COMMUNITY TOOLKITS AND METRICS FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO NATURE
A WORKSHOP FOR PRACTITIONERS

A White Paper - Outcomes, Summary Notes, and Action Steps
Compiled by Teresa L. Penbrooke, PhD, CPRE, GP RED & GreenPlay, Attila Bality, National Park Service, and Christian Beckwith, Executive Director, SHIFT

INTRODUCTION AND FORMAT

At the SHIFT Festival in Jackson Hole, WY, on October 17, 2019, a five-member panel led a three-hour panel workshop on the topic of community toolkits and metrics for measuring equitable access to nature. At mid-point, there was a count of 34 participants in the workshop. Participants were primarily knowledgeable practitioners, researchers, and professionals who work in the realm of providing services within communities.

The panel was developed through initial discussions led by Dr. Teresa Penbrooke and SHIFT Executive Director Christian Beckwith in Spring/Summer 2019. The goal was to lead and facilitate the workshop on the broad topic of introduction to community-focused toolkits, potential metrics, tools, methods, and examples related to engaging communities, measuring access, implementation, and desired outcomes or increasing equitable access to the outdoors. The panelists met by video conference and through emails to create the framework and prepare for the workshop. A list of the participating workshop facilitators, brief bios, and helpful links they provided to participants can be found in **Appendix A.**

Five Workshop Panelists and Facilitators
- Alexi McHugh, MPH - SHIFT Emerging Leader
- Brandi Horton - Rails to Trails Conservancy, Vice President of Communications
- Linda Hwang, MPhil, MBA - Managing Director, Strategy & Innovation, Trust for Public Lands
- Attila Bality – Outdoor Recreation Planner, National Park Service
- Teresa Penbrooke, PhD, CPRE – Director, Healthy Communities Research Group, GP RED, CEO and Founder, GreenPlay, LLC, and Affiliate Faculty, Metro State University – Denver

Methods - Framework of the Workshop and Outcomes Summary

The methods for this workshop were to primarily use a nominal group process technique (Dunham, 2006) to educate participants and to garner consensus to identify potential next steps for addressing these topics as professionals. Facilitated steps included:

1. **Brief introduction by Panelists –** Each panelist presented three slides relative to their work and experience relative to the topics. Alexi McHugh led with slides introducing and describing community-based participatory research and potential applications of these methods to this type of community toolkit engagement. Each following panelist briefly described relevant tools, similarities, and differences in tools, methods, and outcomes. See **Appendix A** for links of work provided.
2. **World Café Format Table Discussions –** Thirty minutes of small group discussions were facilitated on three guiding questions for 1) engagement, 2) measuring and developing access, and 3) implementation and outcomes.
3. **World Café Dessert - Full Group Report Back –** Each table had a volunteer participant report back key themes and ideas that had emerged on the flip chart paper at their table. Summary sheets were developed of the overall themes that emerged for the three guiding questions topics.
4. **Voting for Deepening Topics –** Each participant voted on the summary sheets for the three guiding question summaries of their preference for a deepening discussion topic.
5. **Smaller Group Deepening Discussions –** Participants selected one of three groups on the guiding topics for deeper discussion on the topic that had emerged as most important from the voting on the three large group summary sheets. Notes were compiled based on participant input on the most important aspects for future focus and potential action steps.
6. **Summary Notes and Potential Future Focus –** the panelists compiled notes and created this paper.

▶ World Café Key Questions - Breakout Group Discussions

The full group of attendees were broken into five tables for discussion, each led by one of the workshop facilitators. Each table discussed the following guiding topic questions for 10 minutes each.

The Workshop Included Three Guiding Questions for Discussion:
1. **Engagement -** What does the community want and need around this topic? How do we create intentional, appropriate, and authentic engagement at scale?
2. **Access -** How are we measuring what is physically in our communities? - Inventory, Level of Service, and Capacity Analysis (measuring proximity, quality, transportation, and awareness)
3. **Implementation and Outcomes -** Once we know what we need and what we have – how do we build the capacity and the advocacy to take that forward to implementation and action?

