

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Community Development Committee

Meeting date: April 7, 2014

Subject: 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan discussion on Strengthening Equity in the Regional Parks System

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Rainry Salk PhD, Senior Parks Researcher (651 602-1669) and Jan Youngquist AICP, Planning Analyst (651 602-1029)

Division/Department: Community Development, Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Proposed Action

Information item only. No action required.

Background

Minnesota Statute 473.147 requires the Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide. As per Statute, the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan will:

- Identify generally the areas which should be acquired for the regional parks system
- Estimate the costs of the recommended acquisition and development

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan will include policies and strategies for siting and acquisition, finance, recreation activities and facilities, planning, and protection of the regional parks system.

Thrive MSP 2040 includes policy direction for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, which states that the Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park implementing agencies and State partners to:

- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status

Staff will present information gathered through stakeholder engagement and lead a discussion on policy alternatives to address the equity direction put forward in Thrive MSP 2040. Discussion will focus on five themes: 1) comprehensive policy approaches, 2) funding and investments, 3) planning and design, 4) community engagement, and 5) information and convening. Background materials to inform the discussion can be found in Attachment A. Links to additional resources focused on equity are also provided, including examples of equity impact analysis toolkits and additional readings.

Rationale

Minnesota Statute 473.147 states that the Metropolitan Council shall consult with and make maximum use of the expertise of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission in preparing the policy plan. A joint meeting to discuss the policy direction related to equity in the regional parks system was suggested by the CDC and MPOSC bodies in November 2013.

Funding

N/A

Known Support / Opposition

N/A

Attachment A: Background Materials

Role of the Metropolitan Council in the Regional Parks System

- Collaborative role with Park Implementing Agencies (IAs) who own and operate the regional parks system
 - 10 IAs include: Anoka County, Carver County, Dakota County, Ramsey County, Scott County, Washington County, City of Bloomington, City of St. Paul, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Three Rivers Park District
- **Metropolitan Council provides:**
 - **Funding assistance*—**
 - **Non-competitive grants (Average \$33 Million/fiscal year)**
 - Development
 - Acquisition
 - Parks and Trails Legacy Fund approved expenditures
 - Pass through grants (Operations & Maintenance)
 - **Long-range planning of the entire regional parks system**
 - **System Policy Plan**
 - **Specifies important policies that include:**
 - Permissible activities
 - Nature-based system
 - IAs master plan requirements for each park or trail (which must be approved by Met Council)

*Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System Funding

- **Operations and Maintenance Funds** (Average=\$8.5M/fiscal year)
 - State General Fund & Natural Resources Fund from Lottery in Lieu of Sales Tax revenues
 - *Allocations based on formula (MS 473.351)*
- **Capital Improvement Program Funds**
 - 40% Council Bonds
 - 60% State Bonds
 - *Allocations based on formula in Parks Policy Plan*
- **Acquisition Opportunity Grant Fund**
 - 40% Council Bonds
 - 60% State Funds
 - *Non-competitive*

Note: Capital Improvements and land acquisition amount to an average of \$14M/fiscal year

- **Parks and Trails Legacy Fund** (Average=\$15.5M/fiscal year)
 - 100% from PTLF
 - *Allocations based on formula (MS 85.53)*

Thrive Direction for Regional Parks Policy Plan

- **Strengthen equitable usage** of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status

