

## Creating a Vision for Equitable Access to Nature

### OVERVIEW: THE VISIONING PROCESS

Visioning is a process through which **community partners develop a vision statement** that sets the course for the local children and nature initiative. Through public engagement, the community defines its purpose, core values, and ambitions for the future.

A vision statement **provides essential direction – a “north star”** – for all partners implementing a plan of action. It ensures sustained fidelity to the collective intent of diverse interested parties and partners.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The visioning process engages interested parties representing diverse demographics, organizations, local government, and economic sectors, identified with the help of a [community assessment](#). The greater the diversity, breadth, and depth of co-creation, the more sustainable and supported the vision will remain. Upfront investment in relationship-building, inclusivity, and the time needed to “build a bigger tent” strengthens the vision and implementation in the long run.

### KEY ELEMENTS OF A STRONG VISION STATEMENT

A strong vision

- Results from a **collaborative vision-writing process** that builds shared ownership of the final statement and engages children, youth and adults through community engagement.
- **Capitalizes on opportunities** identified through [policy scanning](#) and aligned funding.
- Inspires community members to rally around **a collective purpose**.
- Specifically names: 1) an audacious goal, 2) a target date/frequency, 3) a target population or scale, and 4) the intended impact.

### STEPS TO DEVELOP A VISION

**Step 1:** Assess the current status of equitable access to nature - this will result in an inventory of current assets, opportunities, challenges, and key interested parties.

**Step 2:** Share the results of your assessment and engage interested parties in co-creating a vision.

**Step 3:** Co-write a vision statement that is shared publicly and serves as a north star for subsequent action planning, partnership development, fundraising and implementation.

## STAYING COMMITTED TO A COMMUNITY'S VISION

**Say it out loud, proudly, and often!** A community's Vision statement should not sit on a shelf or a webpage. It should be continuously referenced as a valuable tool in all activities. Examples include:

- Celebrate the creation of the Vision through a launch event that draws public and media attention, and builds accountability and commitment for achieving shared ambition.
- Refer back to the Vision as an initiative's "north star" when mapping out an action plan, key milestones and assessment activities.
- Feature the Vision in presentations to decision-makers such as city council or school district leaders.
- Create an inspiring Vision one-pager that all partners can easily share electronically or in hard copy when they meet with new, potential partners and funders.
- Read the Vision in working group and action planning meetings
- Restate the Vision as a tagline on published reports, plans and web pages.

## EXAMPLES OF VISION STATEMENTS

Vision statements should be **short, clear, precise and readable**. They should be written in simple words that anyone can understand and should range from a tagline to a paragraph at maximum. Below are a few examples that range in length and depth, but all capture the essence of the community's purpose.

### San Francisco Children & Nature

*Nature for every child. Every day.*

### Madison, WI Connecting Children to Nature

1. *Ensure that every Madison child has regular opportunities to connect to nature to achieve optimal physical, social and emotional well-being and*
2. *Increase community connectedness and a sense of belonging in Nature in Madison's neighborhood's particularly among communities of color.*

### Atlanta Community School Parks

***By 2030, every Atlanta Public School should have a Community School Park that supports the healthy development, success, and well-being of Atlanta's kids and communities.***

*The City of Atlanta and Atlanta Public Schools, in partnership with nonprofit partners—have a collective vision to work with children and teens to transform school grounds across Atlanta's Public School system into vibrant, Community School Parks that equitably provide:*

- *kid-designed play spaces and outdoor learning environments that spark joy and a sense of belonging;*
- *equitable access to healthy, green oases for all communities both during and after school;*
- *increased neighborhood connectivity and climate resiliency through stormwater management, tree canopy, and biodiversity;*
- *community-determined opportunities such as locally grown fresh food, art, and cultural opportunities;*
- *community ownership and environmental stewardship through meaningful engagement.*