

# **Listening to the Community Findings from the Phillips Neighborhood Park System**

**Prepared by  
Amy Cowell  
Research Assistant, University of Minnesota  
Conducted on behalf of  
Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Association  
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Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research

330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center

301 - 19th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55455

phone: 612/625-1020

e-mail: [ksn@umn.edu](mailto:ksn@umn.edu)

website: <http://www.npcr.org>

**Listening to the Community**  
Findings from the Phillips Neighborhood Park System CURA research project

Amy Cowell  
Research Assistant  
University of Minnesota

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**Executive summary:**

The Phillips Neighborhood Park and Recreation CURA Research Project began as a proposal from the Phillips Community Parks Initiative (PCPI) researching community needs regarding the planning of Phillips Parks and Recreation facilities. The research aims to identify community perceived ‘gaps’ between community needs and Phillips Park and Recreation services provided. To this end, this paper: 1) provides a detailed list of the physical amenities and programs available at the Phillips parks; 2) presents common themes found in then informant interviews and 3) offers recommendations for future planning of Community Service Area (CSA) park system. To date, no complete list of CSA services are available for planning purposes; the inventory was made for the use of community members, park staff, and park board members to assist with future planning. The main findings from the project were presented to PCPI during a final presentation in June.

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## **Project Background**

When the project began in mid-January 2009, Phillips neighborhood organizations and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board were at odds over the fate of the Phillips Community Center (PCC). The Park and Recreation Board have owned the property for the last fourteen years. When the last tenants, the Boys and Girls Club vacated in October 2009 the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board was left to decide who should occupy the space. The PCPI did not approve of the plan the Park Board presented for the building's future. The PCPI believes the plans were made without Phillip's community involvement and competes with, instead of complementing, the upcoming East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center (EPPCCC), which is to break ground in fall 2009. Given this conflict, the PNPC requested a CURA research assistant to conduct a project on the park and recreation needs of the Phillips community to aid in future park planning.

## **Park History**

For citizens of Minneapolis, the parks are a source of local pride. Aesthetically pleasing and bustling with activity, the Minneapolis Parks are the epicenter of community life. Residents appreciate the added value the parks provide and realize their importance for the health of the community and the citizens who live there. Yet, despite the local pride, great disparities exist in the quality of the parks city-wide and leave many in poorer areas without access to facilities and opportunities that the Minneapolis Park system is known for. Citizens of Phillips neighborhood know all too well the challenges that face low income neighborhoods and have a long history of discrimination and exploitation. Local concern over the equity of the parks reflects the larger issue of poorer neighborhoods receiving less resources and services.

## Neighborhood statistics

Phillips Neighborhood is among the poorest neighborhoods in Minneapolis. The tables below offer a snapshot of Phillips neighborhood and its distinct demographic features. These statistics were collected and presented by the Development Department of Urban Adventures Organization. (1)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Total population</u> (2000 Census)</p> <p>13,085 Adults 6,000 Children (under 18)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Residents under the age of 19</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>35.4% of the population</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Breakdown by ethnicity</u> (Minneapolis Planning Department 2005)</p> <p>Caucasian 24.6% African American 29% Hispanic 22% Native American 11%, Asian 5.9%, Other 7.4%</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Housing</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>21% owner occupied 79% rental</p>
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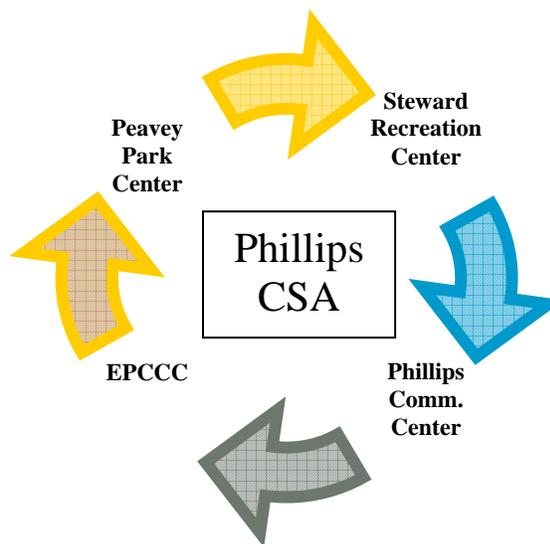
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Single parent homes</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>58%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Female headed households</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>98% of all single family homes are headed by females</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Adults working or looking for work</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>54%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>People living below the poverty level</u> (Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile)</p> <p>31.75%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Per Capita income</u> (2000 census)</p> <p>Central: \$11,400 Phillip: \$10,200 Minneapolis: \$22,700</p>
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## Phillips CSA:

To address the disparities in Minneapolis neighborhoods, the Park and Recreation Board created a community service area (CSA) to cater the park services to the specific needs of the community it serves.(2) The CSA links all of the parks within a geographic region together as a

collaborative instead of individually functioning facilities. Parks within a given CSA work as a team to recruit youth, and organize services and programs. The Phillips CSA consists of three primary park and recreation centers, which include: Peavey Park, Steward Park, and Phillips Community Center (PCC). As mentioned in the research background, the East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center (EPPCCC) will begin construction in fall of 2009, adding an additional recreation center to the CSA. Additionally, the CSA includes Cedar Fields, recreation fields utilized for athletic and community events.