▶ World Café Dessert! – Full Group Themes Identified

Flip chart notes from each of the five tables were summarized under the three guiding topics by the full group report back and discussion (listed in order of votes). Full listings of the flip chart comments are provided in **Appendix B.**

1) Engagement - Full Group Discussion HIGHLIGHTS & VOTING FOR DEEPER DISCUSSIONS

# of Votes	Themes that Emerged from World Café Groups
20	Relationship building and creating reciprocity
11	Find the proxy and people who represent the community
11	Have no predetermined conclusions
10	Build in feedback loops for learning
7	Come with our authenticity and vulnerabilities, and our stories – self awareness
7	Participant buy-in
4	Go where people already gather
4	Define engagement up front
2	No savior complex
2	Wildlife impact
1	Small group, focused activities
1	Connection to public transit
1	Use the lens of volunteerism/stewardship
1	Calls to action
1	Use advisory councils

2) ACCESS - Full Group Discussion HIGHLIGHTS & VOTING FOR DEEPENING

# of Votes	Themes that Emerged from World Café Groups
14	Data sources

- Transit
- Project Play
- TPL Park Score
- Community Commons
- CDC
- Park Audit Tools (i.e.; parks and recreation component-based inventories, GRASP®, and CPAT)
- Demographic and census data
- Wildlife data

# of Votes	Themes that Emerged from World Café Groups
12	What is the right kind of access, listening to the community on their needs
11	Proximity and awareness
5	Knowledge of where to go, what to do – define nature as local
5	Place-based education – ecology, culture, education
3	Terminology can affect use. Wellness vs. healthy habits (healthy habits may be more acceptable?)
3	Define a local definition of ACCESS
3	Marketing – who are you telling your story to?
3	Present data with opportunities to activate
3	Wildlife data
2	Resources available, where to recreate (Apps)
2	The quality of the park needs to be known, what should visitors expect
1	Crowd-sourced data
1	School-health data
1	Different trail tools, such as cameras or counters
1	Language barriers
1	Knowing connectivity – where are the green spaces

3) Implementation and Outcomes - Full Group Discussion HIGHLIGHTS & VOTING FOR DEEPENING

# of Votes	Themes that Emerged from World Café Groups
25	Building capacity and advocacy in the community to enable local leadership
13	Community education about resources and opportunities
12	Using economics to convince to implement, need to calculate with tools – e.g. NRPA Park Metrics, SOPARC (behavior/fitness), and Active Living Conference
9	Mentorship first/nature second for skills building
8	Need consistency of data between agencies to set standards/maximize analysis
5	Have to understand the power dynamics
5	Social media/organic growth/trust as bedrock for advocacy
4	Take personal responsibility for individual role in the work
1	Need understanding from start to finish - How did the plan come together?
1	Gather inputs and outcomes. This is powerful for funders and decision makers.
1	Community grants as a valuable resource
1	Integrated site plans
1	Tying the program happening in a place to creating access

▶ DETERMINING POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

After the World Café summary, participants self-selected to participate in one of the three guiding topics for additional discussions.

1) ENGAGEMENT FOCUS - FINAL DEEP DIVE DISCUSSION

Relationship Building and Reciprocity received the most votes for the deepening discussion (20.
The group determined that the key points for engagement going forward need to focus on:

ACTION: Need to reduce common mistakes, such as:

- Having a preset agenda
- Lack of historical and cultural contexts
- Disinterest of the people
- Go beyond individual dollars and grants
- Ignoring or disregarding the process: e.g.; pre-work, know the value of the journey
- Leave assumptions
- Don't start with conclusions
- Lack of humility and self-awareness – what is your motivation?
- Don't be patronizing
- Not acknowledging what you DO have – come from strengths-focus
- Don't be afraid of taking risks

ACTION: Focus on reciprocity:
- Not only taking, but also giving back – have a two-way street
- Connecting with people personally
- Win/win for the people and the community
- Equally valuing what people bring
- Build opportunity for leadership from within the community
  - Be open to the definition of leadership
- Have intentional partnerships
- Provide recognition

There is a need to be intentional and authentic in engagement and understanding with representative groups by creating trust and identifying the right proxies within the community. There is a need to teach how to leverage engagement to create meaningful access. Engagement is not a one-time thing; it needs to be iterative and circular, like an ongoing relationship. Listen, teach, share, and repeat.

