

# Draft Regional Parks Policy Plan Update: Release for Public Comment

July 18, 2018

Committee of the Whole



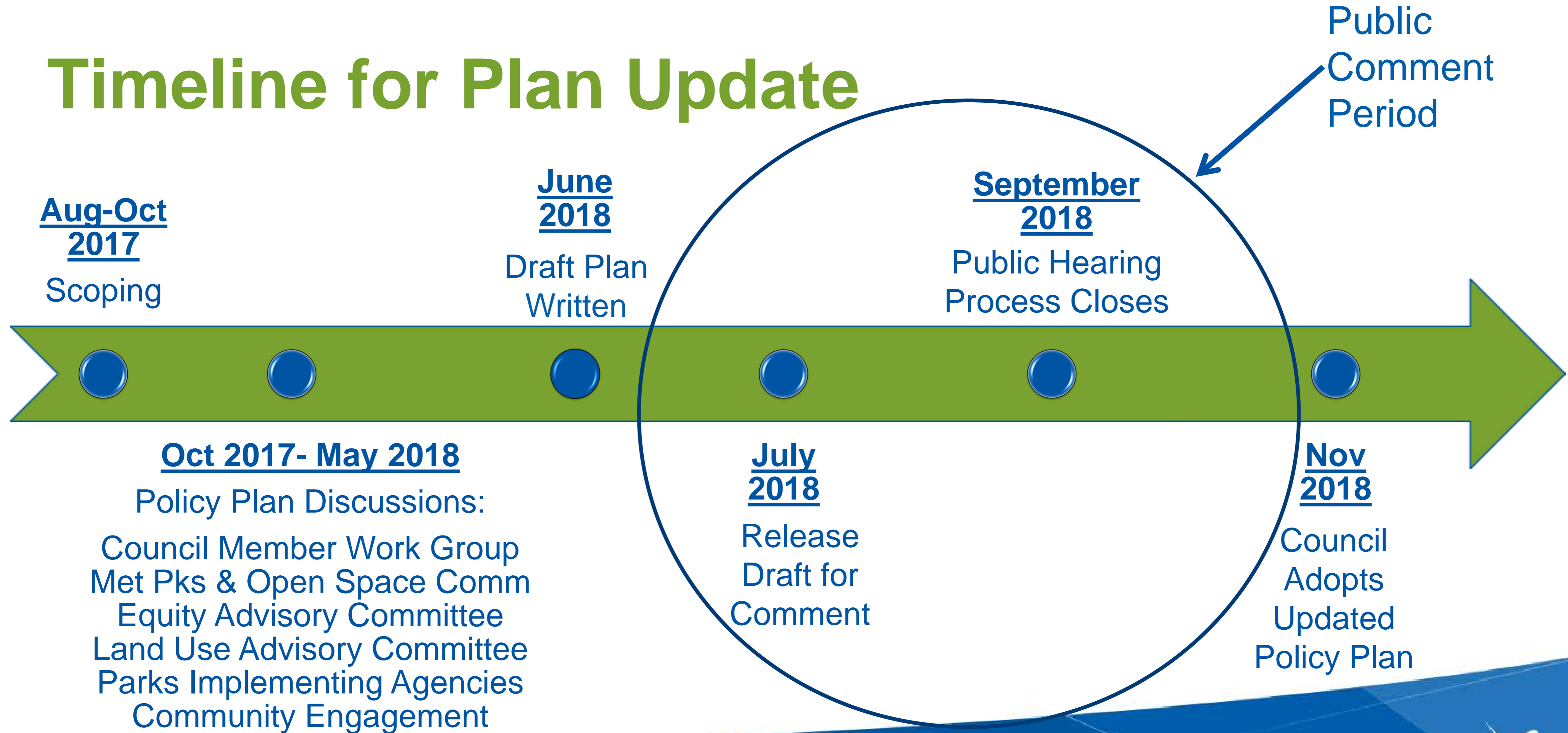
# Today

- Overview of draft plan for public comment
- Discuss so Council Members understand what's new and can have informed conversations
- Discuss next steps



