

American Association of Port Authorities 2011 Environmental Improvement Awards

Stakeholder Awareness, Education & Involvement

Title of Report: Terminal 117 Cleanup Plan Community Involvement

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Introduction – Highlights

Port of Seattle’s Terminal 117 (T-117) property and associated uplands (project site), located on the shore of the Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) in Seattle, has a long and contentious history. Originally an asphalt manufacturing plant (Malarkey Asphalt), the T-117 site has high levels of PCBs and other contaminants that have entered the Duwamish River, or have been tracked in or spilled onto the residential area that is immediately adjacent to the T-117 site, and has caused the site to be listed as an Early Action Area under the Lower Duwamish Waterway’s Superfund listing by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Over the past ten years, the Port of Seattle has completed two interim cleanup measures, several investigation studies and on-going design for the full cleanup of the T-117 site. However, the focus of this application is on the efforts of the Port to develop a cleanup plan that meets the EPA regulatory requirements under the Superfund law and, more importantly, meets the needs and expectations of a marginalized community. South Park, an environmental justice (EJ) neighborhood and ethnic community that lives in the shadows of the LDW Superfund site and Seattle’s largest Industrial corridor, has had significant mistrust in local, state and federal agencies that are handling management of issues that threaten the community’s well-being and continue to undermine achievement of economic vitality.

This application attempts to present in detail how the Port, working collaboratively with the City of Seattle (City) and EPA, developed and implemented a public process that communicated a vision of success for a T-117 cleanup plan that considers the community needs and interests along with their meaningful involvement and support, by: 1) outreach – educating the community about the cleanup planning process; 2) involvement and trust – building the community’s capacity to participate in the project and their trust in the players and process; and finally, 3) commitment – ensuring that by the time the proposed cleanup plan was released to the public for formal comment, plan alternatives would reflect the community’s values, concerns and aspirations for the T-117 site and be acceptable to the community.

The community involvement strategy that resulted was robust and relied on:

- open and honest communication with the community;
- a sincere effort to talk about the cleanup plan and the planning process in accessible languages;

- development of key messages and talking points that always tied back to the need and approach of the cleanup;
- the sincere desire and need for community involvement in the process;
- an approach and message that was respectful and considerate of the numerous other issues with which the stressed community was engaged; and,
- inclusivity of diverse cultures and languages that are a large part of the South Park community.

Encapsulated in a community involvement implementation plan, a successful outcome relied on a combination of outreach activities, collateral materials, and innovative educational and involvement techniques. This application will detail the tried and true techniques such as community and organizational briefings, fact sheets, and a project website, as well as the innovative techniques used to reach deeply into the community, including a neighborhood pizza meeting, door-to-door conversations, outreach to families while waiting in line at the local food bank, and coloring sheets for children that told the cleanup story in pictures.

We will demonstrate how the involvement process used by the Port for this project site is replicable anywhere that a Port needs to engage with its community about a challenging or contentious decision that will have community impact and effect. Whether it is about cleanup of contamination, siting of a new facility, or redesign or repurposing of an existing facility, the premises that were the foundation of the T-117 plan would apply, and the breadth of tools, both old and new, are easily adaptable to any situation.

Finally, we will discuss the outcome of the community involvement process, culminating with the EPA Public Hearing on the proposed cleanup plan. In short, community members attending the public hearing provided nearly as many positive comments about the public involvement process as on the proposed cleanup plan itself. The outcome for the Port, the City, EPA and the community is that the time and resources invested in developing and implementing the public involvement program have avoided delays to the project, increased credibility in the eyes of the community, placed less burden on decision-makers, and built a collaborative and long-lasting relationship with the community moving forward.

Goals and Objectives

Successful projects that rely on community acceptance must have a clearly developed and articulated technical plan and a similar rigorous community involvement plan, both of which must be planned and implemented in an integrated process. For the T-117 cleanup planning, the Port, the City, and EPA worked with consultants to develop the technical approach and retained a community involvement consulting firm to develop the community involvement process. To ensure the community involvement process incorporated the overall project goal of a community-acceptable and technically feasible cleanup plan, the Port and the City, along with the agencies, convened a strategic planning session to develop clear goals and objectives for the process. The group first envisioned what would qualify as a success if/when the final draft plan was submitted to the regulators for approval and then developed goals and objectives to be met to drive towards that success.

