

# Equity Workshop

## NRPA Innovation Labs

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on Race and Equity



CENTER FOR  
SOCIAL INCLUSION



LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

**ALLIANCE ON  
RACE & EQUITY**

# Today's objectives

- Increase understanding of the role and responsibility of park and recreation agencies to advance racial equity
- Gain an increased understanding of racial equity terminology, tools and resources, particularly in the field of parks and recreation
- Expand the commitment of Park and Recreation departments to advance racial equity

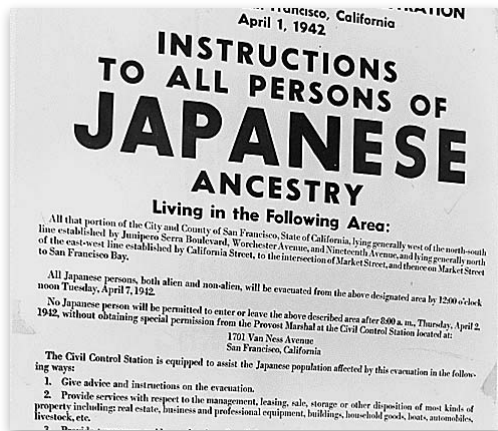
# Why Government?

# Realize our Values

- All men are created equal
- With liberty and justice for all
- Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth

# History of government and equity

Initially explicit



Government explicitly creates and maintains inequity.

Became implicit



Discrimination illegal, but “neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Government for racial equity



Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance equity.

# Why we lead with race

- Racial inequities deep and pervasive
- Racial anxiety on the rise – race is often an elephant in the room
- Learning an institutional and structural approach can be used with other areas of marginalization
- Specificity matters

# Equity

- All community members have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

# Racial equity

- Race cannot be used to predict success. To achieve racial equity, we must target strategies to eliminate racial inequities and advance success across all groups.

# Current context:





# Laying it on the Line

1. People who engage in public meetings are the ones who care most about the issues.
2. Hiring and promotion decisions should be based solely on merit.
3. I believe we can end racial inequity.

# Why Parks and Recreation Agencies?

Recreation and parks, more than any other public service, is a reflection of the values, attitudes, experiences, and culture of those who planned them.

# Park and rec organizations have the unique opportunity to...

- Help people develop the abilities required to live powerfully and civilly in diverse communities
- Break the restrictive cycles of poverty, racism, and low expectations that current limit their career choices and recreation inventories
- Experience their cultural and natural heritage
- Implement inclusive public engagement
- Expand their worlds

# Context

## *History of Parks*

*1890s through 1950s*

United States very homogenous,  
predominately white citizens with a strong  
Eastern European and Scandinavian  
background

National, state and local park movement  
providing green spaces for outdoor  
recreation



# Why does race matter to park and recreation agencies?

## Unique challenges facing State and Federal agencies

According to the 2012 Minnesota State Park Visitor Survey

- 97% of state park visitation is from non-Hispanic white population
- Visitation from non-Hispanic white population showed little growth over last 10 years; trend is expected to continue
- Park and recreation agency need to understand changing community demographics to remain relevant

*We can't use our values to motivate people whose culture lifestyles and choices have emerged from different values system. We have to understand how they experience us and what relevancy we have in their world.*



# Responding to Changing Context

*Park and Recreation Agencies need to reinvent themselves*

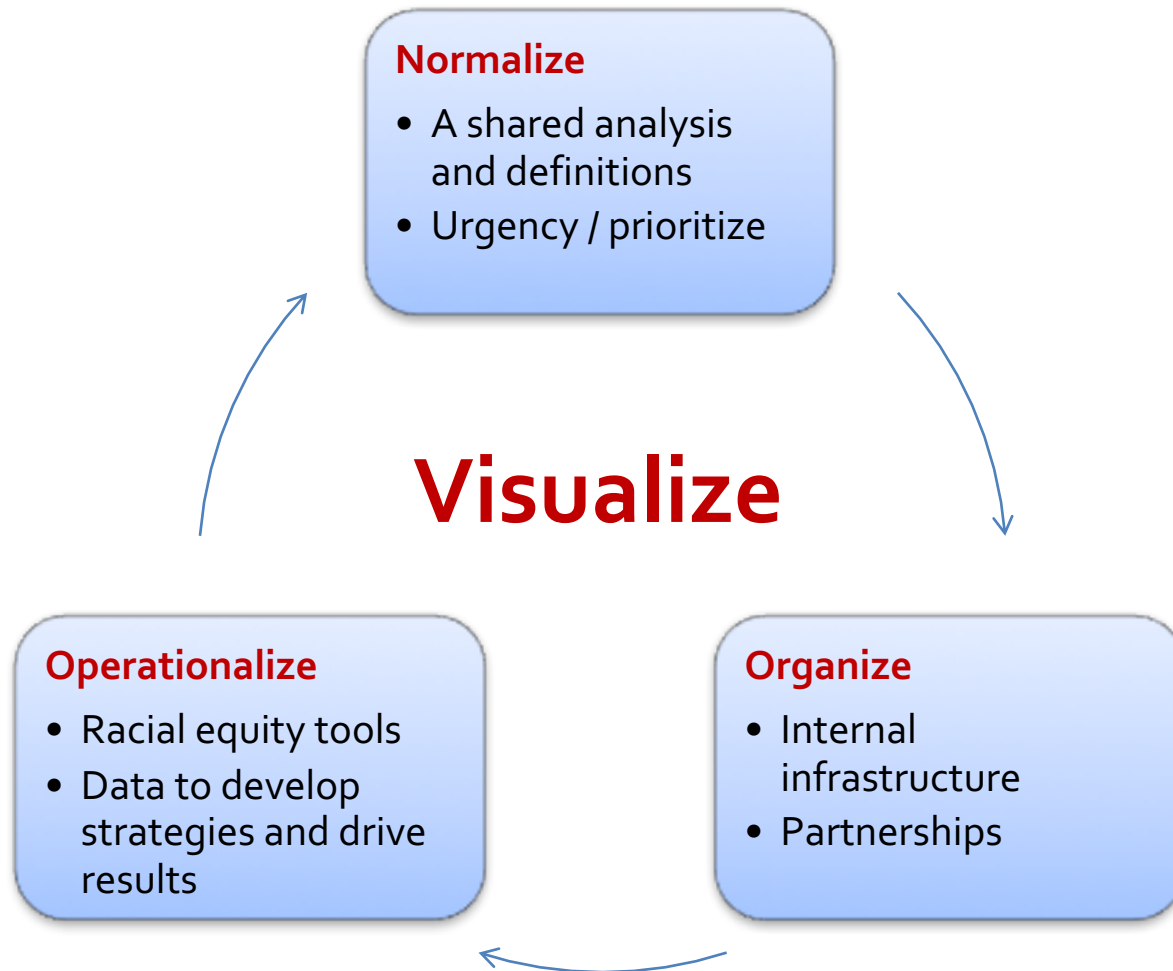
- Active and meaningful community outreach and engagement
- Utilize racial equity toolkits to evaluate work and change decision making processes
- Staff that reflect community
- Racial equity and cultural awareness training



Paired discussion (5 minutes):

How have changing demographics influenced work in your park and recreation department?