Fourth of July Celebration  
Normandale Lake Bandshell, Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve

# Timeline for Plan Update



# Participation: Who helped build the draft

- **Community:**
  - Focus groups
  - Park user surveys
  - 2014 stakeholder follow-up
- **Agencies:**
  - Implementing Agencies
  - Boards and Commissions
  - Department of Natural Resources
- **Council staff:**
  - Parks/Community Development staff
  - Parks Finance staff
  - Transportation staff
  - Environmental Services staff
- **Council Advisory Committees:**
  - Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
  - Equity Advisory Committee
  - Land Use Advisory Committee
- **Council Members:**
  - Council Member Work Group
  - Community Development Committee
  - Committee of the Whole

# What's New?

## Draft Regional Parks Policy Plan Update










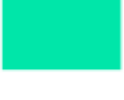





# Six Most Significant Things about the Update

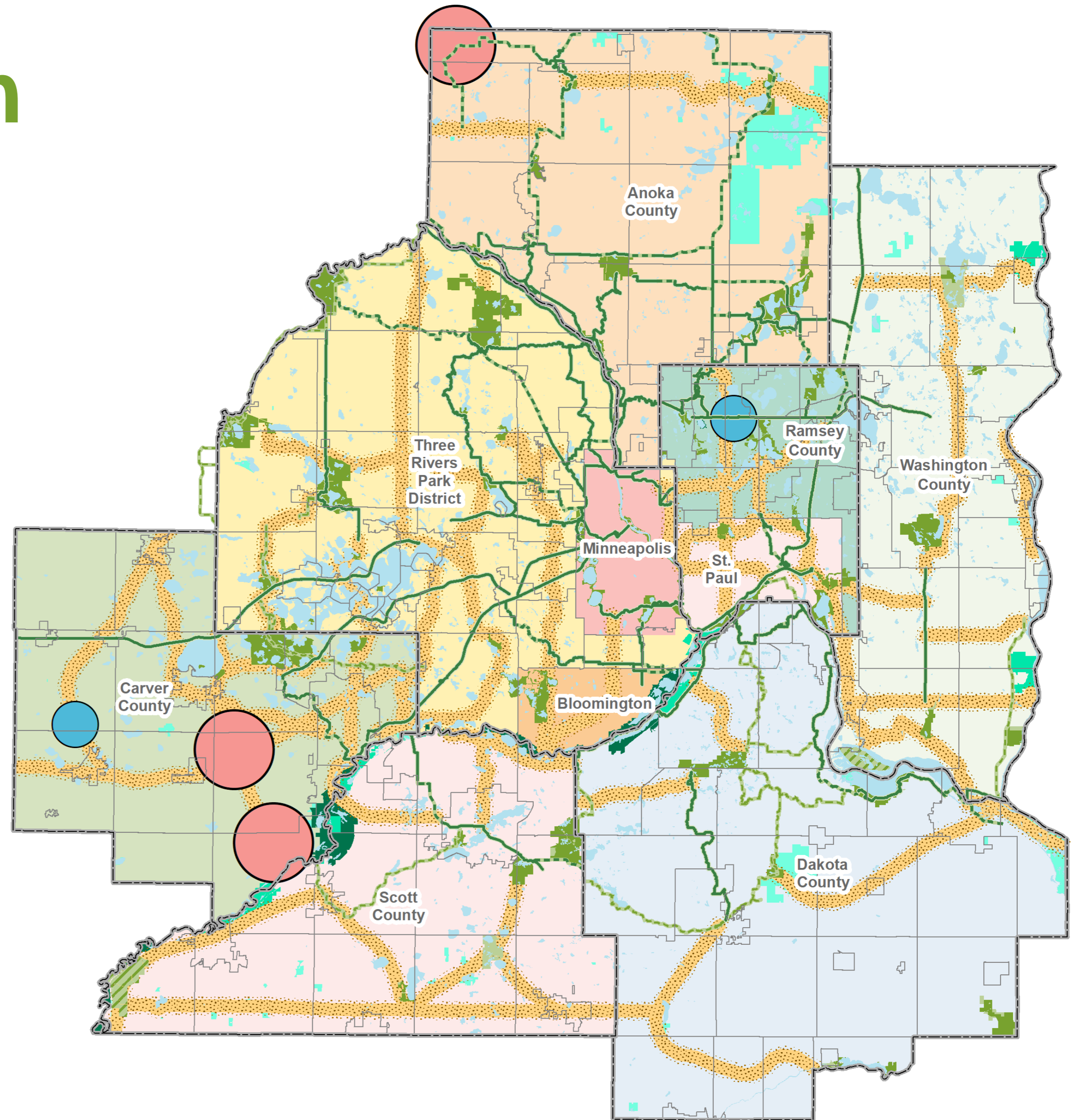
1. Affirm direction created in 2015 with *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
2. Continue to use Equity Toolkit to examine equity impact:
  - For review with Bonding and Legacy projects
  - Modify to be used in park and trail master planning
  - No more project prioritization
3. Update System Plan – one new regional park and 11 new regional trails!
4. Consolidate current Regional Parks System additions criteria into one table to set up a productive 2019 system addition discussion
5. Commit to creating the Equity Grant Program by 2019
6. Develop the Grant Program Guide, splitting out the administrative and grant program information from the policy plan

# Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction and Overview

- No significant changes
- Updated Regional Parks System facts, figures, and maps
- In Chapter 2, added Interest Earnings on Park Funds citation to *Key Legislation Section*
  - *Options for using interest earnings will be determined by the Council in coordination with others, outside of the policy plan update*

# Chapter 3: System Plan

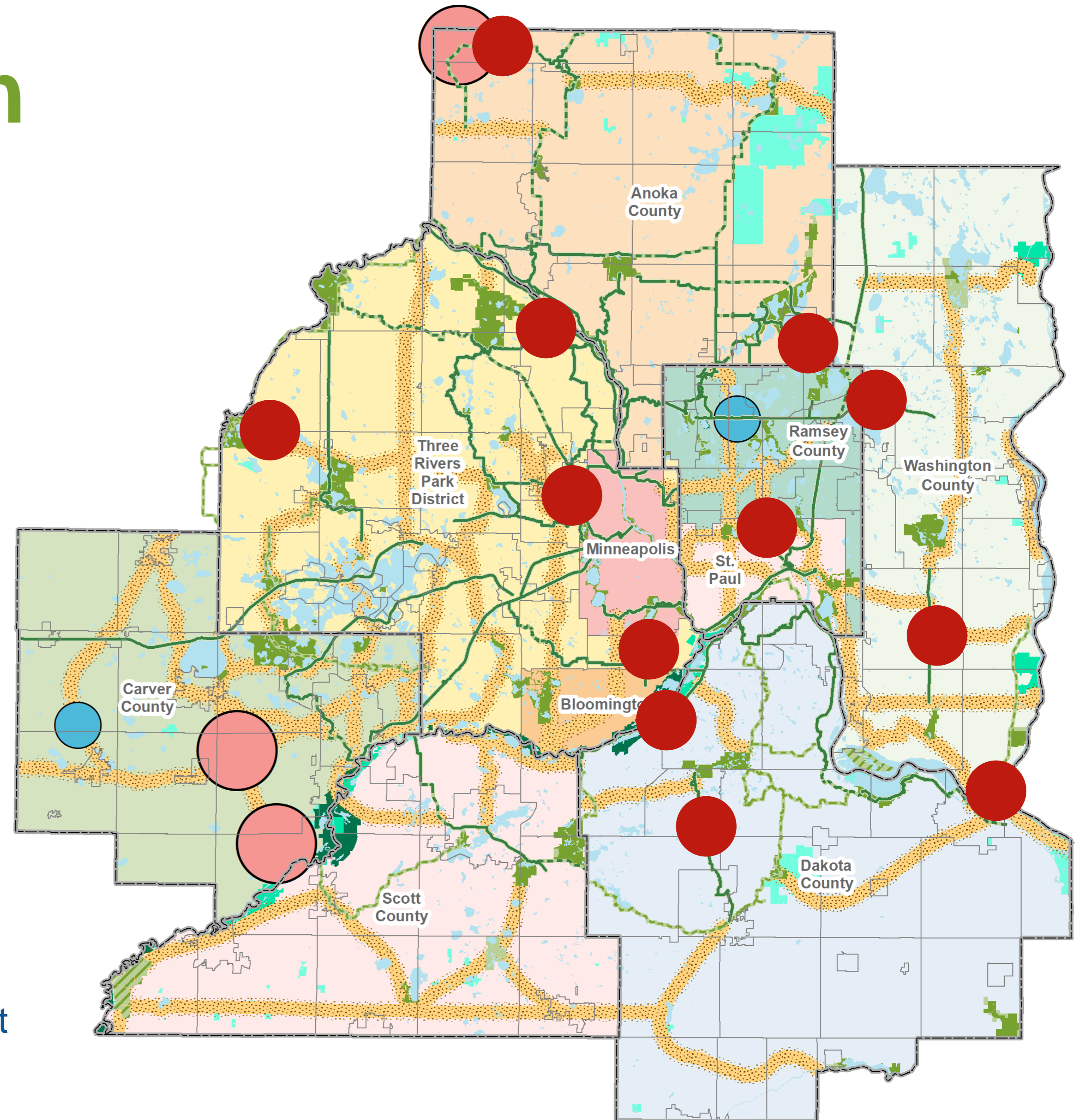
-  Regional Parks (Open to the Public)
-  Regional Parks (Not Open to the Public)
-  Planned Parks (Not Open to the Public)
-  Regional Trails (Open to the Public)
-  Regional Trails (Not Open to the Public)
-  Planned Regional Trails (Not Open to the Public)
-  State Wildlife Management Areas
-  State Parks
-  MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge
-  Minnesota Valley State Trail and Recreation Area
-  Park Boundary Adjustments
-  Park Search Areas
-  Regional Trail Search Corridors





