

## ***Communities Putting Prevention to Work in Minneapolis*** **Year One Neighborhood Survey Summary: Park Outreach Worker Project**

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The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) is working to address personal safety barriers at three Northside parks as part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) project. MDHFS has partnered with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to employ seven outreach workers at Farview, Folwell, and North Commons Parks in North Minneapolis. These Outreach workers engage young people in the parks and surrounding community with the goal of connecting them to positive activities and providing them with referrals to community resources if necessary.

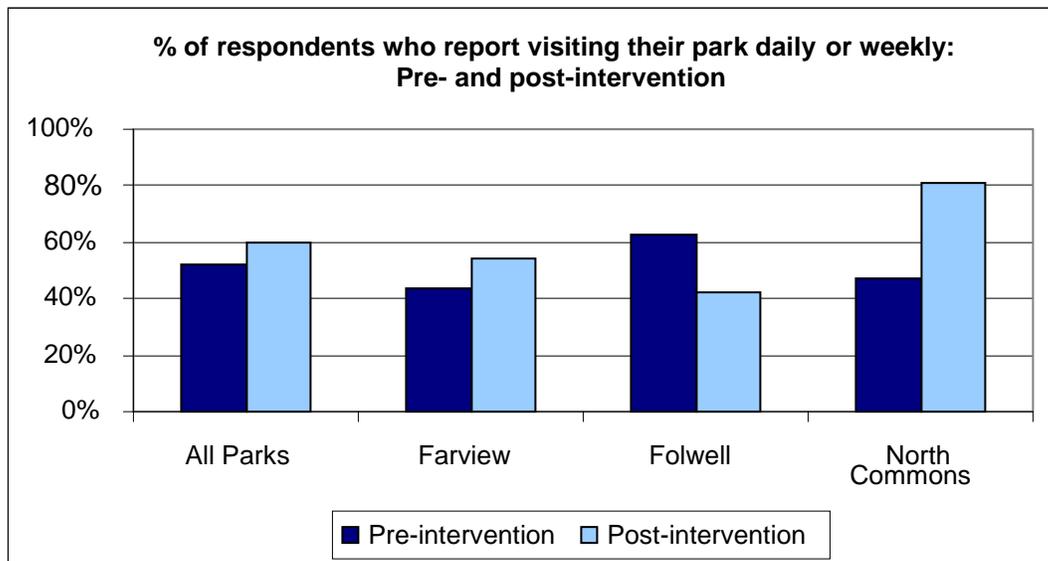
From June 2010 through October 2010, outreach workers conducted street outreach within and near the perimeters of parks, at events, and within park buildings with a special focus on engaging youth and linking them with available park and community programs. StreetReach staff work to change the perception that parks are unsafe and encourage people of all ages to safely and comfortably use their parks to engage in physical activity.

Outreach workers also conducted surveys with neighborhood residents to learn more about their perceptions of safety and park usage. This document summarizes pre- and post-intervention surveys conducted with a convenience sample of households located within one block of the parks. The pre-intervention survey was conducted in June 2010 with a response rate of 23%. The post-intervention survey was conducted in October 2010 with a response rate of 15%.

### **Park Use and Activities**

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In the pre-intervention survey, 52% of respondents indicated that they use their park daily or weekly. In the post-intervention survey, a similar number of respondents (60%) indicated that they use their park daily or weekly. Responses about frequency of park use varied across parks and are included in the chart below. These data should be interpreted with some caution, as the survey samples were small and the response rates were low (especially for the post-intervention survey). Additionally, the pre- and post intervention surveys were conducted in different seasons (summer and fall), which may have influenced participant responses.



