



HOW-TO

Voting Boards



GET READY! Agree on your goals for using this tool.

Remember to work with your Partnerships for Parks (PFP) Outreach Coordinator (OC) when using input-gathering tools. Your OC can answer questions, offer suggestions, and help you work well with Parks throughout the capital process. To find your OC, visit the People Make Parks (PMP) Website.

BEGIN PLANNING: AT LEAST 3 MONTHS BEFORE

- Review the Event Planning Tool, Timeline, and Checklist.
- Discuss your goals in using Voting Boards. Use the questions below as a guide:
 - > WHY do we want to use Voting Boards?
 - > WHO do we want to reach with Voting Boards?
 - > WHO do we want to facilitate the Voting Board activity – kids/teens or adults?
 - > WHAT information about people's current connection to the park do we want to capture with Voting Boards?
 - > WHEN do we want to host Voting Boards, so that the largest number of people can attend?
 - > WHERE do we want to host Voting Boards to encourage strong turnout?
 - > DO WE NEED to create Voting Boards in multiple languages - or have an interpreter at the event – to reach non-English speakers/readers?

ORGANIZE: AT LEAST 2-2 ½ MONTHS BEFORE

- Think about questions you'd like people to answer with Voting Boards. Use the questions below as a guide:
 - > When do you most often visit the park? (e.g., before work; lunch time; after school/early evening; late night)
 - > What brings you to the neighborhood? (e.g., I live here; I work here; I got to school here; Other)
 - > What activities do you typically do in the park? (e.g., rest/read/sit, play, exercise, work, spend time with friends/family)
 - > What park improvements would you most like to see? (e.g., more green space, repair play equipment, increase lighting and safety features)
- Choose five to seven questions for the Voting Boards, one question per board.
- Finalize Voting Board questions. Keep language simple, so that the largest number of park users can understand them.
- To create a Voting Board, write a prompting question in waterproof marker in large, readable print along the top 1/4 of each board. Divide the bottom 3/4 of the board into four to six equal squares and write the answer choices in large, readable print at the top of each square. For example, ask "What new features would you most like to see in the park?" along the top of the board, then write More Greenery, Multi-Use Space, Tables and Benches, Water Feature, and Play Equipment for Toddlers, Play Equipment for Children Aged 5-10 as answers.

OUTREACH: ONE MONTH BEFORE

- Decide whether to have teens or adults facilitate the activity; having a teen facilitator increases the likelihood that people from a wider range of ages will participate.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS:

- > Foamcore boards. (approximately 3' x 4' each)
- > Colored, waterproof markers
- > Small, round, multi-colored stickers

OPTIONAL:

- > Photographs, pictures or maps

OUTREACH (continued):

- To find teen facilitators:
 - > Create a list of local organizations that work with teens.
 - > Contact them for help with recruiting. If needed, create recruitment posters.
 - > Interview teens. Select ones who are outgoing and ideally have interest in ongoing park efforts.
- Create a brief (one-page) facilitation guide for teens that explains Voting Boards, best engagement practices, and documentation. See sample guide.
- Choose a group member to lead teen training.
- Practice leading the Voting Boards activity by inviting your OC and representatives from local organizations to a run through. Alternatively, reach out to local youth for the run-through.
- Afterward, ask people for feedback about their experience.
- Based on that feedback, and your own observations, make changes to the activity as needed.

GET SET! Check last-minute details leading up to the event.

PREP FOR THE EVENT: 2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Review the Event Planning Tool, Timeline, and Checklist to be sure your group is on track.

GO! Host the event & make sure everyone is heard!

- Set up tables, chairs, and Voting Boards in a central or highly visible location. Alternatively, have facilitators divide into pairs to survey people in the surrounding neighborhood.
- If using teen facilitators, have several adults on hand to assist them as needed.
- If facilitators are surveying around the park, decide on a meeting time and location at which to reconvene as a group.
- Specific Instructions:
 - > Approach people in the park or surrounding neighborhood and ask if they would be willing to participate in a fun, brief activity related to their local park.
 - > Explain the Voting Board activity and how it relates to the capital project.
 - > Ask people to place a sticker in the square that best represents their answer to the prompting question.
- After the activity, explain to people how the Voting Boards will be shared with Parks and used to inform a new design. Let them know how they can stay involved with your group and the capital project going forward.
- Collect the Voting Boards for review.

RUN WITH IT! Explore and share what you learned.

DEBRIEF: WITHIN 1-2 WEEKS

- Review the Voting Boards by counting the number of responses received for each answer option.
- Discuss what conclusions you can draw from the responses in terms of current park uses and redesign recommendations.

ANALYZE AND DOCUMENT: WITHIN 1-2 MONTHS

- Read the Event-Planning Tool to learn what to include in your 1- to 2-page Voting Board summary.
- Draft, review, and revise the summary, until you're ready to show it to your OC. With his or her help, further edit, if needed, to create a final version.
- If you've only used Voting Boards to gather input, start planning future events or explore other tools you can use to discover what your community wants in a new park.
- Once you've gathered input using at least three tools, on different days, and/or from at least 50 people, depending on the size of your community and park, you should have enough to write a full Visioning Report that can be shared with the public, your community board, and Parks.