# Chapter 3: System Plan

- 43 Regional Parks (one new)
  - Lake Sarah Regional Park
- 12 Park Reserves
- 8 Special Recreation Features
- 51 Regional Trails (eleven new)
  - Chain of Lakes-Otter Lake Regional Trail
  - Sugar Hills Regional Trail
  - Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail
  - North Creek Greenway Regional Trail
  - Lake Links Regional Trail
  - Trout Brook Regional Trail
  - Crystal Lake Regional Trail
  - West Mississippi River Regional Trail
  - Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trail
  - Central Greenway Regional Trail – South Segment
  - Point Douglas Regional Trail



# Reorganize the document

- Break out current Chapter 4 Policies and Strategies into five new chapters
  - Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition
  - Chapter 5: Planning
  - Chapter 6: System Protection
  - Chapter 7: Recreation Activities and Facilities
  - Chapter 8: Finance
- Establish Grant Program Guide: break out administrative and grant program information from current plan

# Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition

- Added “Process and Criteria Overview for System Additions” section. Consolidated existing criteria
- **Strategy 1:** Lands with restoration potential are also eligible
- **Strategy 2:** Geographic balance concept as stand-alone strategy
- **Strategy 4:** New regional trails may connect state and/or federal recreation units and regionally significant natural resources.
- **Strategy 5:** Expanded Bridging facilities description as Special Recreation Feature

# Chapter 5: Planning

- **Strategy 1:** Expanded to include:
  - Where appropriate, Council staff will provide assistance on master planning, including data/information about race, ethnicity, ability and income
  - New Legislative requirement for regional parks, park reserves, special recreation features, and trails located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

# Chapter 6: System Protection

- **Strategy 4:** Phase 1 and 2 Environmental Site Assessments are eligible for funding, but it is not guaranteed.
- **Strategy 6:** Updated to reflect statutory authority and practice around locating regional wastewater infrastructure and fairly compensating park agencies