# National best practice





# Normalizing

# Equity? Equality?

## What's the difference?



# Racial inequity in the U.S.

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



# Racial equity means:

- “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also **improving outcomes for all**
- To do so, have to:
  - ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
  - ✓ Move beyond “services” and focus on changing policies, institutions and structures

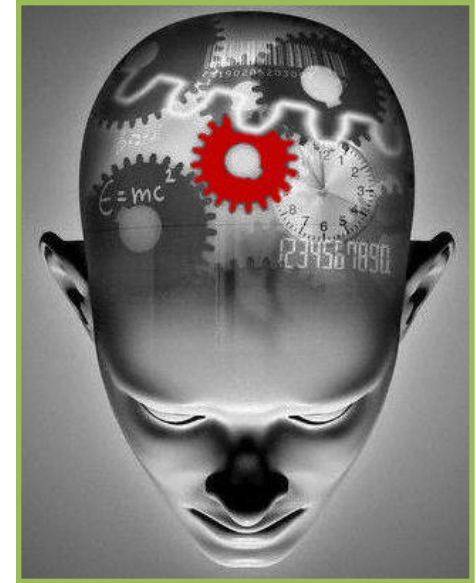
# How We Think

Humans need meaning.

- ✓ Individual meaning
- ✓ Collective meaning

Only **2%** of emotional cognition is available consciously

Racial bias tends to reside in the **unconscious** network



**We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.**

# The Unconscious Mind



**Schemas:** the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world:

1. Sort into categories
2. Create associations
3. Fill in the gaps

# Schemas

Help us organize information into broader categories.  
They largely reside in the sub-conscious.

- ✓ Objects
- ✓ Human beings (e.g., “the elderly”)

Schemas and the unconscious are social. They exist in and are shaped by our environment.



# What color are the following lines of text?

Blue

Red

Green

Black

Green

Red

Blue

Black

Black

Blue

Green

Red

Green

Green

Black

Blue

(The Stroop Test)



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# Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates  
consciously

Example – Sign in the  
window of an apartment  
building – “we don’t rent to  
\_\_\_\_\_”

# Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates  
sub-consciously

Example – a property  
manager doing more  
criminal background checks  
on African Americans than  
whites.

# Examples of implicit bias

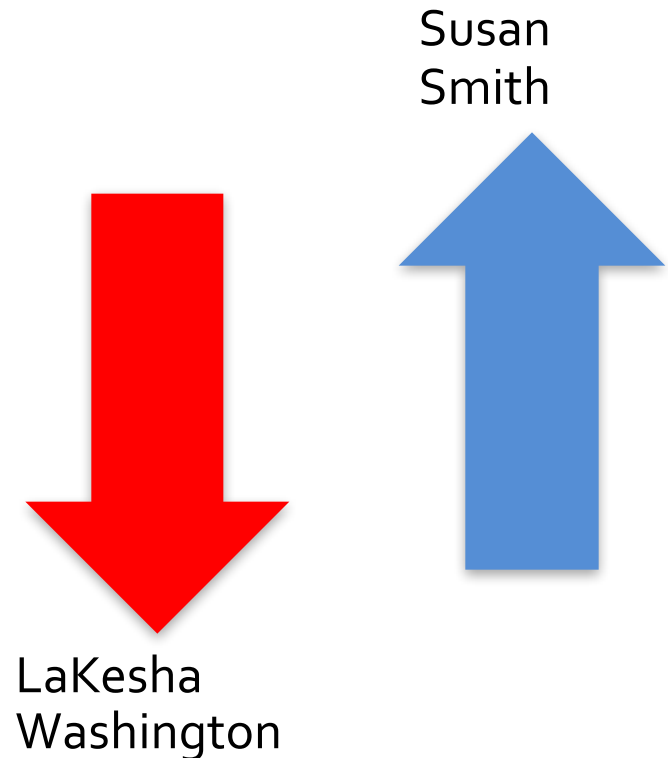
When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.



# Examples of implicit bias

## Job search

- ✓ Identical resumes, apart from names.
- ✓ White-sounding names – 50% more callbacks than African-American sounding names.

