

Beyond Anecdotes Colloquium Research Objectives

Colloquium comments: What Do We Need to Know?

- How can we create stronger connections between people and parks, bridging fractures?
- Whether park projects and investments make a change in health status (which ones and why).
- Can we select a sample population as a baseline group we measure and then continue to measure them after we better connect the community to the park? Can we implement a longitudinal design?
- How organizational engagement can increase (affect) park use.
- What the motivators to increased use of parks are. How to motivate the low to non-users of parks.
- What are the park uses and amenities that are important to the various population cohorts in a city like Pittsburgh, i.e. seniors, active adults, children, teens, working adults?
- To what degree does park access and design affect physical activity?
- How can we put a rich park ecosystem at the service of the people?
- What does a park mean to different users and how might you alter that perception?
- What are people's perspective of parks?
- How can we rebrand parks as delivering a service that can be measured or given a value?
- How do we get people moving over fractured landscapes and getting to the parks, i.e. from the Hill to Schenley, from Homewood to Frick, from WH to Highbridge?
- How can we influence consumer behavior to increase parks visitation?
- How can we document the effectiveness of any such initiatives?
- Can we show that by taking down a fracture we can increase activity levels and decrease stress?
- How can we measure the mental health benefits of parks in terms of stress reduction, blood pressure, depression?
- How do we get non-park users into the parks; who/what is the proper messenger/vehicle for getting them there?
- We need to obtain baseline data of current park use, attitudes, and activity.
- Does environmental stewardship have a long-term impact on physical activity? Do one-day volunteer environmental stewardship activities lead to other types of physical activity, especially over the longer term in parks?
- Does physical activity have a long-term impact on environmental stewardship?
- What kind of activities are best able to activate a park and draw people in?
- How can we get integrated data on stress relief and park uses?
- Need to understand how cultural differences influence the use of parks and parks programming.

- How can we redefine the uses of parks? (Not active or passive?) What can park visitors tell us about the physical, mental and social effects of their activities? How can we use this data to help redefine the types of uses and planning/design required to support these uses?
- How can we better connect food with parks and places to buy and grow food that is healthy and provides productive activity?
- How to inform park professionals on how to more effectively and efficiently perform in-house research to help guide decision-making regarding park development, siting, use, proximity, access, programming vis a vis physical activity.

Who Are Our Natural Partners in These Investigations?

- Children and Nature Network
- Environmental Designers
- Environmental Psychologists
- David Chapin
- Social marketers
- Street Collaborative
- City Resource Exchange
- City /County/State Parks Departments
- Departments of Health
- RAND
- Park users
- CMU: Remaking cities
- ASLA
- Urban Ecology Institute
- Columbia: Spatial Design Lab
- Frances Kuo
- Robin Moore
- City Parks Alliance
- Trust for Public Land
- Municipal art
- Community Design
- CATE

Who Are Potential Funders for These Investigations?

- Community foundations
- Corporate foundations
- Department of Community and Economic Development
- Allegheny County tourism Board
- Del Monte, Kraft

- Food/pharmaceutical industry
- NIH—needs a partner with a history with the organization
- Healthcare organizations