

Pocahontas Park Name - Community Engagement and Analysis Plan

UPDATED March 2021

Background

Pocahontas Park, located on 2540 Pascal, has been in the Roseville Parks and Recreation system since the 1960s. Its original naming did utilize a community process.

Recently, some community members have expressed some concern that the name may cause harm to Native Populations. Community members noted the following concerns:

- Pocahontas, the person, has no direct ties to Minnesota, Minnesota's current Native populations or the indigenous populations who originally inhabited Minnesota.
- The popular, commonly told, narrative of Pocahontas' life focuses primarily on her assimilation to European culture such as her conversion to Christianity and taking a European name. The version of events told by her tribe (The Powhatan) says that Pocahontas was exploited and victimized by the European settlers.

Although there have been some preliminary general comments from the community, the topic has not been widely discussed in a formal way. In accordance with the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) Toolkit, and City standards for engagement, it has been suggested by the Parks and Recreation Commission that a comprehensive engagement process be undertaken to ensure that the:

- Issue is thoroughly understood.
- Impacted populations are aware of the conversation and have the opportunity to participate.
- Recommendations are thoroughly vetted and that feedback of all Roseville residents is considered.

I. Objective

To engage the impacted communities to assess the impact of the name on their feeling of being "welcomed, included and respected" in Roseville, including the:

- Native American people who live in Roseville
- Indigenous populations of Minnesota
- Neighbors of Pocahontas Park
- Entire Roseville community

Utilize the process as a potential opportunity for education on Native Americans in Minnesota for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Community.

Develop relationships with the Native Community that can lead to greater long term, ongoing engagement.

II. Data

History of Pocahontas as a Person: A history of Pocahontas as a person was shared at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on September 1. [View the meeting minutes of that discussion.](#)

Native American Population in Roseville: 168 (2010 Census), estimated 217 (2018 – US Census Bureau estimate).

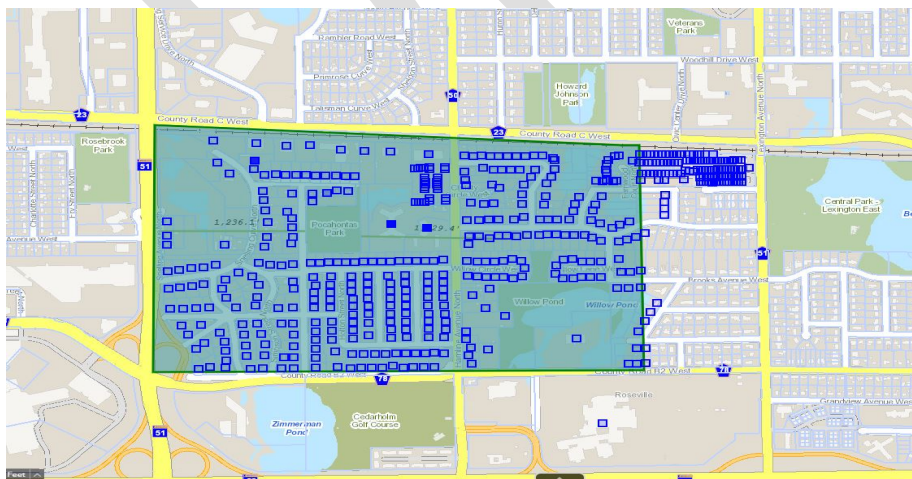
Native American Population in MN:

Populations of color as a proportion of Minnesota's total population: 1990-2010				
Race/Ethnicity	Proportion of Total Minnesota Population			Percent Growth of Population
	In 1990	In 2000	In 2010	
African-American*	2.2 %	3.5 %	5.2 %	189.0 %
American Indian	1.1 %	1.1 %	1.1 %	22.1 %
Asian	1.8 %	2.9 %	4.1 %	177.8 %
Hispanic	1.2 %	2.9 %	4.7 %	364.4 %
White	94.4 %	89.4 %	85.3%	9.5 %

* Includes African-born Americans. Source: US Census Bureau. (2011).

Pocahontas Park Neighborhood:

An estimate found that nearly 700 Roseville addresses would likely consider Pocahontas Park to be their neighborhood park. This analysis of “neighborhood park” was comprised of walkability (distance and absence of significant barriers) and residents for whom Pocahontas Park is their nearest park.