Park visitors reported using parks for a variety of purposes; they most commonly reported using the parks for physical activity. The most common responses about park activities from the post-intervention survey are included below, along with the percentage of respondents that reported engaging in these activities:

- Playground (47%)
- Sports (42%)
- Swimming (34%)
- Dog walking (23%)
- Teen/youth activities excluding sports (19%)
- Computer access (18%)
- Exercise, e.g., walking, jogging, biking (16%)
- Community meetings/events (14%)

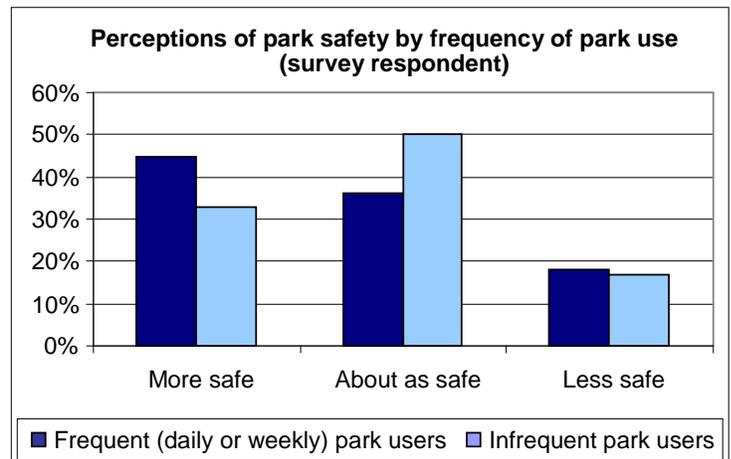
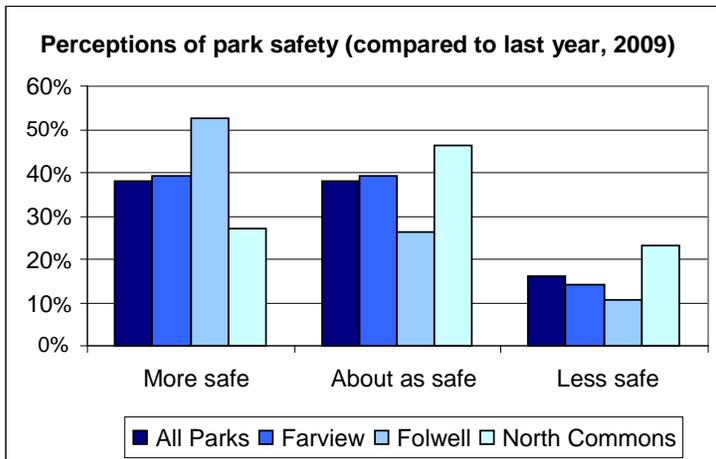
Survey respondents were also asked what activities or events would meet the needs of the members of their household. Common answers are included below:

- Community events/festivals
- Youth programs
- Sports programs/lessons
- Infrastructure improvements (e.g., waterpark, barbeques, tennis court repairs)
- More family activities

### Perceptions of Park Safety

In the pre-intervention survey, respondents were asked what would make them more likely to visit their parks. Residents most often replied that safety and security improvements (e.g., more patrolling, less crime) would make them visit their parks more often. This response indicates residents are concerned about park safety and that this concern might be a barrier to using the parks for some people.

In the post-intervention survey, respondents were asked how safe they think their neighborhood parks are compared to last year. Seventy-six percent of respondents reported that they think their parks are ‘more safe’ (38%) or ‘about as safe’ (38%) as last year, with only 16% of respondents indicating that they think their parks are ‘less safe’ than last year. (The remainder of respondents were unsure or had no comment.) Frequent park users more often reported that they thought their parks were safer; however there is not a significant difference between frequent and infrequent park users.



### Plans for 2011

The Park Board will offer six Family Festivals at Folwell, Farview, and North Commons during Summer 2011. These events will be physical activity-focused and will be targeted toward families and young children in order to attract people of a variety of ages to the parks. Park outreach workers will continue to be a visible presence at the parks and in the community to help promote these events and improve perceptions of park safety.

For more information, please visit the CPPW website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/cppw.asp> or contact Sarah Stewart at 612-673-3987 or [sarah.stewart@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:sarah.stewart@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).