



GP RED National Think Tank 2018

Summary Evaluation and Final Takeaways

The GP RED Board of Directors would like to thank the 2018 National Think Tank attendees and organizers for their contributions to creating a very successful event. 54 invited thought leaders from parks, recreation, public health, design, transportation, and related professions from around the country came together for 3 days of discussion and insights in Irvine, CA in December 2018.

Thank you to lead professionals from around the U.S. who dedicated time and energy!

- Darin Loughrey, City of Irvine, CA Local Host Agency
- Leslie Fritz, California Parks and Recreation Society, Local Host Committee Chair
- Dr. Maureen Dougherty, Let's Go with Dr. Mo LLC, Frederick, MD, Program Chair
- Becky Dunlap, GreenPlay LLC & GP RED, Videographer and Social Media Coordinator
- Chuck Montrie, Maryland Recreation and Parks, Registration Committee Chair
- John Nissel, Sponsorships and Development Chair
- Dr. Robby Layton, GP RED & Design Concepts, Development
- Linda Smith, Chapel Hill, NC & GP RED, Continuing Education Units
- Dr. Teresa Penbrooke, GP RED & GreenPlay LLC, Administration & Marketing
- Chris Cares, RRC Associates & GP RED, Evaluation and Dissemination Committee Chair

Along with ALL of the Committee Members, Topic Experts, Sponsors, and Participants!

Thank you to our Sponsors:

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The final schedule from 2018 is on the following page. Thought leaders are happy to share content, and some videos are available at www.gpred.org. Our next GP RED National Think Tank is already in the planning stages for November/December 2020. We are pleased to share that **the local host in 2020 will be the North Carolina Park and Recreation Association**, and the site will likely be in the Raleigh/Durham Regional Triangle Area. Please contact TeresaP@gpred.org if you would like to sponsor or participate in the next Think Tank.