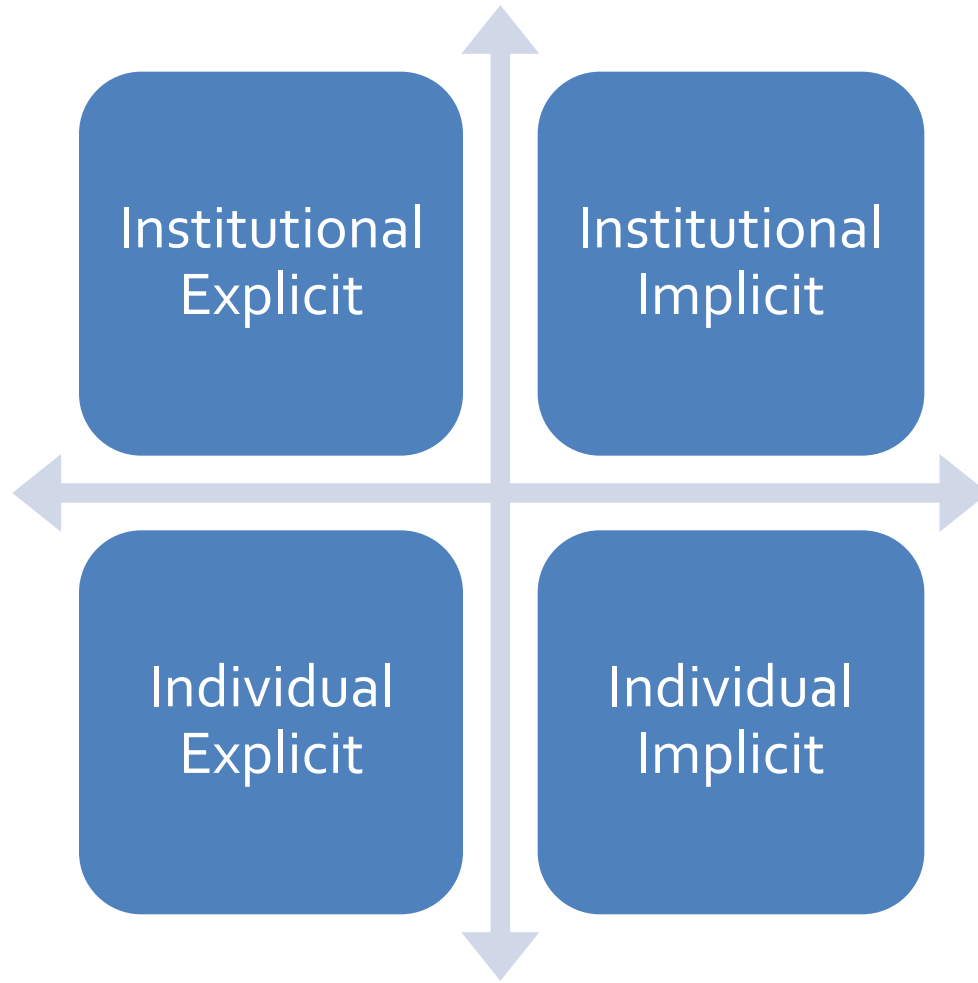


# What to do with bias?

- ✓ Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it.
- ✓ Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions.



# What creates different outcomes?



## Institutional / Explicit

*Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.*

**Example:**

Segregated swimming pools

## Institutional / Implicit

*Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.*

**Example:**

Recreational programming that is more responsive to some communities.

## Individual / Explicit

*Prejudice in action – discrimination.*

**Example:**

A Parks and Rec staff person refusing to rent space to a group based on a racial bias.

## Individual / Implicit

*Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.*

**Example:**

Staff person limiting access to a swimming pool because of “inappropriate attire”

## Individual racism:

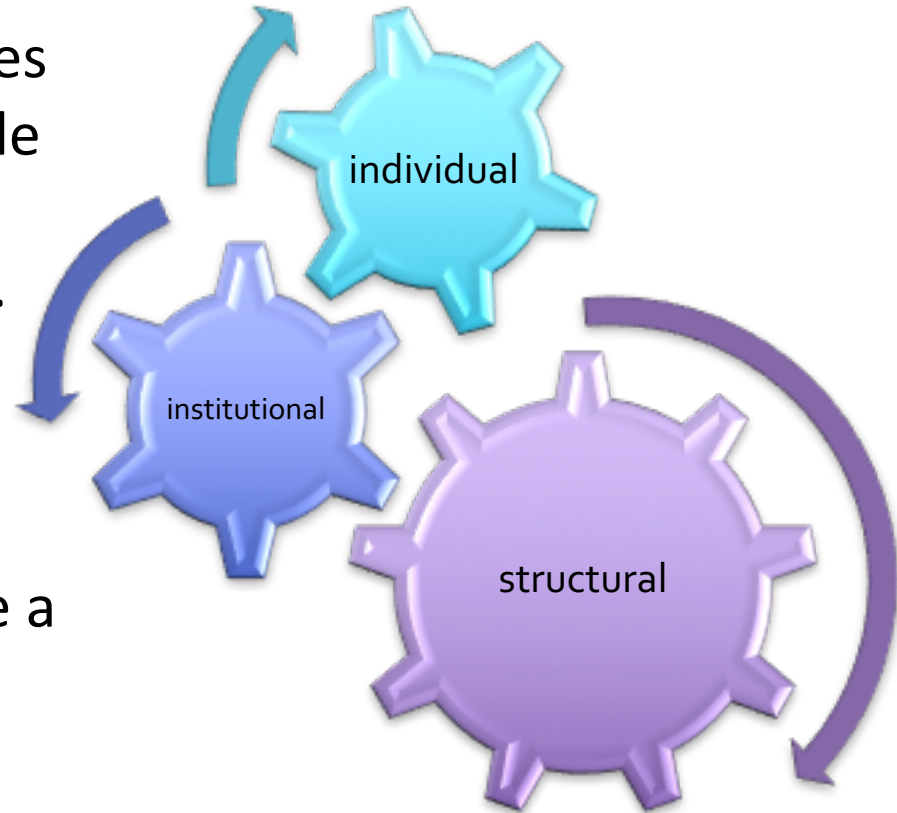
- Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

## Institutional racism:

- Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

## Structural racism:

- A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.





