

Project Team:

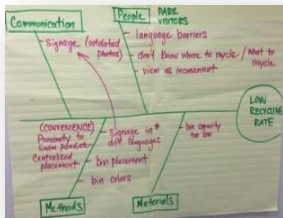
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 Public Works: Brad Swenson, John Elholm, Laura Erickson, Lori Meyers, Mark Prchal, Pete Mott, Steve Hansen, Steve Hart, Wayne Sandberg
 Community Corrections: Rick Tungeth

PLAN

Opportunity for Improvement: Lake Elmo Park Reserve (LEPR) is the most popular park in the Washington County Park system with an estimated 554,000 visitors each year. Beginning in 2015, the Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE), partnering with the County Parks Department, identified a lack of accessible recycling at the swim pond and an initial waste sort found a recycling rate of only 2%.

QI Tools:

- **Survey:** gathered information from park users on recycling awareness and knowledge
- **Process Map:** clarified roles and identified inefficiencies
- **Cause-and-Effect Diagram:** highlighted issues and root causes
- **Consensus Workshop:** facilitated development of priorities and actions



DO

Aim: Increase the recycling rate at the LEPR swim pond from 2% to 15% by September 5, 2016 through enhanced communication to park users as well as installing improved trash and recycling stations in strategic locations.

Implementation:

1. Align process and timing with a large redesign project.
2. Purchase and place new color-coded, paired, trash and recycling bins.
3. Combine trash and recycling collection eliminating Sentence-to-Serve's role. Partially fund transportation equipment for efficient collection.
4. Develop new universally designed labels that include pictures and multiple languages.
5. Add recycling contract to allow for a dumpster onsite, eliminating the need to haul materials off-site.



ACT

Lessons Learned:

- Without consistent partner contacts, project communication is challenging.
- Memorandum Of Understanding is a helpful tool to obtain long term commitment from partners.
- Need to make recycling intuitive and easy for users.
- Effort was successful due to willing partners all sharing the same goal.
- Involving key decision makers allowed for efficient development and implementation of action plan.

Adopt, Adapt, or Abandon:

Due to changes in the collection process, implementation was expanded throughout the entire LEPR at the same time as the swim pond. It will be expanded to all Washington County parks and used as a model for cities interested in park recycling. To continue momentum at LEPR, PHE and Parks will continue to work together to make additional recycling improvements in 2017.

STUDY

Measurable QI Outcomes: A follow-up waste sort was conducted in 2016. Data indicated the recycling rate at the swim pond increased from 2% to 21%, exceeding the aim.



Other QI Outcomes:

- Streamlining the collection process allowed for STS crews to focus on other park priorities.
- Focusing on images rather than text and adding multiple languages to posters and labels met additional recycling best practices.
- New sorting stations allowed for easier collection reducing service time for park staff.