2) ACCESS: PROXIMITY & AWARENESS FOCUS - FINAL DEEP DIVE DISCUSSION
Compiling Data Sources received 14 votes for the deepening topic. The group determined the following actions and key points for going forward:

ACTION—Compile and share Data Source spreadsheet with SHIFT
*Attila Bality noted that almost all of the data sources referenced can be found in the Parks, Trails, and Health Workbook (*go.nps.gov/parkstrailshelath_workbook *and that he can help with this action item.*

Brief Discussion on Proximity and Awareness – Key Points
- Much of this depends on location – could be urban or front country
- Always identify the audience
- Strategy – "Transit direct to Trailhead" model

ACTION – A volunteer team should develop a position paper on Proximity and Awareness for SHIFT 2020.
Format, discussion points, and recommendations are to be developed collaboratively. The following SHIFT participants agreed to be involved in the development of the position paper:

Alexi McHugh   Alexi.McHugh@gmail.com
Tatianna MaGee   mageeta@appstate.edu
Dawn Cooper   dawn@canyonsassociation.org
Meril Wallace   meril@canyonsassociation.org
Marinda Rogers-Gardner   Marinda.Rogers-Gardner@usda.gov
Paul Fitzgerald   paul@bigmarsh.org
Ryan Dotson   ryan.dotson@kingcounty.gov
Attila Bality   Attila_bality@nps.gov
Teresa Penbrooke   teresap@gpred.org

3) OUTCOMES AND IMPLEMENTATION – FINAL DEEP DIVE DISCUSSION
Building capacity and advocacy in the community to enable local leadership received 25 votes.

Key Points Going Forward (Conclusions) - Participants believe we (as a field) need to focus on:
Identifying agents of change and money (they are not exclusive from each other)

- Developing champions in the face of barriers (time, access, willingness)
- Getting funding for this work (soft and hard outcome, placed-based, and long-term)
- Leveraging loved experiences (storytelling from high profile messengers)
- Need a spokesperson/storytelling skill building – unlock the comfort and passion to advocate
- Do research to identify advocates and lived experience/perspective and willingness of elected leaders
- Enhance Youth engagement – build the pipeline for lifelong leadership
- Acknowledge complexity of advocacy, civil disobedience, and choosing strategy with proven outcomes (soft vs. hard)
  - Make advocacy less scary
  - Prove impact
  - Celebrate wins

▶ NEXT STEPS
The panelists convened again in November after the workshop and in January 2020 to review the summary proceedings and determine next steps, including:

1. Writing this summary white paper on proceedings from the workshop to disseminate out through SHIFT and GP RED - to be led by Christian and Teresa
2. Create a deeper paper on Access – Convened by Attila, Teresa, and others
3. SHIFT is developing a grant for a larger marketing approach and refocus on nature as a social determinant of health by looking at how to bring it to scale. Interested professionals are welcome to participate
   a. Brandi will follow up with Christian to align resources – Creating a mastermind group?
   b. GP RED will continue as collaborative marketing alliance with SHIFT
   c. Training – taking structure of storytelling on nature as social determinant of health. Using narrative as a strong portion. Brandi will create an overview.
      - Build a training with others and the panel
      - Train the trainer course - advocacy
      - Awareness course
      - Different venues
      - Potentially include ELP/communications program/campaigns
      - Develop stronger lexicon/new icon/branding/identity – What is IT?
      - Creating a glossary of terms and standardization of language