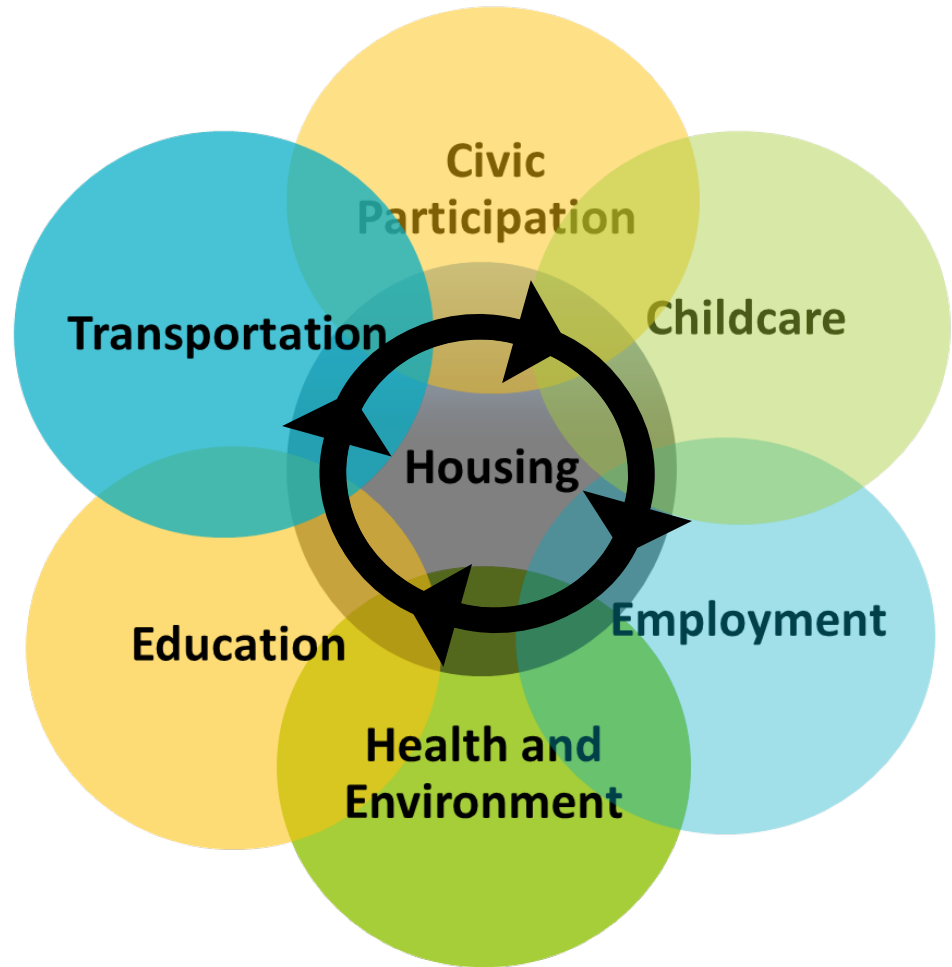
# Structural Racism

**Structural Racism** involves multiple institutions

Public and private institutions interact to produce racial inequities.

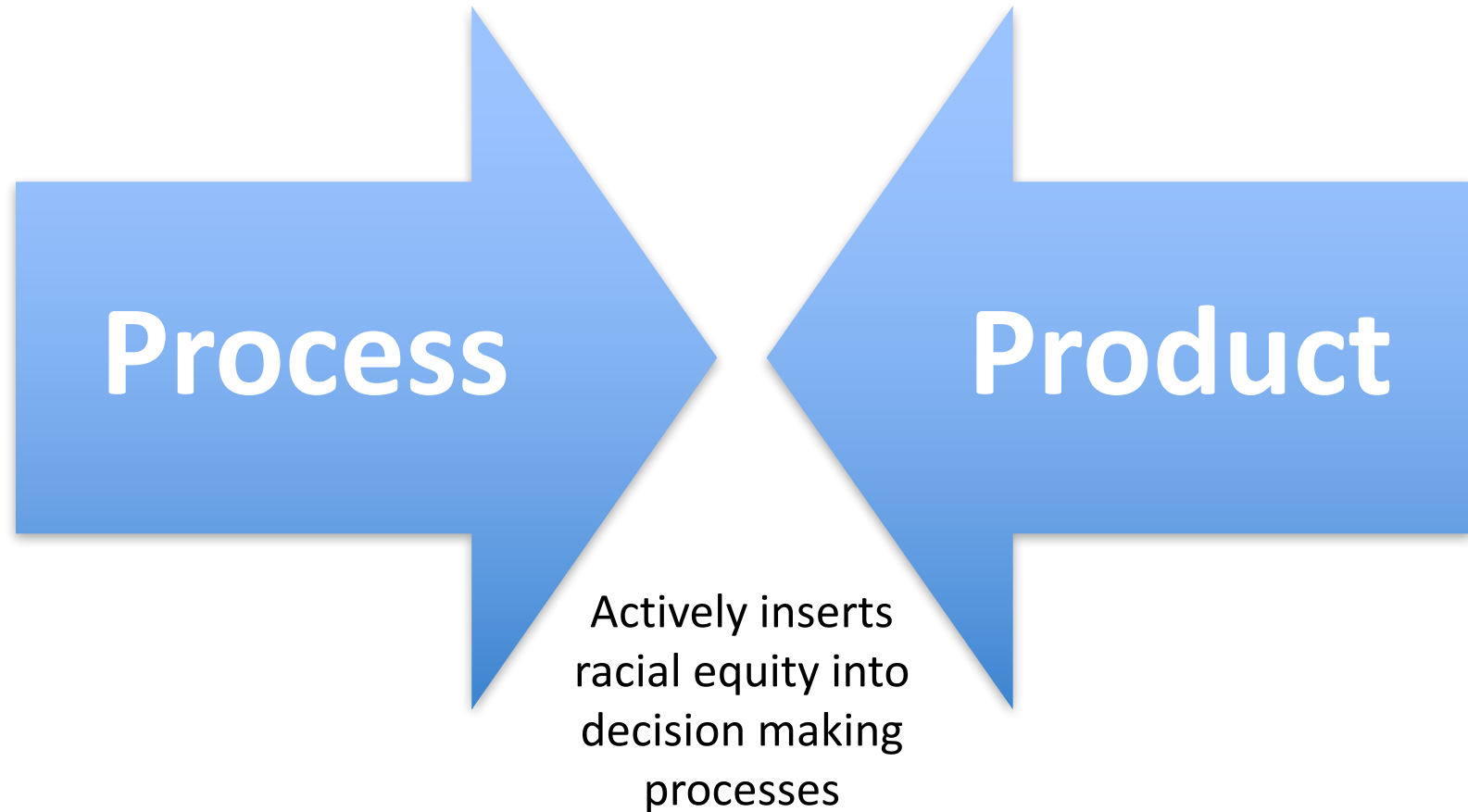
Intent to cause harm is irrelevant

With structural racism, systems operate, often inadvertently, to create benefit for White people at the expense of people of color.