### **Previous park research**

The 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan articulates the importance of research as an effective tool to, “Anticipate and thoughtfully respond to the diverse needs of the city’s communities, continually seeking ways to better deliver park and recreation services.”<sup>(2)</sup> However, the board’s efforts to incorporate community-based research have in the PCPI’s opinion “fallen short.” The Park and Recreation website states intent to utilize research methods including surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, town meetings, and interviews to gain community input.<sup>(2)</sup> Within the Phillips CSA, the Park and Recreation board administered a survey on the main uses and needs of the local parks. Community members voiced concern about the appropriateness and efficacy of the survey tool, as well as the timeliness of other research efforts by the park and recreation board. As of May, 2009 the findings of the survey were not known to the public.

Phillips sub-neighborhood organizations (East Phillips, West Phillips, and Ventura Village) have individually conducted surveys to gauge community satisfaction on the park system. The surveys were conducted in various formats, and ask questions on a range of topics. The surveys offer valuable insight into a broad range of topics and provide an opportunity for community-wide input and representation. However, the surveys were asking several different research questions in a variety of formats making comparison difficult. Due to the limitations of the community surveys and Park and Recreation research, this project aims to take a new approach to PCPI's research efforts through key informant interviews and park inventory.

## **Methods**

### **Park inventory**

A Park inventory was generated based on the use of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation website, research observation, and interviews conducted with park staff. The inventory includes the physical amenities of the three parks facilities within Phillips CSA as well as programming offered at each park site. The park inventory was presented to the Phillips Neighborhood Parks Collaborative and is available for their use. A copy of the inventory can be found in Appendix A. The intent of the inventory is to establish an understanding of the complete resources available within the Phillips CSA. This knowledge is the foundation for further CSA planning and research.

### **Key informant interviews**

Key informant interviews were conducted at the beginning of February. A list of potential interviewees was generated by the PCPI members. These interviewees were identified as users of the parks, community leaders of a specific population segment, or employee of a park service. From the extensive list of potential interviews, nine were selected based on experience, and willingness to participate. The interviews were conducted in person and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. A list of the key informant interviews is listed below. Those interviewed were asked a standard set of questions which were modified to draw on the expertise of the person

interviewed. A list of the standard questions asked can be found in appendix B. The main goal of these interviews was to gain insight on the strengths and weakness of the Phillips CSA as well as recommendations for park planning. Analysis on interview responses was conducted by listing all interview responses after each individual question. Responses were then analysis for recurrent themes, and findings.

**Interviewed:**

**Al Bangora**, CSA Director, Peavey Park Director  
**Rosie Cruz**, Sunday Soccer League Director  
**Julie Greaves**, Youth Program Manager Waite House  
**Gandi Mohamed**, Midtown Phillips Board Member, Somali Community Leader  
**Leon Oman**, Anderson School Afterschool Program Coordinator  
**Carmen Wilson**, Youthline Community Program Leader  
**Bill Ziegler**, Overall Director of Little Earth Tribal Community  
**Steve Zimmer**, Phillips Pool and Gym Staff  
**Shirley Heyer**, Phillips Community Organizer, PCPI Member

**Findings**

Analysis on interview responses was conducted by listing all interview responses after each individual question. Responses were then analysis for recurrent themes, and findings. The primary comments made during the nine interviews regarding the assets and challenges of the Phillips CSA were clustered in two areas. The first area focuses on physical improvements to the park facilities and the need for enhanced programming options. The second area focuses on barriers to the optimal utilization of park and recreation facilities and programs.

**1. Phillips CSA needs to make physical improvements to the park facilities, and create more program options.**

- **Large space available for rental.** Although Peavey and Phillips Community Center offer multipurpose areas for rent, the rooms are infrequently used. Some of the possible reasons for lack of use include: insufficient space available, poor/inadequate conditions of the facilities, and lack of knowledge of the rental option.