The overarching project goal was: *The Engineering Evaluation and Cost Assessment (EE/CA; cleanup plan) could move forward with no substantive changes requested.*

Specific objectives and project goals would be met if:

- Good media coverage with the following key messages:
 - Good things are happening at T-117 as a result of community input
 - The cleanup team is intending to do all they can and should – i.e., “getting a lot done” – as of today, the project has gone further than originally thought
 - T-117 is a small success in the bigger picture of the Lower Duwamish Superfund Site.
- Stakeholder involvement process was fair.
- Stakeholders will accept the outcome.
- All stakeholders have been identified and reached.
- Community feels like they have “a place to go” to address urban contaminants and a plan.
- Community understands the health risks of the contaminants of concern in the EE/CA – and their safety level. They know that either the conditions are safe, or they know how to protect themselves.
- There is internal support within the Port and among the cleanup partners for the process.
- People recognize T-117 project must move ahead without being held up by concerns about other contamination and cleanup needs in the area.

Once the goals and objectives were clearly articulated, then attention could turn to developing the community involvement plan that would achieve those goals and objectives.

Discussion

Background

Featured in a 2009 PBS Frontline series titled “Poisoned Waters”, the community of South Park, situated on the shores of the lower Duwamish waterway, is subject to a “legacy of toxic pollution” in the words of community activist BJ Cummings. South Park was the location of a long-operating asphalt manufacturing plant. Throughout its operating



history, Malarkey Asphalt was a source of PCBs and other contaminants that were spilled, leaked or dumped on the ground and found their way into the adjacent residential neighborhood and into the sediments of the Duwamish River. South Park is an economically depressed, culturally diverse, and largely untrusting

community in the midst of a heavily polluted industrial area. Historically underserved community members were relatively unaware of the PCB contamination and potential health impacts resulting from the Malarkey Asphalt Plant when the Port purchased the Malarkey property and conducted an emergency PCB-soil cleanup in 1999.

From the Port’s purchase and initial cleanup activities in 1999 until 2007, additional interim measures and studies were conducted to address PCBs and other contaminants at the T-117 site and in some streets and yards adjacent to T-117 where contaminants had been tracked out of the industrial site. The EPA directed a full site cleanup to be conducted ahead of the larger Duwamish Waterway Superfund Cleanup, naming T-117 an Early Action Area. Planning for a cleanup to bring the site up to industrial cleanup standards began in earnest in 2003 through a planning process called an Engineering Evaluation and Cost Assessment (EE/CA). Community awareness began to build and health concerns were rising. A November 9, 2004 KING-5 TV story titled “High Levels of PCBs found in South Park” was followed by a September 14, 2005 story in the Seattle Times, headlined “South Park awash in PCBs.” The Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (DRCC), a non-profit group focused on representing the community’s values and concerns, inserted itself squarely in the discussions and was lobbying for cleanup.

In 2005 a cleanup plan, documented in an EE/CA, based on the industrial cleanup standard, was completed and approved by EPA, and an Action Memorandum was released. Subsequently, additional PCBs were found, and the community began to agitate for a cleanup plan that was more conservative and thorough, which would be based on

residential rather than industrial cleanup standards. On May 25, 2006 the Seattle Post Intelligencer ran a story headlined *“Malarkey cleanup pits Port, activists.”* By 2007, as a result of the community’s concerns and lobbying, the Port voluntarily changed the cleanup level to residential, and EPA required a new EE/CA that would meet that level. To complicate matters, additional dioxin/furan contaminants were found in the streets and yards near T-117 in 2008 and 2009, and the community expectations regarding the cleanup plan continued to mount. In the PBS Frontline *Poisoned Waters* series, BJ Cummings, DRCC, noted, *“We have a community here that has been on the fringe of any economic or political power for many decades until recently. It is a community that is re-finding its voice.”*

It was in this setting that the Port and its cleanup partner, the City of Seattle, were developing a new draft cleanup plan. Submitted to EPA for early review in late 2009, the Port, the City and EPA all agreed that the community would have to be involved in the review and development of the final plan for it to have any hopes of meeting the community’s expectations.