# Operationalizing

# What is a Racial Equity Tool?



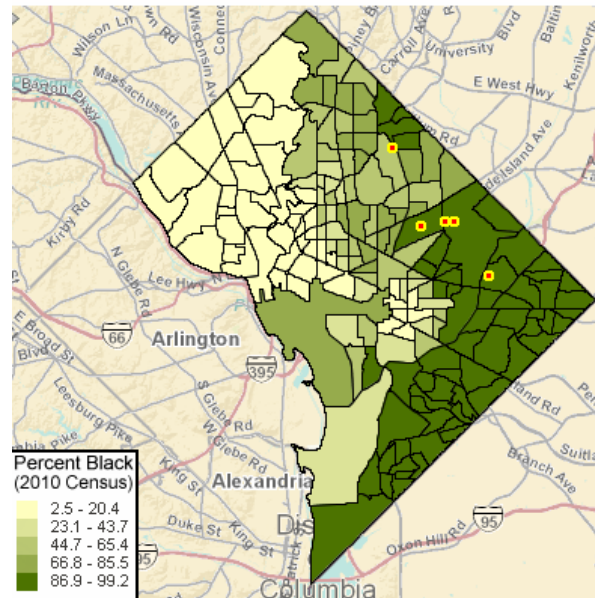
# Race in governmental policies

## Federal Housing Administration



## Location of city facilities

DC Trash Transfer Stations



## Streetlighting



# What is a Racial Equity Tool process?



<http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/10/30/racial-equity-toolkit/>

# Who should use a Racial Equity Tool?



Elected officials

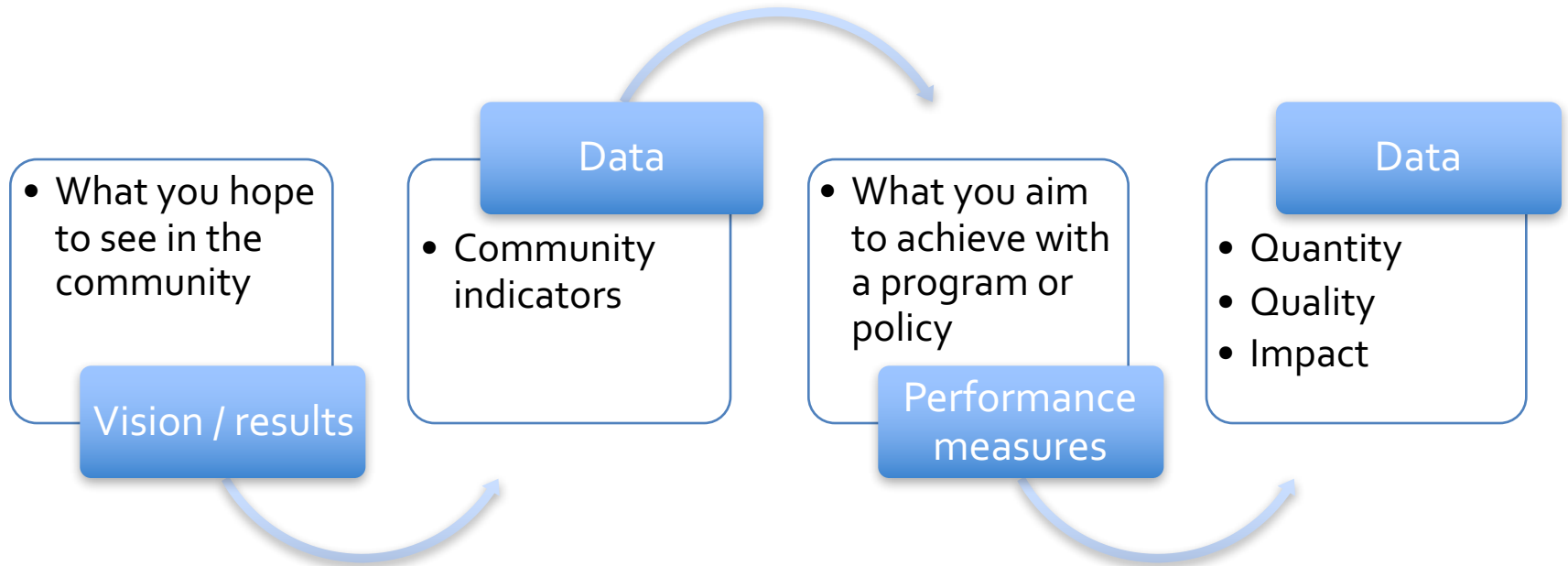


Government staff



Community

# Racial Equity Action Plans – Key Measurement Principles



# Definitions

## RESULT

A condition of well-being.

i.e. Babies Born Healthy, Economically Self-Sufficient Communities, Safe Communities, Clean Environment

## INDICATOR

A measure which helps quantify the achievement of a result – always disaggregated by race

i.e. Rate of low-birth weight babies, unemployment rate, crime rate, air quality index

## PERFORMANCE MEASURE

A measure of how well a program, policy, agency, or service system is working.

1. **Quantity** How much did we do?
2. **Quality** How well did we do it? = **Participant Results**
3. **Impact** Is anyone better off?



# Ask yourself “WHY?” 3-5 times

Why are there racial disproportionalities?

Why else?

Why else?

Why else?

Why else?

Example – obesity rates

What are the explanations at an individual, institutional and structural level?

# Example

**Result** – Increase healthy life outcomes

- **Indicator** – Overall rate of obesity decreases from 18% to 5% in ten years, and the disproportionality by race is eliminated (currently ranges from 11.6% of Asians to 22% of Latinos)
- **Indicator** – Disproportionality in life expectancy is eliminated (current gap – is 10 years)

**Strategies** – what you are going to do to achieve the result

- Increase access to healthy foods, parks and open space in neighborhoods where access is lacking