4. Sync with research groups/PAPRN+/overview of key people on related areas:
    a. Determine what is needed from researchers to create evidence base – Penbrooke to connect with the research group
    b. Identify what researchers can do to help going forward – practical application needs
    c. TPL is working with a network of researchers – capturing a full-body of work around schoolyard, health, climate change, and local universities. They will have a PI to coordinate
    d. All current panelists can help
    e. Link to *Active Living Conference* – Penbrooke will attend and share
    f. Develop a database of researchers working in this realm
    g. Do another poster session – invite nationally from around the world
    h. Link to World Leisure Organization – Penbrooke will attend
    i. Link to National Outdoor Recreation Conference – Bality and Penbrooke will attend
    j. Link to Offset Cost Savings calculators (from Knowledge Network)
    k. Create mastermind groups to do deep drill – complementary focus areas – develop an objective with a timeline
    l. Take the value set to scale – implement these goals

Resources

Dunham, Randall. (2006). Nominal Group Technique: A User's Guide. University of Wisconsin. From:
https://sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/DUNHAM%201998%20Nominal%20Group%20Technique%20-%20A%20Users'%20Guide.pdf

Appendix A: SHIFT Workshop Panel Facilitators Bios & Helpful Links

Community Toolkits and Metrics for Equitable Access to Nature

1. **Alexi McHugh, MPH - SHIFT Emerging Leader**
    Alexi a Public Health Professional who has been fortunate enough to have lived and worked in the field of public health on both coasts of the United States. His work in, and with, nonprofits, higher education, and government has focused on a range of topics and issues, from HIV/AIDS and obesity to outdoor spaces and diversity. He recently wrapped up a term as a RARE AmeriCorps Volunteer in Oregon, working with rural Latinx populations and facilitating outdoor engagement for families with young children. He is currently working with the National Park Service Office of Healthy Parks, Healthy People as a Diversity and Volunteer Consultant. He is actively searching for employment in the outdoor space where he can bring his public health background to full use.
    alexi.mchugh@gmail.com

    *   https://www.detroiturc.org/cbpr-principles.html
        A great explanation of the principles of CBPR and why they matter
    *   https://outreach-partners.org/2011/10/01/applying-principles-of-community-based-participatory-research-to-your-program/
        A lovely explainer on how to apply CBPR to your work
    *   https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4138529/
        An academic paper on applying CBPR to partnership Building
    *   https://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cbpr/u1/u11.php
        A very full guide to CBPR

2. **Brandi Horton - Rails to Trails Conservancy, Vice President of Communications**
    Brandi has dedicated her career to communications for social change and is passionate about creating communities that promote health and well-being. For more than 14 years, she has partnered with nonprofit organizations and government agencies to leverage communications strategies to organize and engage audiences in support of social good. She brings diverse, comprehensive public relations and integrated marketing experience with a skill set spanning earned, paid, owned, and shared media strategies that advance nonprofit advocacy agendas.
    brandi@railstotrails.org

    *   www.trailnation.org is the best programmatic resource that provides an overview of the program and the goal to develop trail network models for the nation.
    *   http://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/trailnation/summit/ is a great resource with some of the education and background on the Playbook from a convening R2T.

3. **Linda Hwang, MPhil, MBA - Managing Director, Strategy & Innovation, Trust for Public Lands**
   Linda is currently the Interim Lead for TPL's Research & Innovation Department, developing long-term strategy, providing high-level leadership, and setting performance metrics. She has worked directly with each state office to develop their five-year strategic plans. Prior to TPL, Linda was a partner at a start-up that developed customized decision-support tools that quantify ecosystem services for clients such as the Nature Conservancy, the Dow Chemical Company, and the Environmental Defense Fund. She was also at Business for Social Responsibility, where she built and led advisory services program offerings on corporate water strategy and ecosystem service strategies for Fortune 500 companies. Linda has a BA in environmental economics from the University of Michigan, an MPhil in Development Studies and Social Transformation from the University of Cape Town, and an MBA from the University of Michigan.
   Linda.Hwang@tpl.org