# Chapter 7: Recreation Activities and Facilities

- **Strategy 1:** Balance conservation with the provision of recreation opportunities:
  - Activities and facilities should avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects
  - Activities and facilities should evolve to meet all residents' needs, across race, ethnicity, income and ability
- **Strategy 2:** Clarify range of recreation opportunities spectrum: developed to rustic
- **Strategy 3:** Reaffirm 2015 equity strategies, including Equity Grant Program by 2019
- **Strategy 4:** Better coordinate Council's implementation of Regional Trails and the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network

# Equity strategies status - Planning

- Bridging facilities
  - Added additional language; interest rising; convening topic
- Encourage design elements in master plans, emphasizing new users
  - Amenities suited for aging and limited mobility population, picnic areas, large open ball fields suitable for emerging recreational patterns of use, amenities clusters serving multi-generational groups
  - Continues; added examples based on community engagement; convening topic
- Require enhanced community engagement in developing regional park and trail master plans
  - To mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic barriers and include diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities, and immigrant statuses
  - Continues; convening topic

# Equity strategies status – Funding/investment

- Require equity toolkit in grant applications
  - Continues; additional uses cited
- Using the toolkit, the Council and MPOSC will be involved in the prioritization of the project lists proposed for the CIP and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund
  - Disallowed in 2017 funding bill; changed to analysis tool
- Using Council bonds, create, fund, and administer a set-aside competitive grant program for capital projects explicitly aimed to strengthen equitable usage
  - Create by end of 2019; interest is high; potential use for interest earnings
- Require a minimum percentage of each agency’s share of its Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations be used to “Connect People and the Outdoors”
  - Disallowed in 2017 funding bill; removed



# Equity strategies status – Convene/information

- Create regional parks system ambassador program
  - Created and staffed; continues with new hire in June 2018
- Assist implementing agencies in establishing public engagement process
  - Available; broadened to peer sharing; convening topic
- Conduct studies to inform Regional Parks System planning and management
  - Continues; shared interest in quality studies; engaging research unit
- Convene stakeholder meetings with implementing agencies, partners, community based organizations and advocacy groups to enhance knowledge and continuous improvement
  - Strong support; will continue; venue for complex topics
- Conduct region-wide visitor survey every five years
  - Will continue; high interest in good data

# Chapter 8: Finance

- Consolidate financial information into one standalone chapter
- **Strategy 2:** Bond funds may be used for natural resource restoration. Update Council's Five-Year Parks Capital Improvement Plan
- **Strategy 3:** Removed requirement to establish minimum level of spending for “connecting people and the outdoors”
- **Strategy 4:** Removed project prioritization from Legacy and Capital Improvement programs and recommitted to using Equity Toolkit
- **Strategy 9:** Explore other Regional Parks System funding sources. Includes estimate of costs to complete the system: \$2.6 billion!

# Parks Policy Plan: Schedule

- Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission: July 12, 2018
- Community Development Committee: July 16, 2018
- Equity Advisory Committee: July 17, 2018
- Committee of the Whole: July 18, 2018
- Metropolitan Council: July 25, 2018
  - Draft Regional Parks Policy Plan Update will be available on the Council's Parks page ([www.metrocouncil.org/Parks](http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks)): July 25, 2018
- Public Hearing at Community Development Committee: September 17, 2018
- Public Comment Period Closes: September 24, 2018
- Present Parks Policy Plan for approval: November 2018

# MPOSC Discussion Topics

- Geographic balance – how will it be used?
- New cost estimates to complete the system – enhance the narrative
- Increasing quantitative use of equity toolkit, and other measures
- Including “age” as a named equity category
- Focus on how welcoming regional parks are for potential new users
- Use of interest earnings

# EAC Discussion Topics

- Accessibility in regional parks
- Accountability mechanisms for equity investments
- Involvement of community in planning and implementation processes
- Equity grant program
  - Community involvement in creation
  - Criteria
  - Ensuring that money not spent to perpetuate inequitable use

# Questions and Discussion

- How can we support you during the public comment period?
- Other ideas or questions?

# Thank You

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