**Performance measurements** – how you measure your success

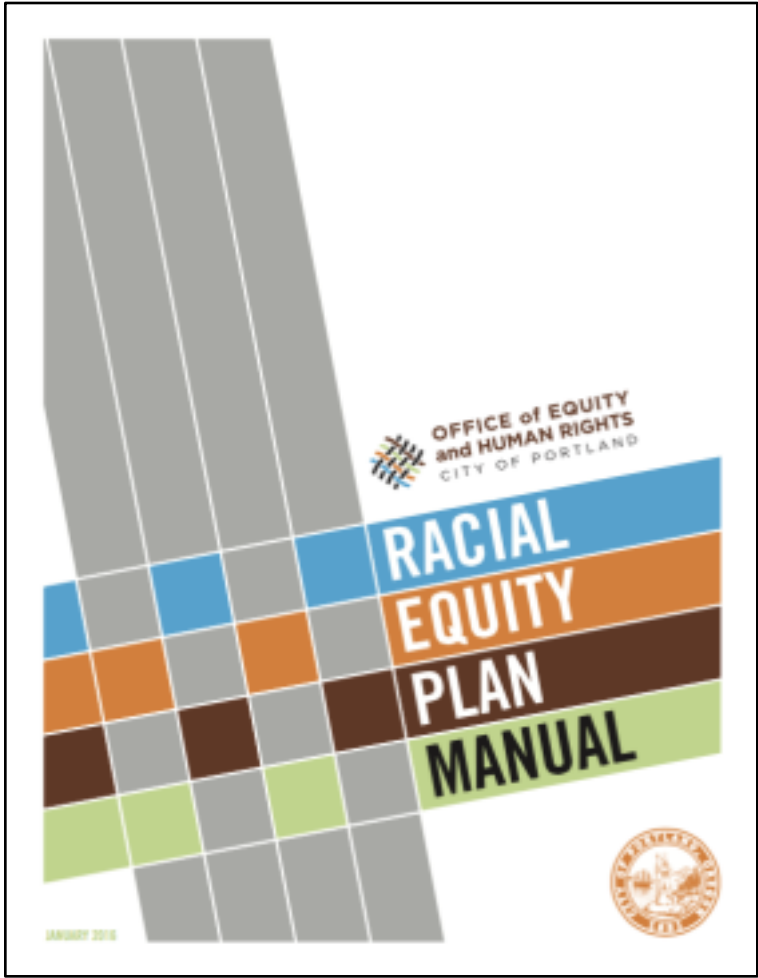
- Pass “healthy retail” legislation
- Increase “safe routes to school” % of students walking to school

# Racial Equity Action Plans: Dane County

Dane County Template for 2016 Departmental Racial Equity Action Plans  
 Department:

1. Dane County employees understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.				
Outcomes and Actions	Department Performance Measure	Timeline	Person responsible	Progress report
<b>A. Dane County employees understand, are committed to, and have the infrastructure needed to advance racial equity.</b> 1) <b>Leadership</b> – Department director or designee assigned to participate on the Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Leadership Team.	Assignment made	Dec 2015		
2) <b>Racial Equity Plan</b> – Plan is developed and progress reports take place twice a year.	Plan developed Progress reported	Dec 2015 July 2016		
3) <b>Racial Equity Team</b> – Team is convened and assists departmental leadership with the development and implementation of the Action Plan.	Team is convened	Dec 2015		
4) <b>Training leads</b> – Identify employees to lead Introductory Racial Equity Training for their colleagues. Participate in a countywide “train-the-trainer” session.	Trainers identified and participate in train-the-trainer session	Q1		
5) <b>Training for all employees</b> – Conduct Introductory Racial Equity Training for all employees.	Percent of departmental employees who have	2016		

# Racial Equity Action Plans: **Portland**



# Organizing

# Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative



**Late 1990's** -  
community  
pressure, some  
departments  
initiate racial  
equity efforts

**2004** - Mayor  
Nickels  
launches City-  
wide racial  
equity initiative  
focused  
internally

**2009** – Expanded  
partnerships with  
community; City  
Council legislation  
passes  
unanimously;  
plans and tools  
institutionalized.

**2015** - New plan  
providing expanded  
focus on community  
outcomes

**Racial Equity Leadership Team – senior leadership**



**Housing**



**Transit**



**Police**



**Parks**



**Courts**

**Core Team**

leadership development and capacity building

**Interdepartmental Teams**

contracting equity, workforce equity, community engagement

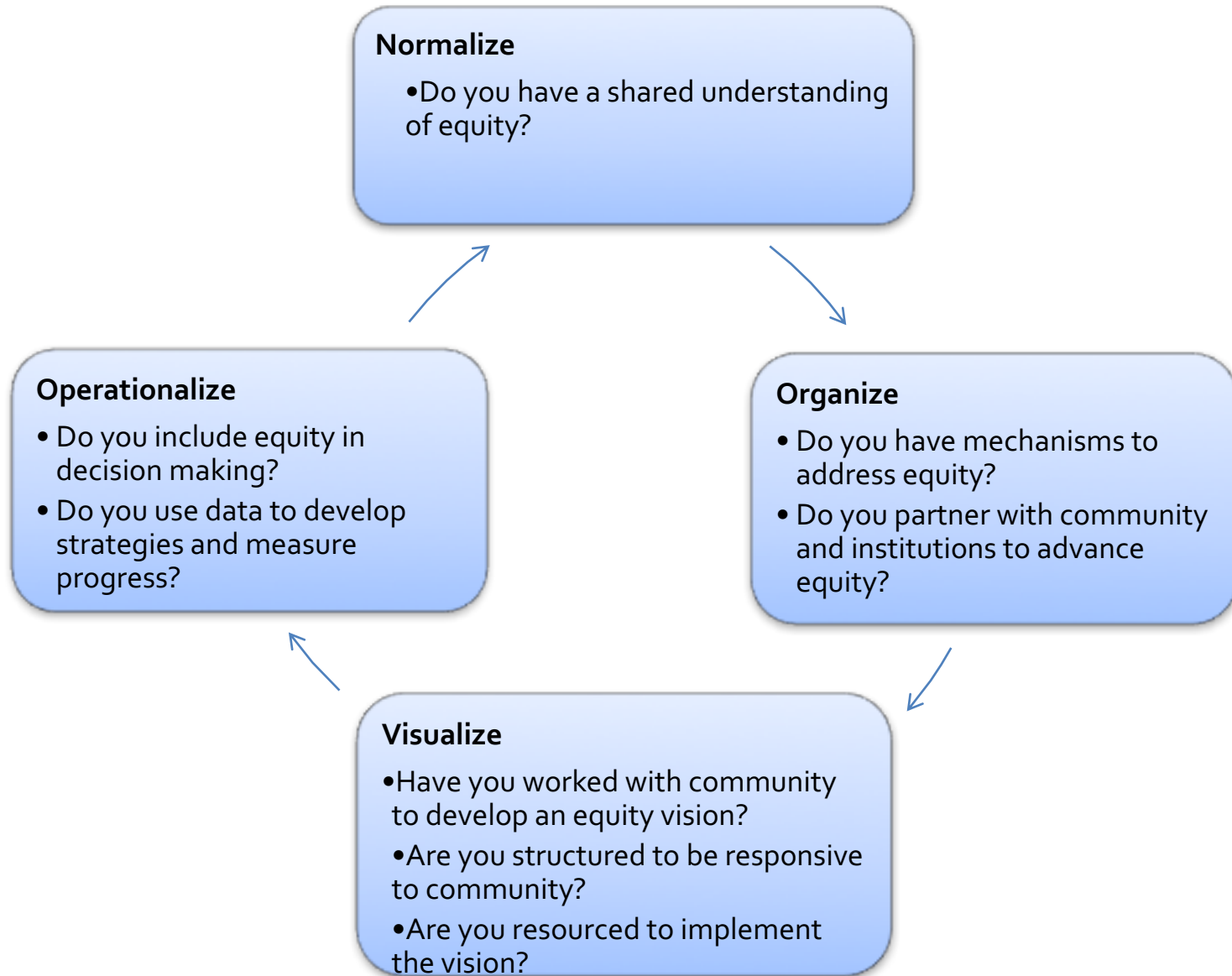
- Accountability agreements
- Departmental work plans
- Performance reviews
- Racial Equity Tools
- Institution-wide work plans