Objectives and Methodology

To be successful, the community involvement program had to meet all the objectives laid out

- Good media coverage with the following key messages
 - Good things are happening at T-117 as a result of community input
 - The cleanup team is intending to do all they can and should – i.e, “getting a lot done” – as of today, the project has gone further than originally thought
 - T-117 is a small success in the bigger picture of the Lower Duwamish Superfund Site
- Stakeholder involvement process was fair.
- Stakeholders will accept the outcome.
- Be comfortable all stakeholders have been identified and reached.
- Community feels like they have “a place to go” to address urban contaminants and a plan.
- Community understands the health risks of the contaminants of concern in the EE/CA – and their safety level. They know that either conditions are safe, or they know how to protect themselves.
- There is internal support within the Port and among the cleanup partners for the process.
- People recognize T-117 project must move ahead without being held up by concerns about other contamination and cleanup needs in the area.

In the following section, we detail the steps taken to plan and implement the T-117 public involvement program.

Strategy session: As discussed in the goals and objectives section, the Port convened a facilitated strategy session, inviting decision-makers from the Port, the City, EPA and Ecology, and the communicators responsible for implementing the public involvement program. At this meeting, consensus goals and objectives were hammered out, and those goals and objectives were then provided to the implementation team to decide on schedule, tools, techniques and tactics to employ, and roles and responsibilities for the implementation.

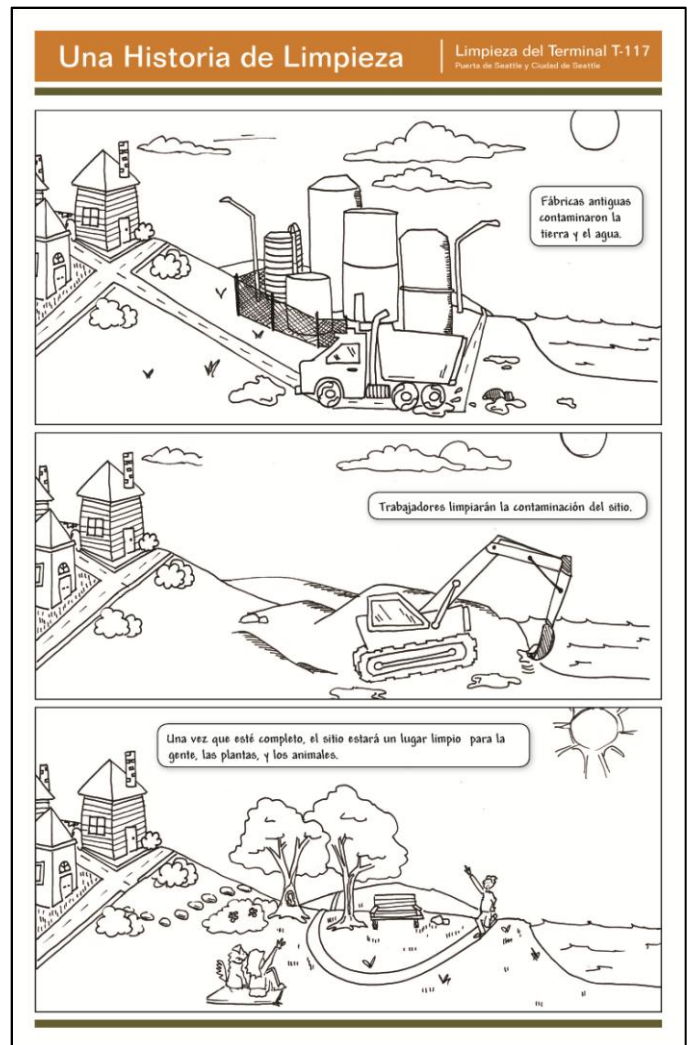
Implementation planning: Using the goals and objectives and schedule, a detailed implementation plan was developed that matched tools and techniques to the objectives. These tools are discussed below.

Key Messages: These were developed collaboratively by all members of the project team. Key messages were used during outreach events and community briefings related to the project to ensure that the public received accurate and consistent information and eliminated potential risk of miscommunication.