Schedule

DAY/TIME	GP RED 5th NATIONAL THINK TANK	IRVINE, CA - 2018
Wednesday: 12/5	General Sessions	Second Breakout (when applicable)
2:00 – 4:30pm	<i>Welcome, Check In & Name Tags - Overall Theme Transformation to Action: Strategies for Community Implementation</i>	
2:00 – 4:30pm	<i>Optional Guided Hike - Quail Hill Center* - Darin Loughrey, Community Services Manager, City of Irvine</i>	
4:30 – 5:15pm	Welcome & Icebreaker Rob Layton, PhD, GP RED; Stephanie Stephens, CPRS, Maureen Dougherty, PhD	
5:15 – 5:30pm	<i>Non-Alcoholic refreshments & snacks</i>	
5:30 – 7:00pm	Intro to Topics/Schedule Preview, Think Tank Objectives: Maureen Dougherty, PhD, and Teresa Penbrooke, PhD, GP RED, GreenPlay, & NCSU	
7:00pm - ?	<i>Optional Networking: Local Restaurant/Bar Close proximity to recommended hotel(s)</i>	
Thursday 12/6		
8:00 – 8:30am	<i>Welcome and Light Breakfast – Quail Hill Center</i>	
8:30 – 10:00am	GENERAL SESSION 1: Collaborations – Associations, Universities, and Agencies Working Together <i>Topic Experts: Teresa Penbrooke, PhD; Kevin Roth, PhD (NRPA), Stephanie Stephens (CPRS), Chuck Montrie (MRPA), and Amanda Walker (ALR & UCSD)</i>	
10:00 – 10:15am	Break	
10:15 – Noon	Breakout 2.1: Entrepreneurial Solutions for Local Government Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology & Collaboration - Entrepreneurial mindset - Working with schools/partners <i>Topic Experts: Leslie Fritz, CPRS; John Keisler, Long Beach, CA; Dr. Wade Martin, CSU Long Beach</i>	Breakout 2.2: Community and Economic Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Contributions - Risk of Development - Importance of System-wide Master Planning <i>Topic Experts: Pat O'Toole, GreenPlay; Brian Albright, San Diego County, CA</i>
Noon – 1:00pm	<i>Lunch Provided - Overview and Thanks for Sponsors</i>	
1:00 – 2:30pm	Breakout 3.1: On the Fray – Managing Non-Sanctioned Behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristics of Homeless Populations - Strategies – What's Working; What is Not - Multi-disciplinary Approaches <i>Topic Experts: Chris Dropinski and Brian Albright</i>	Breakout 3.2: Nature-Based Exposure through P&R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effects of nature (flora/fauna/water) on stress - PA, cognitive function, recovery, etc. - Nature dosing and assessment <i>Topic Experts: Teresa Penbrooke, PhD; Sonja Wilhelm-Stanis, PhD, University of MO</i>
2:30 – 3:00pm	Drive to Orange County Great Park (10 minute commute) <i>All of Thursday afternoon and evening sessions are at Orange County Great Park</i>	
3:15 – 4:45pm	Breakout 4.1: Parks are Everywhere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pop-up Parks - Underground Parks - Roof Top Parks - Vacant Lots and Parking Lots <i>Topic Experts: Robby Layton, PhD; John Nissel, Montgomery County, MD</i>	Breakout 4.2: Community Resilience Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare, Respond, and Recover from Natural Disasters - Operation Recreation Response - Partnering with FEMA and local authorities <i>Topic Experts: Linda Smith, Chapel Hill, NC; Andy Fox, North Carolina State University</i>
4:45 – 5:45pm	<i>Break: Walk & Talk to Explore Great Park - Optional Guided Tour (City of Irvine Staff)</i>	
5:45 – 7:45pm	GENERAL SESSION 5: Dinner and Evening Program Keynote - Transform into Action: Up Level Your Energy to Continue the Good Work Lora Polowczuk, MPH, Chief Energy Officer at Priority Retreats International, and Operating Board Member, GP RED	
7:45pm - ?	<i>Optional Networking: Local Restaurant/Bar</i>	
Friday 12/7		
8:00am	Quail Hill Park - Optional Morning Walk (Note: GP RED Operating and Advisory Boards will meet during this time.)	
8:30 – 9:00am	<i>Gather on Site; Light Breakfast</i>	
9:00 – 10:30am	Breakout 6.1: Handling Health Factors in Parks & Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latest on Modifiable Health Factors - Park Rx <i>Topic Experts: Teresa Penbrooke, PhD; John Henderson, JD, Executive Director, Park Rx America</i>	Breakout 6.2: Macro Trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing Priorities - Handing the torch from Baby Boomers to Millennials - Innovations in Metrics – Balanced Scorecard <i>Topic Experts: Adam Coleman, USGreentech; Becky Dunlap</i>
10:45 – Noon	GENERAL SESSION 7: Diversity and Nature: The Intersection of Race/Ethnicity, Culture, Class <i>Topic Experts: Nina Roberts, PhD, San Francisco State University; Micky Fearn, Department of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism, North Carolina State University</i>	
Noon – 1:00pm	Closing Lunch: Dissemination and Action – Where do we go from Here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles and Think Tank summaries - Outcomes and Evaluations/Volunteers <i>Topic Experts: Veda Ward, PhD, Chris Cares & Karla Henderson, PhD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Becky Dunlap, CPRE, GreenPlay - Videographer to help capture key elements from the Think Tank - Written Summaries - Upload of presentations

An Overview of Selected Evaluation Results

The Survey Evaluation of Think Tank 2018

Compiled by RRC Associates for GP RED, January 2019

The survey resulted in 30 responses, about 55% of the 54 registered attendees. Full results can be found by following the link [HERE](#).

Think Tank Attendees Provided a Wide Variety of “Take-Away” Comments in a Final Exercise as Summarized and Listed Below.

The Question Read: A final question to close out the Think Tank:

Take a few minutes and jot down one or two (or more, if you are so moved) brief comments you would make in response to the question below. Please leave this form behind at the end of our session – we’d like to compile and organize what we heard from you. Thanks in advance.

When you see your colleagues on Monday and they ask you about the Think Tank, what will you say you learned that was useful? Put another way, what were the important take-home points from the Think Tank?

In general, several of the **recurring themes, ideas, and takeaways** for participants included:

- Homelessness (especially Parks and Recreation Agencies’ role in these problems)
- Utilization of language -- particularly "underserved" vs. "underestimated" communities
- Pop-up parks, parks are everywhere
- Working with millennials
- Collaboration, finding opportunities in a variety of forms
- How to bridge gap between academia and practitioners

Summary of Think Tank Evaluations

- The **largest share of attendees report they are in Parks and Recreation roles** (~60%), with the remaining attendees representing a variety of roles within higher education, research, planning, public health, or other related fields.
- **Overall ratings of the Think Tank were positive.** In particular, the clarity/presentation of the content experts received the highest share of “5-excellent” ratings (54%). Content of the Think Tank overall received a higher share of “4” (48%) than “5” ratings (36%), and relevancy and usefulness of Think Tank content and discussion received equal shares of “4” and “5” ratings (37.5% each).
- Respondents were generally **not in favor of the newly tried concurrent sessions**. Participants felt the group was divided and it took away from the sharing aspects.
- Attendees also commented on a **desire for more discussion, networking, and brainstorming**. Some comments mentioned wanting more time to network, discuss, and address big topics as a Think Tank from a variety of perspectives as a large group (as well as more opportunity to debate/disagree).
- In order to foster synthesis of the information presented, a few attendees commented that it would have been helpful to allow time for thinking through **application of major takeaways**.
- One person made the following suggestion: **“Send presentations out to attendees ahead of time** so that the time can be spent on discussion rather than learning.” This might be a method for future consideration.