# Changing minds

- Most importantly, the best way to change attitudes is to change behavior.
- Attitudinal change tends to follow behavior change.
- Requires both short and long-term approaches.



# Assessing your organization



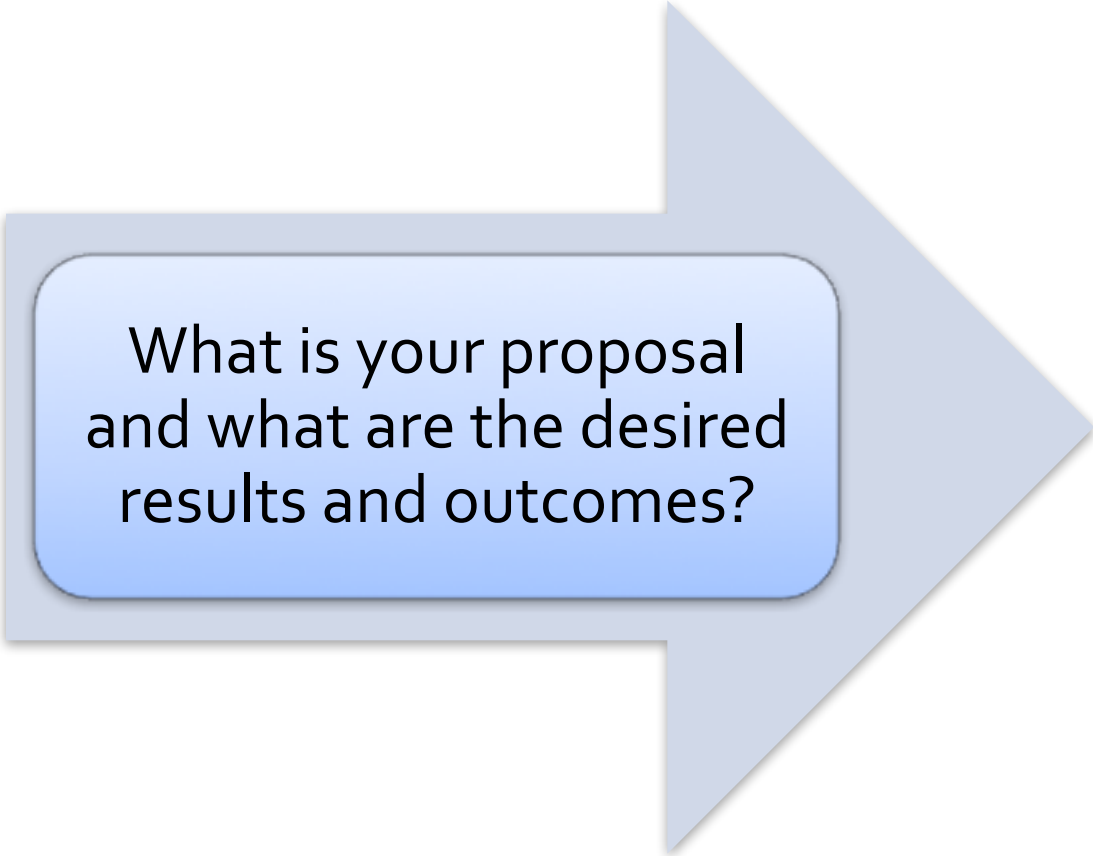
# Using the Racial Equity Tool

# What is a Racial Equity Tool process?



<http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/10/30/racial-equity-toolkit/>


# #1



What is your proposal  
and what are the desired  
results and outcomes?



What's the community  
and performance data?  
What does the data tell  
us?



How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

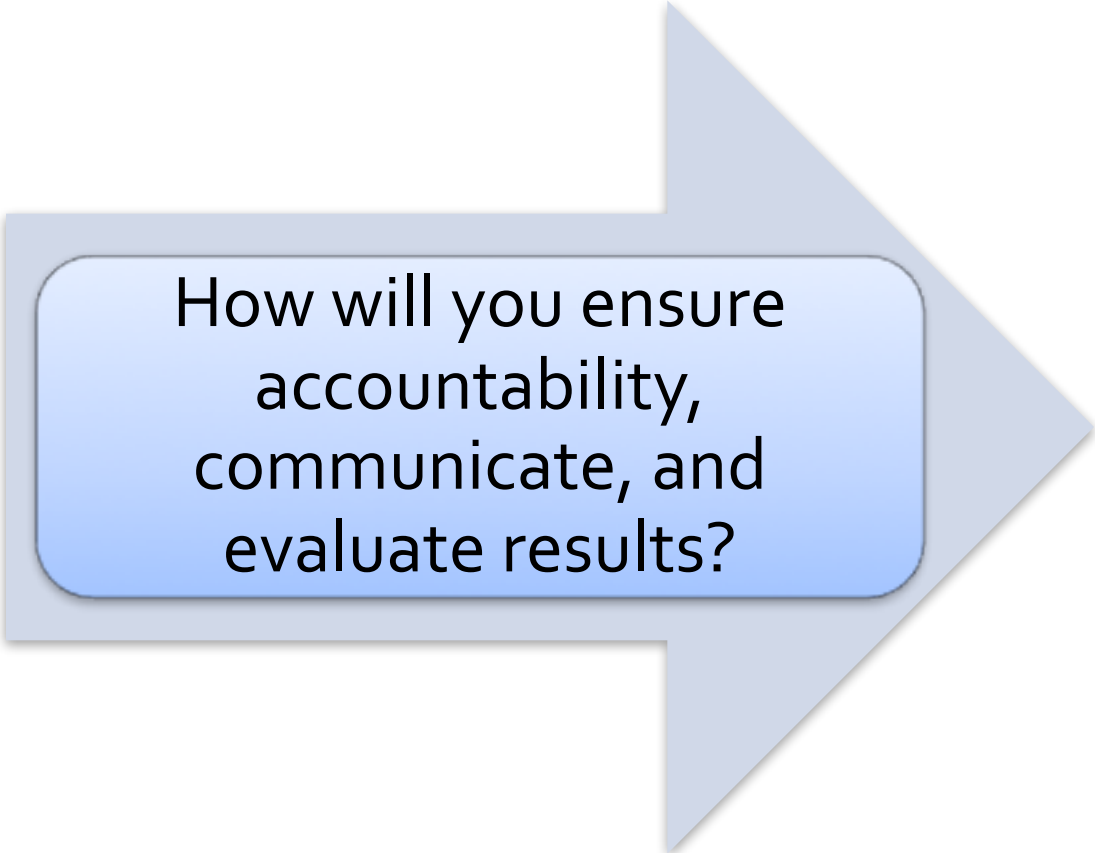
Who will benefit from or be burdened? How are you advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