Total Population of Roseville: 33,660

III. Engagement

Based on the information provided above, the following groups and strategies have been identified for engagement. Next to each strategy, a proposed responsible person is listed in parentheses. For further commentary/methodology, see **Section V. Implementation.**

Native Americans who live in Roseville

- Engagement Strategies:
 - Public notice that the Parks and Recreation Commission is seeking comment on the issue (Staff)
 - Project webpage (Staff)
 - Public meeting (likely virtual due to COVID 19) (Staff/Commission)
 - Connecting through personal resources
 - Wild Rice Festival Participants (Staff)
 - City newsletter (Staff)
 - Target: minimum 10 people.

Native Americans who live outside of Roseville but have expertise on impacts of names on a population

- Engagement strategies
 - Specific invitations:
 - Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
 - Shannon Geshik discussed with the Commission on December 1, 2020.
 - Roseville Area School Native American Parent Group
 - Staff attended a meeting in April.
 - U of M American Indian Studies leaders/faculty
 - Reached out, no response.
 - Minnesota Historical Society
 - The Commission has been provided links to two webinars presented by Dr. Kate Beane, one regarding naming issues.
 - St. Paul Public Schools Indian Education Program
 - Received feedback from John Bobolink
 - Native Governance Center
 - Staff spoke with Executive Director, Wayne Ducheneaux in November.
 - Target: 2 or 3 experts

Neighbors of Pocahontas Park

- Engagement method
 - Direct mailing
 - Electronic notice
 - Listening session
 - [City newsletter](#)
 - Direct Engagement
 - Target: 25 people

Roseville residents beyond the park neighborhood

- Electronic notice
- Listening session
- [City newsletter](#)
- [Web page](#)
- HRIEC
- Commission members outreach (Commission members)
- Target: 50 people

Sufficient Engagement Will Have Been Accomplished When:

- A significant number of each of the stakeholder groups above have provided input (see “targets” above).
- Impacted groups such as neighbors, Roseville’s native community and the greater Roseville community is aware of the issue and conversation.

IV. Analysis

Parks and Recreation Commission Members shall review and analyze the data collected and make a recommendation to the City Council to either keep the name the same, change the name or engage in further conversation on the issue. If the commission recommends a name change, the City Council may ask the Parks and Recreation Commission to continue this process to recommend a new name to the city council.

It is important to note that the City’s Racial Equity Narrative will be utilized in the analysis of the data and the provision of a recommendation. This process is not intended to be a simple “straw poll” on the issue.

V. Implementation

The proposed process consists of (completed items *italicized*):

- **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

- *November 5, 2020* – Parks and Recreation Commission developed draft Engagement Plan. Agree that plan will continue to evolve as more information is learned.
- *January 2020* – Joint meeting with City Council to update on feedback received and seek feedback.

- **INFORMATION GATHERING**

- *Commissioners heard from Shannon Geshik of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, a Roseville Resident and member of the Roseville Indian Education Parent Committee and Roseville resident. (See December Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes)*
- *Staff Spoke with Wayne Ducheneaux from the Native Governance Center. (Notes included in March Parks and Recreation Commission Packet)*
- *Received written correspondence from John Bobolink, St. Paul Public schools. (Included in March Parks and Recreation Commission Packet)*
- *Received written feedback from Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors Group. (Included in March Parks and Recreation Commission Packet)*
- *Other written reports and information sessions have been collected and provided to the Commission. (See various Commission Packets and meeting minutes).*
- **Community Listening Session (September 7, 2021)**
 - Share feedback that has been received
 - Invite neighbors to participate
 - Direct mailing to neighborhood
 - Targeted mailing to Native American community (if possible)
 - Social Media/Nextdoor
 - Invite Native American residents to participate
 - Utilize existing contacts at school district(s)

- **WEBSITE**

- Overview of the discussion of the issue and updated
- Offer opportunity for residents to submit their feedback

- **WRITTEN FEEDBACK**

- Allow experts to submit written feedback

- **IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT**

- The COVID 19 pandemic causes challenges to other vehicles for engagement that may be used. Examples could include in-person community meetings and engagement at community events. Staff and the commission will continue to analyze the viability of safely using these methods.
- **DELIBERATION AND RECOMENDATION**
 - Once sufficient engagement with all target populations has been reached, the Parks and Recreation Commission will analyze the data received and develop a recommendation for City Council. Their recommendation shall ensure that impacted communities' input and racial equity considerations are included in their recommendation.

VI. Accountability

The above process will strive to meet the following tangible benchmarks to ensure that it meets the objective listed in section I.

- Notify all neighbors within the defined “neighborhood” of the conversation and provide them an opportunity to participate in the conversation.
- Receive feedback from:
 - 10 Roseville residents who are Native American.
 - 2 Native American experts.
 - 20 Neighbors of the park.
 - Provided the opportunity for all Roseville residents to participate in the process.
 - Provided the opportunity for feedback on the final proposal before it is implemented.