- **Soccer fields.** Although soccer was identified by all of those interviewed as the most popular activity in the community, the CSA lacks designated soccer fields, or successful leagues.
- **Childcare programming.** Availability of childcare was identified as a major need of Phillips families, and an important reason for use of park and Rec services.
- **Adult Latino recreation.** Adult recreation sports were just beginning to organize at Phillips Community Center in spring 2009, and the CSA does not have a positive reputation of serving adult recreation needs. Additionally, community leaders mentioned the problem of reserving recreation space within the CSA for league practice and game time.
- **Double gym space** at Phillips Community Center, Peavey, and Stewart Park are seen as key Park assets. Yet even with gym space at three of the four CSA parks, gym space is viewed as unavailable and needed. This is not necessarily an indication of a need for more physical gym space, but for a need for space to be available for resident use. Two of the parks (Peavey and Stewart) share their gymnasiums with attached community schools whose afterschool programs and recreational sporting events take precedence over park use. Thus, individual community members must compete for gym use. An additional complaint raised by interviewees is that Phillips organizations are not given preference over outside neighborhood teams and organizations.
- **Club Youthline** at Phillips Community Center serves the most Phillips youth on a daily basis. Interviews with park staff revealed that 60-80 youth were attending PCC on a daily basis. Many of these youth have attended PCC programming since the facility was the Boys and Girls Club. The uncertain future of the building jeopardizes the high participation rate. If the Phillips Community Center closes, 60-80 Phillips youth would be left without afterschool programming.

- **The You<sup>th</sup> Are Here bus system** is a valuable tool for connecting youth with parks. You<sup>th</sup> Are Here buses are available throughout Hennepin county and provide a safe, reliable ride to youth activities throughout the summer. Stops include: parks, libraries, and youth program facilities. Park staff credit the bus system for increasing usage of park facilities.
- **Needed renovation of the PCC Pool.** Although everyone interviewed mentioned the pool at Phillips Community Center as a potential community asset, most also realized the cost of renovation and maintenance as a deterrent to its use. Most Phillips youth do not have the opportunity to swim because there are no large public pools in the neighborhood.

## 2. **Barriers to optimal utilization of park facilities and programs**

- **Cost** is a significant barrier to use of the parks and park programming. Cost was identified by park users as a major barrier to an organization renting of park facilities as well as major limiting factor to program participation. The average income of Phillips community members is substantially less than that of individuals across Minneapolis; the average income in Phillips is \$26,405 while the average income in Minneapolis is \$48,602. Yet, Phillips CSA charges the same Park and Recreation standard fees for renting park facilities as the other Minneapolis CSAs.
- **Historically the parks have been oriented to African Americans** and the connotation exists despite the changing demographics. The park facilities are still viewed by residents as places for African Americans; therefore, the facilities are underutilized by other racial groups including Native Americans and Hispanics. While park staff are aware of this perception, little has been done to change it.
- **Relationship between Park Board and Phillips neighborhood organizations.** The park board has historically done a poor job of soliciting the community's input for CSA

planning. Neighborhood organizations have struggled to maintain a solution oriented approach when dealing with Park and Recreation conflicts. The tumultuous relationship between the Board and the community organizations leaves community members feeling unheard and ignored in park planning issues.

- **Park location.** Most interviewees identified neighborhood crime and dangerous streets as barriers to youth using certain park facilities.

**Latino youth participation.** The interviewees mentioned the small percentage of Latino youth participating in that participate in park programs relative to the number of Hispanics in Phillips population. Some possible reasons for the disproportion include lack of park staff diversity, language assistance issues, African American connotation, and lack of experience with park system.

### **Other Findings**

- Neighborhood collation still suffers from sub-neighborhood fragmentation (i.e.: East Phillips, West Phillips, Ventura Village)
- The Park Board's research does not complement rapidly changing Phillips CSA
- Park's Limited resources to hire and train staff. A major challenge identified by park directors was finding dedicated, reliable staff that would work for the wage available. Due to budgetary constraints new park staff do not receive formal job training.
- Park and Recreation website is not current and online registration is ineffective.

### **Recommendations**

- **Website.** Online description of park facilities was outdated. The website should include detailed lists of specific park assets so community members are aware of park resources. Additionally the registration process for Park and recreation programming is confusing and is not even fully understood by park staff. The registration process

should be simplified and translated into multiple languages to ensure usage by Phillip's limited English speakers.

- **Reduce fees.** Charging standard fees to a population who makes substantially less than the rest of the city creates barriers to park access. Fees should be reduced or eliminated to remove barriers to participation.
- **Outreach to Latino's.**

Pillsbury Waite House is a well established Phillips organization that provides renowned programming to youth and adults in Phillips. The Waite house has successfully served the diverse racial groups of Phillips, and the CSA would benefit from their service model and community reputation. The Waite House serves about 200 youth annually and has a regular waiting list due to limited physical space and budgetary constraints. Park and Recreation should offer Waite House the much needed facility space available at Phillips Community Center in exchange for participation in Waite House programming.