#5

What is your plan  
for  
implementation?







How will you ensure  
accountability,  
communicate, and  
evaluate results?

# Use of a Racial Equity Tool: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board case study

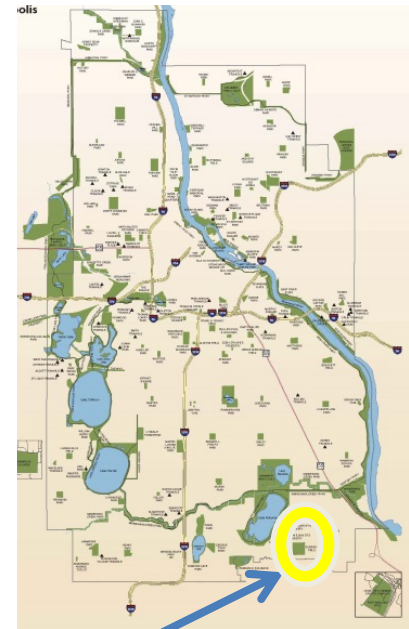
# Case Study: Minneapolis - Bossen Field Master Plan

## Background:

- \$3+ million for 'Athletic field, playground and site improvements' from 2012-2017
- Two main user groups: neighbors and athletic league participants (mostly adults)

## Why this project?

- Small-scale
- Immediate impacts
- Opportunity to better serve neighborhood
- Critical relationships already in place



## **Step 1: What is your proposal and what are the desired results and outcomes?**

Goal: Develop a master plan that balances city-wide athletic and neighborhood needs

## **Step 2: What does the data tell us?**

Neighborhood demographics

Athletic user demographics

Field use data (including policies that impact use)

Expenses (operations) and revenue (athletic leagues)

## **Step 3: How have communities (stakeholders) been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?**

Different tools to reach different groups

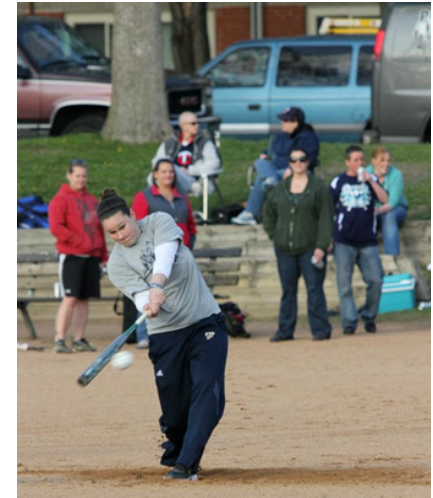
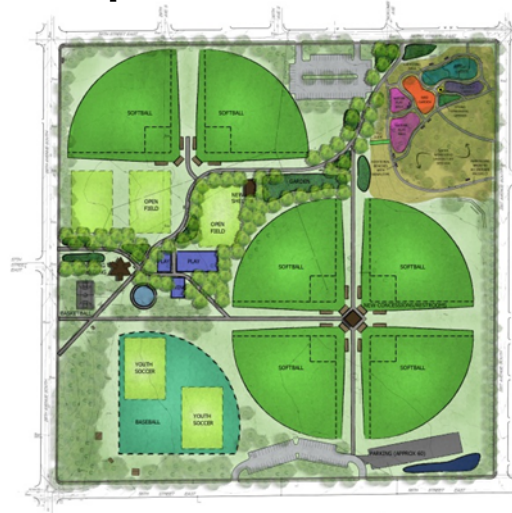
Balancing qualitative and quantitative feedback

## Step 4: Who will benefit from or be burdened? How are you advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

### Athletics users

Concept B was strongly preferred.

Thought on location was “where it impacted people less.”



### Neighborhood

Concept C was strongly preferred.

Location of open field space close to residents was key. Also desired walkways through park, two basketball courts, location of picnic shelter



# BOSSEN Master Plan

## COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY CORRIDOR  
OPEN FIELD SPACE  
NEW PLAYAREA  
RENOVATED RESTROOMS  
GROUP PICNIC SHELTER

## NORTHEAST CORNER

PICNIC AREA  
GARDENS  
BENCH SWINGS  
SUNSET VIEWING  
PATHS

## ATHLETIC FIELDS

6 SOFTBALL FIELDS  
CONCESSIONS/  
RESTROOM  
LIGHTING



MPRB **Bossen Field Park**

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SOCIAL INCLUSION



JULY 2015 / project# 193803068

# Why authentic engagement matters

2015 Community-based design concept



2007 Concept without neighborhood input



## **Step 5: What is your plan for implementation?**

Communication about phasing and impacts

Ongoing community engagement

Programming considerations

## **Step 6: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results**

Developing plan to hold ourselves accountable

Data to evaluate impacts over time

Incorporating lessons learned into future projects



# Contact information

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Resources:

[www.centerforsocialinclusion.org](http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org)

[www.racialequityalliance.org](http://www.racialequityalliance.org)



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