1. What makes your event special? What will happen at this event that is newsworthy, unique or of great value to your target audience?</p>	
<p>2. How will you let people know about the event? How will you attract people to the event? What will you say/do to motivate people to attend your event?</p>	
<p>3. What products/services/ideas/ will you promote at the event? How will you use the event to get people to return to your parks/facilities?</p>	
<p>4. How will you capture contact information from those attending the event? What action do you want people to take during or after the event?</p>	
<p>5. How will you follow-up with new contacts? What will you do to motivate new contacts to continue to do business with you? Participate in another event? Visit your park/facility?</p>	
<p>6. What do you need to complete these activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resources ● Staff ● Talent ● Tools 	
<p>7. What do you need to do first? What do you need to do after that? What do you need to do before you do this?</p>	

Appendix 10. Intervention monitoring

Monitoring the progress of an intervention is important if one is interested in testing outcomes of an intervention. On the next page you will find the intervention proposal form, which also served as a reference point for monitoring. We primarily used routine contact with park directors and PABs to monitor progress. Meetings with park directors and PABs provided an opportunity to discuss any issues that might have arisen, and project management staff conducted routine monitoring of the data collection process as well, which provided further opportunities to check in with park staff. While the monitoring process worked a little differently at each recreation center, some of the key items to monitor and activities to complete throughout are listed below.

Monitoring Checklist

1. Intervention materials received by recreation center
2. Materials have been (and continue to be) used as intended
 - a. Are banners strategically placed where they are likely to be seen?
 - b. Are program flyers readily available?
3. If a program or event is part of the intervention, does it occur as scheduled?
4. Are park directors attending marketing workshops?
5. "Secret shopper" calls placed to recreation centers to assess customer service (customer service was a component of marketing workshops)

The intervention itself will help to determine what should be monitored, and the brief list above is suggested as a starting point as you consider how to monitor your intervention.

Intervention Proposal Form

Engaging in physical activity is one of the most important health habits known to contribute to a variety of positive health outcomes, including longevity, increased quality of life and levels of daily functioning, and reduced rates of diabetes and obesity. So, one of the overall goals of this project is to examine how public parks can influence community physical activity using park programs, community outreach, and promotion. Using the information obtained through the surveys and park observations recently completed at your facility, it is our intent that the park director and Park Advisory Board develop a park program, outreach and promotion campaign, or other such activity, or facility or equipment improvement to increase the number of park users and the level of physical activity in which they engage. Your facility will receive \$4000.00 to put towards these activities.

These funds must be spent before _____.

Please describe the program you intend to implement by answering the questions below.

Park name: _____

Program name: _____

Start date: _____

Please mark each of the program components you intend to implement at your facility.

_____ New park program

_____ Promotion of park programs

_____ Community outreach

_____ Program equipment

_____ Additional course instructors

_____ Other (*please list*) _____

In the space below please provide further details about each of the program components or activity that you marked above. (e.g. How will outreach or promotion be conducted? What equipment will be purchased?)