The Sunday Soccer Program run by Rosie Cruz is a unique community asset that should be supported by Phillips CSA. Collaborating with this program will increase outreach to the Hispanic population, while also enhancing the inadequate soccer program. The Park and Rec should offer the Sunday Soccer Program convenient playing space within Phillips at an affordable price.

- **Recreation Plus.** Phillips CSA should implement Recreation Plus afterschool programming at a Phillips park facility. Recreation Plus is an after school program for children ages 6-12 offered by Minneapolis Park and Rec. With Rec Plus, kids play games, create artwork, read books, get homework help, go on field trips, and learn about the environment during our after school child care program. The fee for the program is \$141 per month, plus field trip fees and a \$35 yearly registration fee.

Frequently, these fees are waived for qualified low-income residents. RecPlus is currently available at several other parks across Minneapolis.

- **Staff training.** The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board should create a staff training model that can be easily be implemented at all park facilities. This would ensure that all staff are receiving basic instruction on park duties and expectations. Additionally, to better represent the multicultural population of Phillips, Park and Rec should make an effort to hire more bilingual staff.

## **Discussion**

This research was conducted for The Phillips Neighborhood Parks Initiative's use in future park planning. The Park Inventory was created to give community members a comprehensive list of all of the resources available within the CSA. This compilation will offer a foundation for understanding the current park situation for effective Park planning and research. The intent of the inventory is to allow for further research and evaluation. It became apparent at the start of this project that the park's need could not be assessed without an understanding of all of the park's amenities. This list can be appended as the assets of the park change and programming is updated.

The inventory is intended to be the beginning of a complete list. The dimensions of rooms, handicapped accessibility, and a list of staff employed and their titles are still needed. Additionally, the number of kids given in the inventory is an estimate provided by park staff. Exact numbers, based on daily sign-in totals, would be a useful addition for tracking park usage. Further research could track usage rates year round to see seasonal and other fluctuations.

A factsheet summarizing project description, research findings, and suggestions for action was created for the use of the Phillips Neighborhood Parks Initiative and presented to the PCPI in June. A copy of the Factsheet is attached as appendix C. The fact sheet maybe distributed as is at the will of the PCPI.

**Work cited:**

1) Hollimon, Ann. *Analytical Research Concerning Education, Income, and Demographics of the Phillips, Central neighborhoods and Surrounding Area*. Urban Adventures Development Department. March, 2007.

2) *Comprehensive Plan Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2007-2020*.  
[www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org)

## **Appendix A Phillips CSA Inventory**

<b>Steward Rec Center</b>
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**2700 12th Ave. S  
Minneapolis, MN 55407**

- Seven acres
- Three half-court basketball areas
- Tennis court
- Volleyball/badminton court
- Baseball diamonds
- Open fields to play soccer or football
- Two playgrounds
- Wading pool
- Picnic area
- Walking path
- 1,856 sq. ft. shelter
- Gymnasium
  - shared with Anderson Open School
- Craft Room
  - full craft room complete with pottery wheel and oven
- Meeting Rooms
  - large meeting room attached to the kitchen that is often rented out for birthday parties/events
- Computer Lab (6 computers)
  - well maintained, but staff admitted was outdated
- Teen Room
  - TV, DVD, video games
  - Foosball
  - Air hockey
  - Couches/chairs
- Drinking Fountains
- Kitchen
  - not fully functioning and in need of renovation
  - used in summer months to serve city provided daily lunch/snack
- Restroom Facilities

-mostly utilized by Somali youth  
-nearly all of the kids were participating in open gym  
-Al Bangora director of Phillips CSA, works at Stewart Park

Programming:

### **Youth Activities Counsel**

#### **Minneapolis Swims**

#### **Afternoon Open Gym**

- Time: 2:00 -06:00PM Monday-Thursday

### **Creative Exploration**

- A weekly art/invention class on Mondays from 2:30-4:30pm.

### **Basketball Skills Camp**

- Time: 5:00pm-7:00pm Monday and Wednesdays

### **Cooking with Jennifer**

- Mondays 6:15pm-07:30pm

### **Go Karts**

- Make a ready-to-use go-kart with wood and wheels. Add special features and details to customize your creation. On the final day, head to Farmstead Park and field test your vehicle. We have existing carts ready to be decorated and styled before racing. Racing is encouraged.
- Tuesdays 2:00-4:00 pm.