   - www.tpl.org
   - www.tpl.org/parkscore

4. **Attila Bality – Outdoor Recreation Planner, National Park Service**
   Attila works with the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. He has been involved with parks, trails, and open space issues in New Mexico and the southwest for more than 25 years. Attila's work is focused on helping local communities improve and enhance parks, open space, trails, and river corridors. Many of his projects engage youth in both planning and on-the-ground activities. More recently, Attila's interests have focused on parks, trails, and community health. He was instrumental in creating the Albuquerque Prescription Trails program, now a national model. He is co-lead for the National Park Service Healthy Recreation Community of Practice providing resources and training for staff across the country that are integrating community health into parks and trails projects. Attila works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Places Program in the development of tools and measurements to increase the value of parks and trails to the public health sector.
   attila_bality@nps.gov

   - go.nps.gov/parkstrailshelath_workbook

5. **Teresa Penbrooke, PhD, CPRE – Director, Healthy Communities Research Group, GP RED**
   CEO and Founder, GreenPlay, LLC, and Affiliate Faculty, Metro State University – Denver,
   Dr. Teresa Penbrooke's career has included more than 30 years of private and nonprofit business management, teaching, and research, including years as a parks and recreation agency administrator and program coordinator for three different public agencies in Colorado. Teresa now authors books and articles, teaches for universities, state, and national associations, and researches/consults. Areas of focus are quality of life systems, planning and management, leadership, access to nature, modifying preventive community health, operations, strategic planning, and community engagement. In addition to her work with GP RED, Teresa is also the CEO and Founder of GreenPlay, LLC, a leading national private parks, recreation, tourism, and open space consulting firm, which has completed community engagement and planning for over 550 communities since 1999. She has a BS in Kinesiology, a Masters in Organizational Management, and a PhD in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management. She loves combining her intellectual curiosity, love of the outdoors, healthy lifestyles, entrepreneurial spirit, and public sector heart to help communities thrive.
   TeresaP@gpred.org or TeresaP@greenplayllc.com

   - www.greenplayllc.com
   - www.gpred.org
   - https://www.gpred.org/initiatives/healthy-communities-research-group/

Appendix B: Detailed Flip Chart Notes from World Café Tables

This is a list of the recorded information from the flip chart papers from the five facilitated tables, combined under the three guiding questions topics (not edited), in no particular order.

Engagement:
- Work with community-based programs that are rooted in neighborhoods and ask them what they need
- Design programs to affirm identity
- Smaller stakeholder meetings – bring in representatives, parents, business leaders, and community leaders
- Pop-Up engagement. Set up where people are gathering – grocery store, community center, churches, in a park, along a trail, etc.
- Surveys – intercept and electronic
- Community participatory activities such as walk audits, park audits, and crowd-sourced mapping
- Need
    - Financial support in addition to promotion
    - Participant buy-in
    - Strong relationships and personalized benefits
    - Including people with disabilities (inclusion)
    - Access & easy access
    - Connections with public transit
    - Reaching out with partnerships
- Learn from mistakes – it has not been comprehensive engagement
- Equity-based
- Challenges:
    - Government turnover
    - Who are the champions? What is their network?
    - Sustainability
    - Having enough resources
    - Surveys don't feel deep
    - Time for inventorying partners
- Engage the wildlife community
- Invite the conversation early
- Need to engage the right stakeholders/engage squeaky wheels
- Don't be siloed
- How to meet people where they are?
- Address language barriers
- Define Engagement:
    - Relationship-building
    - Volunteerism
    - Call to action
    - Donors
    - Lobbying
    - Education

- Goal must be win/win
- Tactics:
  - Community-driven goals
  - Finding the right messenger
  - No savior complex in resource distribution and access
  - Advisory councils
  - Pledges from politicians and lobbyists
  - Not extractive
  - Mutuality of benefit, interest, buy-in
  - Self-awareness – Am I the person?
- Host call-ins to understand needs
- Work with established orgs
- Surveys
- Assess needs through conversations with experts
- Film & Multi-media to share stories and Q&A
- "With a community" vs. "For a community
- Stick to it!
- Build relationships before engagement to navigate power differential and build rapport