Project Story: The project team recognized the long history of emergency cleanup activities, starts and stops to the overall cleanup planning, and the community impressions of interminable and unacceptable delays to the project. To address this, and ensure the project was starting from a place of truth and transparency, a project story was compiled and placed prominently on the project website.

Project Materials: The following materials were developed and shared with the community during the project:

- Project fact sheets in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- Project flyers in English and Spanish
- Listening Log (see www.t117.com)



Project coloring sheet, *A Clean up Story*

- Project posters
- Executive Summary of the EE/CA cleanup plan in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- Children’s coloring sheet, titled *A Cleanup Story*, in English and Spanish
- Project Web site at www.t117.com
- Maps of the study area, showing areas of contamination and proposed cleanup boundaries

Community Events: During this time period, the project team attended nearly every event in the community to share the T-117 story, build an understanding of what would be in the cleanup plan, and encourage public input on the plan. Events attended included:

- Duwamish River Festival
- University of Washington/DRCC community charette
- Duwamish Alive Celebration
- South Park at the Providence Regina House Food Bank
- Environmental Health Fair



Environmental Health Fair

Community Drop-In Meeting: The Port and its partners held an informal neighborhood drop-in meeting on April 24, 2010 at Napoli’s Pizzeria, located in the heart of South Park. The purpose of the meeting was to bring the project to the neighborhood to present an overview of Terminal 117, explain the technical work and the public process, and provide an opportunity for neighbors, particularly those who live within the study area, to ask the project team questions in an informal setting. Attendees were also provided information about the EE/CA release and public hearing and encouraged to attend the hearing and provide their comments.

Listening Log: In early 2010, members of the T-117 cleanup project team began visiting with local groups and citizens regarding the PCB cleanup of T-117 and the adjacent streets and yards. The Listening Log is a direct result of this outreach and captures the comments and questions the project team heard at community briefings and public forums. The log was continually updated as community members provided input and the project team developed responses to questions and comments.



Home	T-117 Story	Get Involved	We're Listening	Library	Contact Us
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- Introduction
- Cleanup Plan
- Construction
- Dioxin/Furan
- Public Involvement
- Restoration
- Other Cleanup Projects
- South Park

We're Listening

T-117 Cleanup Plan and Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA)

Is there a timeline for ground breaking and cleanup for T-117?

EPA plans to release the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis cleanup plan for public comment on June 7 and then issue the cleanup plan decision in an Action Memorandum this year by September 2010. Design of the cleanup will take another year, so we expect construction to begin in 2012 and take two years to complete. Cleanup will begin in the off-shore sediments.

If the South Park Bridge is replaced, would that affect the cleanup schedule for the T-117 project?

Bridge construction or closure will primarily limit the truck routes for moving contaminated materials out of this area and clean dirt into the area.

Are you confident you have the boundary of the T-117 contamination defined? Have you done sampling to confirm that?

This site was identified for early cleanup based on high PCB concentrations in the river and on the former Duwamish Manufacturing and Malarkey asphalt site (T-117 property). As such, the site now consists of three investigation and cleanup areas: off-shore river sediments, T-117 upland property, and adjacent streets and residential yards. We are sure of the sediment cleanup boundary because we have determined the outer edge based on several sediment sampling rounds. Contaminated sediments will be removed between the shore and this clean sediment boundary. All of the contaminated soil on the T-117 upland property area will essentially be removed or covered with backfill or cap material.

EPA has identified an Adjacent Streets and Residential Yards "Study Area" that is between T-117 and 14th Avenue South, Dallas Avenue and South Donovan Street. This area was defined based on PCB samples since they are the primary concern for recontamination to the river. Residential yard and streets have not been sampled for PCBs on the west side of 14th Avenue because Ecology's source tracing data from area catch basins demonstrated there was not an accumulation of PCBs to indicate this area is a potential recontamination source to the river. Also, the purpose of this Superfund Removal Action at T-117 is not to determine exact boundaries of all contaminants in the area. The purpose of this removal action is to clean up the highly contaminated areas that could be a source of contamination to the river.

www.t117.com

Community Briefings: During the spring of 2010, project staff met with neighborhood and community groups and presented information concerning the project schedule, upcoming briefings and events, release date of the EE/CA, and details about the June 17 public hearing. The project team relied on the South Park and other community listservs, and DRCC announcements to promote these meetings. The following briefings were conducted between January and June, 2010.

- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting January 12, 2010
- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting February 9, 2010
- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting March 9, 2010
- Georgetown Community Council March 15, 2010
- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting April 13, 2010
- Greater Duwamish District Council April 28, 2010
- South Park Community Association Advisory Council May 20, 2010
- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting May 11, 2010
- South Park Neighborhood Association Meeting June 8, 2010

Project poster locations: In early 2010, to solicit community interest, and demonstrate to the community that things were happening with the T-117 project, project posters (see page 15) were prominently displayed in the public locations listed below. The posters included information about the project area, current project status, upcoming activities, conceptual option for T-117 habitat restoration, project history and timeline, and contact information.

- Concord Elementary School
- Napoli's Pizzeria (within the T-117 'pocket neighborhood')
- Project kiosk at T-117 site
- Sea Mar Health Center
- South Park Community Center
- South Park Information and Resource Center
- South Park Library
- South Park Neighborhood Center

Media: Throughout the EE/CA development process, local media was focused on the discovery of additional contaminants in the streets and yards of the neighborhood adjacent to T-117 and whether those contaminants would be addressed in the T-117 cleanup. To keep them informed of the project details and decisions being made, and to serve as another conduit to provide information to the community, press releases, blog entries, and press briefings were conducted throughout the process.

How the project fulfills the Award Criteria

The T-117 community involvement program for the EE/CA meets all six of the award criteria.

1. Level and nature of benefits to the environmental quality, beautification or community involvement.

The success of the T-117 EE/CA, acceptance by the community and by EPA, was a direct result of the robust and vigorous community involvement program designed and led by the Port. The carefully planned process used numerous tools and techniques designed to bring the community together, solicit meaningful input and develop a cleanup plan that was not only accepted but would be supported by the community and could allow the cleanup project to move ahead into design. The community is well aware of the project, informed about the plan details for cleanup and how it will protect the environment and health and well-being of the community, and sees their values

and concerns addressed in the plan. At the EPA Public Hearing on the draft EE/CA, the following comments were made by members of the South Park community:

“... South Park is very thankful for the process that has allowed us to reach the Alternatives 1 and 2 as opposed to the considerations that were on the table three to four years ago.”

“The cooperation we have received and the help and education we have received is unprecedented. And I believe it is a wonderful model, for the whole country, of how people can come together and work together for a very positive solution. And thank you very much for paying attention to our comments and our requests and taking them seriously and working with it and coming through for us. And I really appreciate it.”

Proving the value of the process, for the first time in more than a decade, during public testimony on the cleanup plan there were no negative comments about the technical work or the public involvement process. It was a dramatic turnaround and meant all the goals and objectives laid out in the early strategic planning process for the community’s involvement in the EE/CA were achieved.

2. Level of independent involvement and effort by the port.

The Port was a prominent leader in the development and implementation of the community involvement process. The Port strongly supported the effort from start to finish by procuring the community involvement consultant to lead the process (with cost sharing from the City), leading the planning effort, ensuring EPA and the City were involved in all planning processes, and providing the public involvement team all the resources they needed for implementation. The Port Project Manager and other key staff were out in the community frequently, building relationships and demonstrating their involvement in and respect for the local community.

3. The creativity of the solution or program.

The public involvement program was more intense, carefully crafted and creative than other community involvement efforts the Port has pursued. Not content to use only standard community involvement practices, such as public meetings and newsletters, the Port sought creative ideas to fully reach into the community to meet the goals and objectives. As discussed in the methodologies section, these included hosting a Saturday information “pizza meeting” session for nearby neighbors at the pizza parlor, which is also a near neighbor of the T-117 site. Also, providing coloring sheets for children that told the story of the cleanup in simple graphics met two purposes: 1) providing an activity for children and 2) providing a way to convey the cleanup story to non-English speaking parents of children in the neighborhood through recognizable images and limited words. Additionally, the Listening Log was an innovative tool to demonstrate that the Port was listening – and responding – to every concern or suggestion they heard. Making

the Listening Log available in hard copy as well as on the T-117 website forced the Port and its partners to squarely address every issue, develop responses and stand by those responses as they were made so publicly. This transparency contributed to building trust in the community.