### **Homework Helper & Reading**

- Monday- Thursday 2:00-3:00pm

### **Soccer Skills Camp**

- Tuesday and Thursday 5:30pm-7:00pm

### **Teen Open Gym**

- Tuesday-Thursday 06:00 PM-08:30 PM

## **Peavey Park Center**

**730 22nd St. E  
Minneapolis, MN 55404**

- Gymnasium  
Shared with Hope School
- Multipurpose Room

Programming:

**Soccer**

**Open gym**

Afterschool daily

**Girls Group**

Wednesday nights

-in summer 30/40 kids a day

## **Phillips Community Center**

- Computer Lab: 8 computers
- Double Gymnasium
- Cafeteria 'Kid's Café':
  - Full communal kitchen: currently not being used, would require complete remodeling
  - Attached reception room big enough for 50 people (staff estimates). Room overlooks the gym and would be ideal for party rental.
- Class/meeting Rooms:
  - Several class rooms lining the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level. Many of the first level rooms are partially remodeled since the YWCA has left.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has the 'Kid's Café' and multiple AV rooms. The room closest to the café is the 'recording room' and was intended to be use for recording production.

- Apparently, the Boys and Girls club had a partnership with IPR (Institute of Production and Recording) which utilized the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor recording space. Right now the rooms are vacant.

- Additionally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor there is a large AV room that looks like it served as a computer lab for the Boys and Girls Club. It is facing the pool and has window overlooking the pool. This room would need a lot of work including rewiring.

- Teen room
  - TV/Movie/Wii Room
  - (3) Foosball tables
  - ‘bar’ area
  - ping-pong
  - couches, chairs
- Restrooms: would need retiling on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Drinking Fountains
- Pool: currently not functional
- 3 acres
- Building: 40,000 square feet
- 80 parking spots
- Laundry Room: Not working
- Elevators

Programming:

- **Youth line:**
  - currently about 70-80 kids a night
  - under 11 year olds leave at 6
  - open gym
- **Freeport partnership:** Twice a week a Freeport employee comes to work with homeless youth. They also offer classes on nutrition and exercise.
- **Adult sports** are just beginning at PCC (as of Spring 2009).

### East Phillips Park

- Baseball/Softball Field
- Picnic Area
- Wading Pool
- Sledding Hill
- Basketball Courts
- Playground
- Drinking Fountains
- Bathrooms

Facilities are notoriously in poor condition; with the nickname ‘cockroach park’ well know throughout the community.

Outdoor recreation area used largely by Little Earth community.

Courts video-monitored by Little Earth due to pervious issues of youth violence.

### East Phillips Park: Cultural and Community Center

- Teen Center : computers, pool tables, books, games, and social gathering space
- Family Room
- Pump Room: Workout area
- Annex (PHASE 1B)
- Performance Space
- Craft room
- Tutoring Rooms (3)
- Computer Class Room
- 2 exterior decks
- Green roof
- Technology Room
- Commercial Kitchen
- Sheriff Office (Hennepin County)

Outside:

- Baseball diamond
- (2) Basketball courts
- Field House (PHASE 2)

## **Appendix B**

### **Standard Interview Questions and Common Responses**

#### **1) Describe your program?**

Interviewees provided incite into a plethora of community programs/activities of Phillips community including: Sunday Soccer Program, Phillips Neighborhood Parks Collation, Little Earth Tribal Community, Waite House Youth Programming, Phillips Club Youthline, Stewart Park, and Anderson Open Afterschool program. A brief description of represented programs and services are listed below.

#### **Little Earth:**

Little Earth was founded in 1973 to create affordable housing for the growing urban American Indian population in Minneapolis. As the first urban housing complex with American Indian preference, Little Earth served as a national model, at the forefront of American Indian migration into urban areas. The urbanization of American Indians has continued over the past three decades. In total, Little Earth has a total of 23.5 staff members. 19.5 program staff, and 4 administrative staff. In mid-2007, an estimated 30 volunteers—largely residents-- also contribute to the well-being of Little Earth.

#### **Waite House:**

Waite House is one of the Pillsbury United Communities four inner city locations in Minneapolis. Waite House addresses the unique needs of Phillips population through a variety of services and programs including:

#### **Kids College**

This reading-tutoring program is designed to build reading skills and comprehension in children K – 8th grade. 35-40 children can participate daily from 1:45pm – 4:30pm during the school year. Staff, Volunteers and College interns work with students on reading for 20 minutes each day. Homework assistance and healthy snacks are offered during this time.

#### **Jumpstart**

Jumpstart is a service-learning program designed to work with youth in 7th-8th grades. Youth concentrate their time learning about and serving in the following areas:

- Intergenerational activities
- Career & College Prep
- Community Beautification
- Hunger & Nutrition
- Fine Arts

Youth that are successful in Jumpstart are given priority to enroll in FANS, and may continue their participation in service-learning beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade through a program called “Teens in Action.”