Access:
- King County Metro has provided transit data identifying disparities in certain parts of town. (The Wilderness Society through the Urban to Wild project initiated transit studies)
- Project Play (https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/) identifies disparities in access
- City of Boulder has a free shuttle to open space properties which helps with equity access
- The Trust for Public Land Park Score (https://www.tpl.org/parkscore) has been extremely helpful in Atlanta
- Community Commons data https://www.communitycommons.org/
- CDC Environmental Public Health Tracking Network https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/
- Methods and tools such as SOPARC https://activelivingresearch.org/soparc-system-observing-play-and-recreation-communities Active Living Research should be a go-to site!
- Demographic data comparing who park visitors are to census data
- Community assessments help push assumptions aside
- Language – more languages on park/trail signage makes all visitors feel welcome
- Resource = ioverlander = ONX) – through BLM
- Barrier/time - 10 min walk to green spaces
- Pathway systems
- Marketing – Who is it being marketed to? Who is involved in the campaigns?
- Types of events
- Access doesn't equal quality
- Ethics aren't discussed
- What are actionable tools? Present data with the opportunities around it
- How do we crowdsource data?
- Some data is tough to get:
  - Wildlife – Audubon, tribes, USFW
  - School health data – especially below county level (YANS from GP RED)
  - Demographics of users
- What is the qualitative piece? Where is qualitative without survey fatigue?
- Make surveys meaningful – what is the WHY?
- How to get to middle ground

- Language barriers
- How to measure ADA – usage? Multiple uses?
- Measuring in statistically-valid way
- Proximity vs. awareness – sites, signage, marketing
- Need better ROI
- Need metrics – linguistics and racial implications of what you are asking for and how
- Listening within the community as a learner
- Don't start with conclusions
- Is your population the population?
- What are barriers to access?
- Qualitative vs. Quantitative data – Who lives 10 min. walk away? 10 min. walk is not enough to measure
- Need to hear absent and ignored voices
- Use social determinants of health
- Identity is influenced by narrative – ecology, economy, culture
- Know connectivity to greenspaces
- Parks to parks, and parks to people
- Use hyper-local definitions of access – language, transport, pricing
- Transport to green spaces
- Knowledge barriers – gear, where to go, what to do, don't assume people know what to do
- Inventory is easier
- Quality of nature is sometimes unknown
- Needs to be relatable – new stories and language (healthy habits vs. wellness)
- Tap existing communities
- Know about perceived barriers

Implementation and Desired Outcomes:
- Create a vision plan, which is imagined and developed through community design process. The plan should contain list of participants and team meeting notes to illustrate community investment in the process and outcomes; it is nvaluable to getting to actions
- Often, the stakeholder planning teams become the "friends of" groups that advocate and can fundraise for implementation
- A community grant program that provides seed money to Friends or other NGO supporting implementation. Capital improvement turned over to group to design and build. Stewardship and maintenance also designed into park management
- Integrated Site Plans that reach deep into communities and neighborhoods for advice and recommendations
- Workshops for Friends Groups. One large parks and recreation department hosts on-going capacity building training for park friends groups
- Spread awareness – mentorship community/creative ways to disseminate
- Donations
- Mentorship first, nature second
- Connect nature to what people care about
- Support prep and gear libraries
- Meet people where they are
- Work through trusted connections and partnerships
- Social media and organic growth
- Build the economic database – look at health care payers and share in an actionable way
- Use statewide plans, such as SCORPs – OR, CO, MI as examples

- SORPARC can measure – get trained at Active Living Conference
- Strive for consistency between agencies
    - Use component-based measurement systems like GRASP
    - Need national standards for data collection so data can talk to each other
    - Data interpretation
- Power of net promotion may outweigh data
- Need feedback loops and post-survey monitoring
- Too much misinformation or assumptions about access
- Intentional inclusions and tokenism
- Mutuality of benefit
- How do we responsibly share the authorship and benefit of intentional inclusive programs?
    - Authenticity – vulnerability – own power dynamics at play
- Implementation is tied to access
- Education – getting people there, programming, telling people about parks near them
- Success = retention, smiles, pre- & post-surveys, empowerment, self-sufficiency