- The **venue, food, and logistics were commented on very positively** by many attendees.
- Results highlight that **personal development is a value of Think Tank participation**. Two in five attendees attended the Think Tank for an equal mix of personal and professional development (40%), with a larger share there for personal development (50%), and 10% just there for professional purposes (10%). These results are similar to those obtained in 2016 – clearly one of the unique aspects of the Think Tank relative to other events and conferences is that most attendees have a “personal” motivation to attend. This represents an opportunity to continue to distinguish the event in the future, and it also helps to explain some of the more critical comments from attendees that preferred not to have concurrent sessions and would have liked more time for discussion and quality social engagement.
- Respondents were most likely to agree that **networking with new and familiar colleagues/community members was an important aspect of the Think Tank** (75% provided a rating of “5-strongly agree”). The next most-agreed upon statement was that the Think Tank was worth the time invested in traveling and participating (65% provided a “5” rating), followed by the Think Tank being relevant to professional role (45%), that the Think Tank inspired experimentation with new methods of convening stakeholders, community members, and colleagues (35%), and being better able to identify best practices in planning and leadership as a result of the Think Tank (21%).
- **The NPS (Net Promoter Score) of the Think Tank is 25%:** about 45% of attendees were promoters, 35% passives, and 20% detractors. About 30% rated this year’s gathering a 10, “extremely likely to recommend.” The NPS from the 2016 Think Tank in Maryland was 86% with 62% rating it a 10. The overall figure from this year is relatively lower and the comments and ratings from the more negative individuals will be explored further.
- Strengths of the Think Tank noted by attendees include diverse backgrounds, interactive nature of each session, how it was a well-run meeting (e.g., venue, food), meeting new contacts and seeing old friends (networking), and the content of many of the sessions.
- Weaknesses noted include the concurrent sessions, not having a “plan B” for inclement weather on Thursday night (venue was cold and generally noted to be uncomfortable), that there was a greater focus on presentation than brainstorming/collaboration (i.e., too much one-way discussion), and an overemphasis on presenting info and then discussion (i.e., could have utilized different group participation and engagement techniques).
- **Half of attendees are “very likely” to attend a future Think Tank.** 30% are somewhat likely and 20% somewhat unlikely.
- One person noted that it could be helpful for Think Tank organizers to **secure a block of rooms** next time.
- One person made the following suggestion, which seems like it might address some other perceived weaknesses of the Think Tank: The first night was great that we could all sit together and enjoy local food, though I would recommend having a private area or room reserved so we could talk and hear a bit easier. I only had conversations to people on my immediate right and left. Perhaps the second night we could **host a social in a suite in a hotel where most people are staying or a large bar area**.

Comments are presented verbatim on the following page.

ID Verbatim Comments from Evaluation Survey Questions

- 1 *Innovative ways to work with the homeless populations*
- 1 *Innovative ways to work with millennials*
- 1 *Importance of self-care*
- 1 *Finding better ways to increase diversified use of my park facilities*
- 2 *Same struggle, different day*
- 2 *There are a lot of strategies and solutions out there - use them!*
- 2 *Innovation is key (pop-up parks are possible wave of the future)*
- 2 *Continue to dissect research to be useable*
- 3 *The Millennial Differences*
- 3 *Homelessness - how to address*
- 3 *Parks and Recreations Departments role in Healthy Communities*
- 3 *Economic Impact for Police and Recreation Agencies*
- 4 *Stop waiting for someone else to do "it" for you*
- 4 *Do not forget resources in the people in this space for 3 days.*
- 4 *Some cannot innovate - so redesign what you have responding to today's audiences*
- 5 *Importance of working with universities and how*
- 5 *How people calculate ROI*
- 5 *Virtual Park for persons with disease and disability*
- 5 *"Underestimated" communities*
- 6 *Recreation response to disasters*
- 6 *Community outreach - how do we reach diverse groups*
- 6 *Need for new grads to understand soft skills*
- 6 *Underestimated populations*
- 7 *Parks and Rec is a broad, inter-disciplinary topic, impacting everything from economic vitality to homelessness to quality of life*
- 7 *Language usage and storytelling matters*
- 8 *Learned some interesting economic development ideas*
- 8 *Learned more of the complexities surrounding homelessness*
- 9 *New collaborations (and importance of them)*
- 9 *Terminology (language importance)*
- 9 *Communication between research/practice*
- 9 *Relationship building*
- 10 *A better understanding of role P&R in Health - using the data*
- 10 *Refer to underserved communities as underestimated*
- 10 *Building resiliency - disasters - using natural remedies*
- 10 *Diversity is diverse*
- 11 *Outreach to find and work with diverse groups*
- 11 *Innovation incubators*
- 11 *Emergency plans - Red Cross and other resources*
- 12 *Make sure how you measure success if aligned with your goals - don't send mixed messages - or an industry might be at the table of collaboration to help make a difference*
- 12 *"underestimated" population*
- 12 *trade up - best practices -> best principles -> most promising principles*
- 13 *How to use public-private partnership model for industry (what are the benefits for each sector)*
- 13 *Use churches/ethnic centers to capture diverse population*
- 13 *How to integrate tech into outdoors*
- 13 *Instead of parks and rec, experience creators*