#### **FANS**

This program helps prepare youth in 8th – 12th grade for college. Youth and staff work together and develop plans to achieve goals like delaying parenthood, resisting drugs, contributing to the community and going to college. The youth are also given opportunities to find scholarships, prepare for the ACT/SAT tests and look at career opportunities that fit in line with college programs. Participating youth who fulfill the requirements are eligible to earn college scholarship money upon graduating from high school.

**After School & Summer Programs**

Waite House offers a variety of programs for youth in the arts, athletics, academics, technology and computers. These programs are offered year round. Youth are rewarded with field trips on several school release days. The summer program includes weekly field trips and overnight camping opportunities.

**Youth Employment**

Our employment counselor works with youth between ages 14 -21 one-on-one to help set and meet their individual goals in areas working and college. The employment counselor can work with the individual youth on resume writing, filling out job applications, locating college scholarship opportunities, and enrolling in high school or colleges.

**Emergency Food Shelf, Community Café, Housing Rental Assistance,** Adult Computer Skills, Tax Assistance, Ways to Work Family Loan Program, Preparing for the U.S. Citizenship Test, Legal Clinics, Latinas Creativas

**Anderson Open After School Programming:**

After school programming at Anderson open serve about 100-150 children Monday – Thursday. These participants are students at Anderson open, as well as Phillips Community School. Extensive program staff includes: teachers, teaching assistants, and between 40 to 50 volunteers depending on time/day. About 3/4<sup>th</sup> of program participants are Latino as Anderson is the English Language Learner (ELL) center for Spanish speakers in the area. Leon Oman is director of afterschool programming.

**Club Youthline:**

Club Youthline is the Minneapolis Park and Recreation programming offered at 29 Park sites citywide. Youthline has been operating in Phillips Pool and Gym since August 2008 when it replaced the Phillips branch of the Boys and Girls club. Currently Youthline is serving about 70-80 kids a night and offers structured as well as unstructured programming.

**Phillips Community Park Initiative:**

The Park Collation chaired by Shirley Heyer, was created 18 months ago in response to community concern over the lack of organized citizen representation on issues of the Neighborhood Park and recreation. The collation is a partnership with representation of all Phillips sub-neighborhoods. The collation aims to represent the people of Phillips and maintain the spirit of grass roots organization that has lead previous neighborhood revitalization efforts.

**Sunday Soccer Program**

Sunday soccer league was created two years ago by Phillips resident Rosie Cruz in response to dissatisfaction with the soccer league offered through the Park and Recreation. The Park and Recreation soccer was offered just 4-6 weeks in the fall and only at specific park locations. The community desired a longer playing season, and more convenient location. The Sunday Soccer program is a unique local entity that serves around 6-700 youth. The program is run completely through volunteer efforts. Lead by Rosie Cruz, all games are scheduled under the guidance of the Minnesota Thunder Coach who volunteers 8 hours of his time weekly to league organizational instruction. Teams are coached by parent volunteers who meet weekly in Cruz's garage to receive instruction. Although a majority of players are Latino, the league is open to everyone and several other ethnicities participate including: Hmong, Serbian, White, and Somali. The league plays every Sunday September through April and does not charge participants.

**2) What is your relation to the Park and Rec at Phillips CSA? Describe your relationship to the Park and Recreation in Phillips?**

Interviews relation to the Park and Rec varied including park employees, community member park users, youth programming directors who partner with Park and Rec, and community member advocates.

**3) How do people hear about (specified) services/programs?**

The interviews produced the following themes regarding transmission of information:

- Word of Mouth
- Partnerships with other organizations
- Relationship with key community leaders
- Outreach Campaigns

**4) What are the biggest challenges facing (the specified Phillips population) served by your program?**

The interviews produced a variety of thoughts, stories, and visions regarding the challenges facing Phillips citizens. Although the responses varied depending on the role the interviewee maintained in the community, the following themes could be derived:

- Poverty/Cyclical (generational) Poverty
- Loss of Childhood due to increased family and social responsibility
- Gang Violence
- Lack of role models/Lack of role model involvement
- Neighborhood Crime/Violence
- Lack of quality, engaging youth programming
- Insufficient knowledge of English

**5) How does (specified program) address these challenges?**

- Quality programs that engage youth with staff...
- Ensuring facilities, and programming is free of gang affiliation or threat of violence
- Programming that connects people with employment opportunities

**6) What makes your program/service successful?**

- Flexibility
- Knowing the population (needs)
- Cost Free
- Connection with School (trusted institute)
- Provides transportation
- Incentivizes participation