4. Whether the project results are apparent (the project must be complete through some beneficial increment).

The final draft EE/CA, presented to the community in June of 2010 was accepted by the community with support for the substance and the public process and with no substantive requests for changes. This resulted in EPA writing an Action Memorandum, memorializing the cleanup plan and directing the Port and the City to proceed forward with design of the solution, in September 2010. This was a critical milestone for the cleanup, and was a memorable moment for a project that had been beleaguered for so many years.

5. The cost effectiveness of the activity or the program.

The community involvement work, planning and implementing, cost under \$100,000 and included consultant cost, direct costs for posters, fliers, maps and the website and for translations and interpreters for all materials and all events (compared to the investigation and planning costs for the EE/CA at around \$2M). This cost was shared by the Port and the City. The intensity of the work and the successful achievement of the project goals and objectives made the investment well worthwhile. The investment prevented additional delays and re-dos of technical work that had plagued the project for years and that would have cost much more than the cost of the community involvement program.

6. The transferability of the technology or idea to the port industry.

This community involvement project was about an environmental cleanup. However, the comprehensive community involvement process – from strategic planning to implementation is easily transferable to many types of port endeavors; whether siting a new facility, expanding an existing facility, or proposing any action that would cause (and/or resolve) significant impacts to the environment and a community. Identifying goals and objectives by back casting from a success vision will provide a solid basis for a community involvement program for any major project or decision. The application of innovative tools to communicate with, reach out to, and involve different audiences, especially typically underserved populations, would improve the possibility for success of any potentially contentious project. Demonstrating the transferability, EPA and its cleanup partners are currently using T-117 as a model for the Lower Duwamish Superfund Site community involvement planning for their cleanup plan process.



EE/CA Public Hearing

Terminal 117/Malarkey Asphalt Superfund Cleanup

Current Project Status

- Final stages of cleanup planning
- Reaching out to the community
- Continuing site maintenance and ground water monitoring



Upcoming Activities

- Public review and comment on draft cleanup plan
- EPA Action Memorandum (approved final cleanup plan)
- Design and construction of cleanup
- Design of T-117 redevelopment and habitat restoration



The Port of Seattle and City of Seattle are committed to working with the EPA, Ecology, the neighbors and community to develop and implement the site cleanup.

- Piper Peterson Lee, Environmental Protection Agency Project Manager, 206-553-4951, Peterson-Lee.piper@epa.gov
- Roy Kuroiwa, Port of Seattle Project Manager, 206-787-3814, Kuroiwa.r@portseattle.org
- Tom Meyer, Seattle City Light Project Manager, 206-386-9168, Tom.meyer@seattle.gov

Project Poster

Conclusion

A successful project is defined by its outcomes, and the T-117 community involvement program's outcomes exceeded all expectations. Faced with a community that had proven themselves willing to rally and employ political tactics when they believed they were being disrespected, unfairly treated, and overridden, the Port recognized the need for a robust and meaningful approach to community involvement for a successful cleanup planning process. Working with their cleanup partner, the City of Seattle, as well as the cleanup regulatory agencies, the Port included the welfare and values of the community as one of the highest priorities to address in the cleanup plan process. Port staff demonstrated their willingness to work with the community through their presence at just about every South Park



Port booth at Duwamish River Festival

event, meeting, or celebration during the cleanup planning process and built a trusting and collaborative relationship with many of the community leaders and activists. Their transparency about the project was demonstrated by the care they took in responding, in a meaningful way, to every comment heard at every briefing, meeting or gathering, and the community came to believe they were being heard. The results were measurable – a public hearing on a cleanup plan that was

termed by some as a “love fest” and a cleanup plan with alternatives the community understood and had been involved in developing. The ultimate result was an Action Memorandum from the EPA, meaning the cleanup plan had been approved and the Port and the City were clear to pursue the actual design and construction of the cleanup plan. This is a key step to fulfilling a promise to the community made almost a decade earlier to remove the PCBs and other contaminants from the site, reducing the T-117 source of pollutants into the contaminated Duwamish Waterway, and improving the health and welfare of the South Park community.