14 *Use underestimated instead of underserved*
15 *Understanding homelessness implications for Parks and Rec*
15 *Resources for connecting with/understanding communities of color*
15 *Activating parks/pop up activities*
15 *New program ideas - millennials*
16 *We need to view all programs and places as opportunities to build relationships*
16 *How do I find relevant research to put into practice*
17 *Great discussion on the millennial workforce*
17 *Constraints to visiting parks was very eye-opening*
17 *Bridging the gap between academia and practitioners*
18 *Speaking with different perspective, i.e. underestimated*
18 *A variety of ways to include millennials in problem-solving*
18 *A variety of ways to include diverse groups in inclusion*
19 *Evaluation (change practices) for millennials - look at practice*
19 *Economic development and quality of life partnerships*
19 *Parks are everywhere*
19 *Themes of inclusion at various levels -> workforce*
20 *Using term underestimated vs. underserved*
20 *Loved interdisciplinary nature*
20 *How to get research access? Bridge/translate*
20 *Happy Hour!!*
21 *Be open, consider perspectives outside your own!*
21 *Dialogue, questions, and listening are all GOOD!*
21 *PR's ability to impact our communities is HUGE!*
21 *Forwarding thinking, adapt to change, pay attention to trends*
21 *Need to adjust our practices to accommodate millennials (outcome oriented/impact based job descriptions)*
22 *Need to be able to better respond to on-demand programming*
23 *We continue to address to adults learn from a "school based" (class/teacher) perspective; why not*
23 *Point - counterpoint; facilitated discussions*
23 *W/O presentations? We have great minds here but we still had too many "talkers" and not enough sharing/debate*
24 *Collaborate. Collaborate. Collaborate!*
24 *P&R has a role in addressing homelessness. Need to figure out what it is?*
24 *Parks are everywhere.*
24 *Small group discussions are valuable - the TT format is an effective alternative to traditional conference.*
24 *Loved it!*
24 *Working with other Industry Professionals from around the country on current, relevant issues such as: homelessness, in parks, economics of P&R, millennial generation issues, and how we are all experiencing similar issues.*
25 *Small groups, focused.*
25 *Resiliency planning in P&R*
26 *Networking...learn*
26 *Economic dev...*
26 *Implementation models...*
27 *The opportunity to meet folks nation-wide*
27 *Entrepreneurial thinking is not only okay, it's possible*
28 *Diversity/Inclusion->relevance*
28 *Generational workforce issues (positive and negative)*

- 28 *Pop up parks to reinvigorate community interest*
Collaboration - need to continue to develop relationships in community to improve park programming and
- 29 *design and health equity*
Parks are everywhere - think of parks in a broader lens. Parks as a third place (wi-fi, intergenerational,
- 29 *dogs, kids, etc.)*
- 30 *Energy - factors - adapting and saying no*
- 30 *Nature and Ethnicity - share the concerns*
- 30 *Connecting with peeps around the country*
- 30 *Amazing Great Park*
- 31 *There are incredible partnership opportunities - I have so much to follow up on.*
- 31 *People want to support their parks (willing to pay more) - how to leverage?*
Translation and availability of tools -> need to share better and collaborate and break down the
- 31 *lingo/academic speak*
- 32 *There need to be more well-marketed opportunities to connect researchers with practitioners*
Be careful how to talk about things, re: underestimated groups, "the homeless," ability, people of color,
- 32 *etc.*