**7) Why do (specified Phillips population) use the Park facilities, or not use the facilities?**

Somali populations use the parks at a high rate. Community leaders within the Somali Community attribute their participation to traditional parenting practice and a community wide feeling of safety and acceptance at the parks. According to Mohamed Ghandi, Midtown Phillips Board Member, the Somali community has a parenting style that values self efficacy, and resilience. This traditional view allows for more child freedom than the typical American view of parenting. Thus parents are comfortable allowing their children to attend locations that have been identified as safe and acceptable. Examples of these locations include: Parks and Recreation, Library, School activities, Mosques. Ghandi also mentioned that the Brian Cowsls center, which has been a larger provider to the Somali community has recently shifted programming from youth focused to a becoming a social service provider.

Native American populations typically are not involved in the Park and Recreation in Phillips. Bill Ziegler, President of Little Earth Community say that the main reason for lack of participation is location. Little Earth residents have East Phillips Park in their back yard, although the park does not have a building or programming the playground, recreational courts and fields are used regularly by Little Earth residents. Residents however are underrepresented at other Park and Rec cites and programs. Ziegler states the reasons for the Native disenfranchisement is due to resident's unwillingness to travel, across in some many cases dangerous streets to use park facilities and program while little Earth provides their own respective activities and programs.

Latino populations are dramatically underrepresented in Park and recreation participation. Interviews offered various potentially reasoning for the populations underuse. One perspective, from Rosie Cruz was the lack of knowledge of the Park and Rec services. Cruz stated limited English capabilities as a barrier as Hispanics are unable to read Park outreach publications/advertisements.

**8) What do the Phillips parks need to better serve (specified) population?**

- Latino Outreach/ Partnerships
- Increase diversity among park staff
- RecPlus programming in Phillips to address lack of childcare
- Women-only physical activity programs (Somali women)
- Mediation measures with neighborhood organizations to facilitate dialog
- Increase cost-free rental space and free programming

**9) What are the assets and limitations of Phillips Park and Rec CSA?**

Key Assets

- Pool and Gym building
- Double Gym of Stewart
- Solution focused philosophy of current Phillips CSA leadership
- Membership in Youth Service providers group
- Partnerships with plethora of outside organizations to expand programming scope
- Successful CSA formation (resource sharing)
- Experienced CSA park director

## Key Limitation

- Limited training of Park Staff
- Lack of prioritization of Phillips citizens in facility reservation and use
- Unrealistic cost associated with park facility rental
- Historical association as African American facility....
- Not serving optimal amount of neighborhood youth
- Limited use by Latino population
- Lack of multipurpose space for organizational rental
- Disfunctional relationship with neighborhood organization
- Lack of effective community outreach
- Lack of gym space available for community use
- Lack of up to date facilities

## Appendix C Fact Sheet

June, 2009

### Key findings and recommendation from CURA grant research project.

In response to community concern over lack of representation in Park and Recreation planning the Phillips Community Parks Collaborative requested a graduate student to conduct research into the Phillip's Park and Recreation system. The following information was collected from spring 2009 through key informant interviews as well investigation into publically available resources.

#### Phillips Neighborhood Stats

Comparison statistics for the City of Minneapolis are shown in [brackets].

**SIZE** 1.6 square miles [54.9]

##### **POPULATION**

- Individuals: 19,805 [382,618]
- Households: 6,333 [162,352]
- Families: 3,155 [73,939]
- Children under 18: 6,336 - 32.0% of Phillips population [84,169 - 22.0%]

##### **DIVERSITY**

- Native American: 2,352 - 11.9% of Phillips [8,378 - 2.2% of City]
- Black: 5,825 - 29.4% [68,818 - 18.0%]
- Latino: 4,385 - 22.1% [29,175 - 7.6%]
- Asian: 1,216 - 6.1% [23,744 - 6.2%]
- White: 6,258 - 31.6% [249,186 - 65.1%]
- Total non-white: 13,547 - 68.4% [133,432 - 34.9%]

##### **MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME**

\$26,405 [\$48,602]

##### **MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

\$21,353 [\$37,974]

##### **FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY**

1,034 - 31.9% of Phillips families [8,868 - 11.9%]

##### **CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY**

2,538 - 40.6% of all children in Phillips [20,477 - 25.1%]

##### **UNEMPLOYMENT**

956 - 12.4% of workers [12,778 - 5.8%]

#### **HOUSING**

Total number of housing units: 6,734 [168,606]  
Vacant units: 401 - 6.0% of Phillips units [6,254 - 3.7%]

Owner occupied units: 1,366 - 20.3% [83,408 - 51.4%]

Renter-occupied units: 4,967 - 73.8% [78,944 - 48.6%]

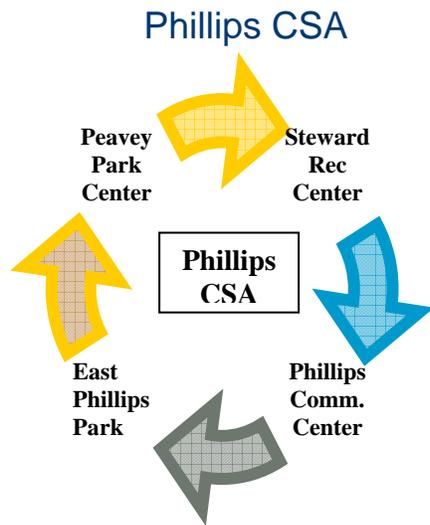
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Since their creation, parks have been viewed as key to the health and well-being of Minneapolis residents and visitors. The challenges facing society today may be different, but the expectations of the park system have not changed. CSAs were created in order to "deliver recreation that inspires personal growth, healthy lifestyles and a sense of community." (1)

#### Phillips Park CSA

A community service area (CSA) is a concept created out of the 2007-2010 Comprehensive Plan. A CSA is a geographic area of the city of Minneapolis that is established with the primary goal to apply its park and recreation resources to best meet the program and service needs of the community it serves. This includes the development of a new "community center service model that is relevant to community members." While each CSA may differ from other CSAs, all will be alike in their focus on delivering high quality programs relevant to the community. (1)

The Phillips Park recreation system consist of 3 parks facilities which include free standing buildings as well as outdoor recreation space and facilities. This research focuses on the three main parks facilities within the Phillips CSA and how they are together addressing the unique needs of the Phillips population. 9 key informant interviews were conducted, along with physical surveys of the park facilities. Main themes were identified and used to create recommendations for future park planning.



## Research Findings

The primary findings from the key informants are clustered in two areas:

1. Park needs include physical improvements to the park facilities, as well as enhanced program options.
2. Barriers to optimal utilization of current park facilities and programs.

1. Park needs include physical improvements to the park facilities, as well as enhanced program options.

- Significant desire for large space available for party/event rental
- Significant community desire for soccer fields
- Phillips recreation is losing Latino adults to better organized suburban athletic leagues.
- Double gym space at Phillips Community Center, and Stewart Park are key Park assets, yet are not accessible to community groups.
- Yo<sup>th</sup> Are Here bus system is a valuable asset for connecting youth with parks.

2. Barriers to optimal utilization of current park facilities and programs

- Cost is a significant barrier to use of the parks and park programming
- Childcare identified as key use of park and recreation

- Dysfunctional relationship between Park Board and Phillips neighborhood organizations
- Importance of park location in relation to dangerous streets and intersections
- Lack of Latino participation
- Historically the parks have been oriented to African Americans and the connotation exists despite the neighborhoods changing racial/ethnic demographics.
- Park and Recreation web cite information is not up to date and online program registration is not effective.

Other:

- Frustration over lack of prioritization of Phillips community members at park and Rec facilities
- Parks and Recreation attempts at community input have not produced timely results
- Park challenge of hiring, and training quality staff with limited resources

**A previous survey conducted by a neighborhood organization collected responses from 65 community members at two separate meetings found the following Top Ten Building Desires in a Phillips Park Facility(2):**

- 1) Full sized Gym with Bleachers
- 2) Tutoring/Educating Rooms
- 3) Health, Wellness, and fitness rooms
- 4) Technology Center
- 5) Indoor Soccer Field
- 6) Daycare Center
- 7) Police or Sheriff Safety Center
- 8) Community office space
- 9) Theatre/Conference room
- 10) Walking/Running Track

## Suggestions for future park planning

- Park and Recreation online resources must be updated, and online registration catered to Phillips population needs.
- Standard Park fees should be minimized or eliminated to increase participation of Phillips residents who are significantly more disadvantaged than the rest of Minneapolis.
- Phillips residence should be prioritized in reservation of Phillips CSA facilities.
- Increase outreach to Latino population by strengthening partnerships with successful local organizations.
- Neighborhood organizations should work together with park and recreation with solution oriented goals.
- Increase Park and Recreation staff training and diversity
- Phillips CSA should establish Recreation Plus programming within the CSA

**Work cited:**

1) Hollimon, Ann. *Analytical Research Concerning Education, Income, and Demographics of the Phillips, Central neighborhoods and Surrounding Area*. Urban Adventures Development Department. March, 2007.

2) *Comprehensive Plan Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2007-2020*. [www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org)