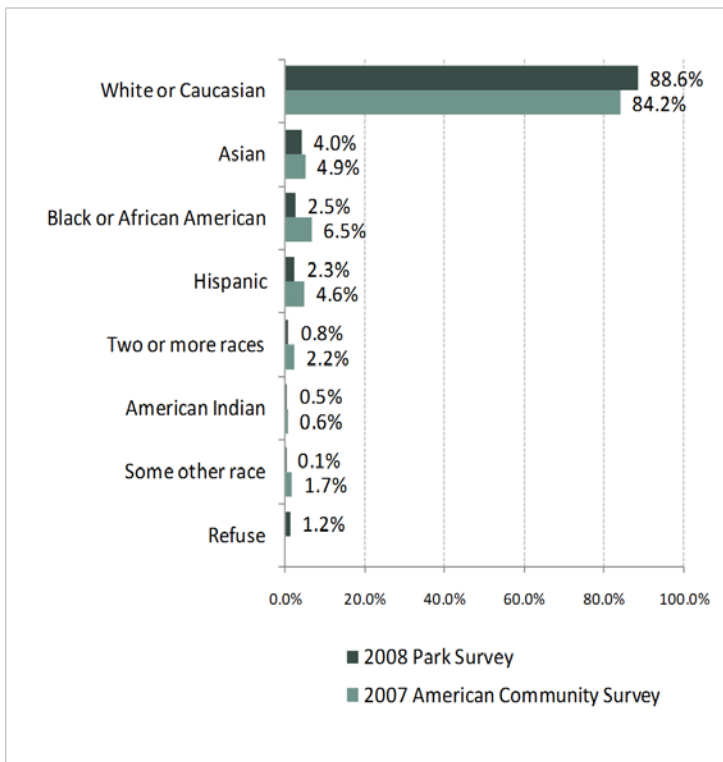
Description of Equity in Thrive

Connecting all residents to opportunity and creating viable housing and transportation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. Promoting equity means:

- **Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region**
- Creating real choices in where we live and how we travel for all our residents, across age, race and ethnicity, economic means, and ability
- Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transitways
- **Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making**

Important Considerations: Current Figures and Future Trends

Equity is important to this region for many reasons. Several trends are important to consider when thinking about equity and the regional parks system. The following charts look at regional parks system use by race and ethnicity (Figure 1), as well as regional population trends based on race, ethnicity and age (Figure 2-4).



Note: American Community Survey is the annual population survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 1. Race and ethnicity of Regional Park and Trails visitors, 2008 (Source: [Regional Parks 2008 Survey](#); n=91 sites; 7,245 visitors).

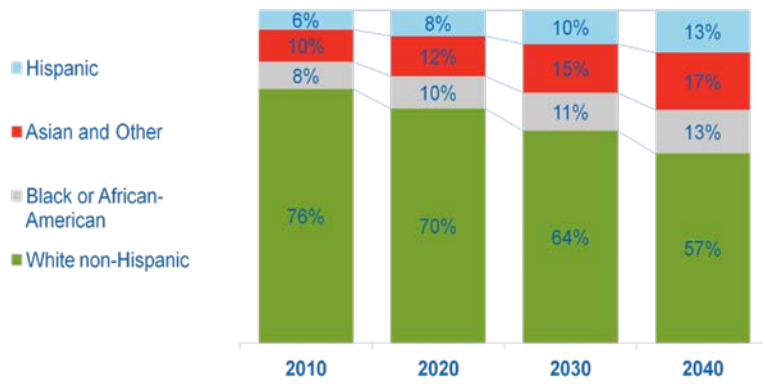


Figure 2. Regional population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010-2040 (Source: Metropolitan Council, 2012).

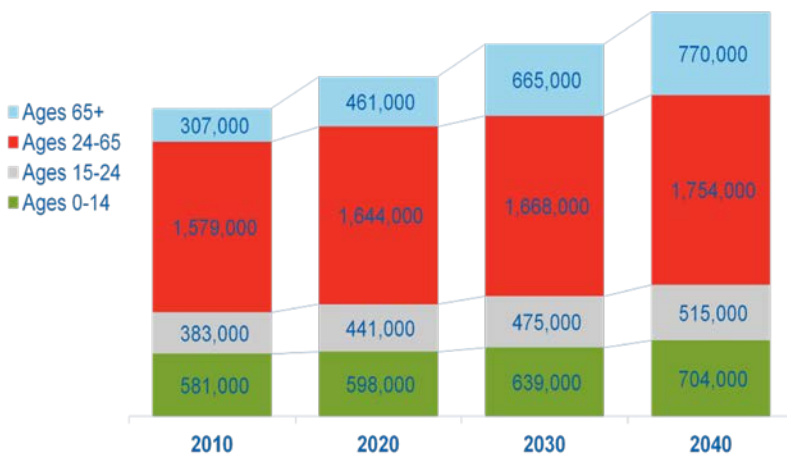


Figure 3. Regional population by age cohort, 2010-2040 (Source: Metropolitan Council, 2012).

Population by Race / Ethnicity and Age



Figure 4. Regional population by Race/Ethnicity and age cohort, 2010-2040 (Source: Metropolitan Council, 2012).

Met Council Research with Select Communities of Color

Suggestions from 2014 Focus Group Participants to Enhance Regional Park Visits

1	Increase Awareness
2	Address Safety
3	Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces*
	Create Ambassador Program*
4	Increase and Diversify Programming
5	Provide More Events

(n=263)

*Items tied.

Link: [Regional Park Use among Select Communities of Color](#)

Potential Resources of Interest (Internal and External Links)

Primer

[Core Concepts](#)

[Thrive MSP 2040](#)

[Choice, Place and Opportunity](#)

[PolicyLink's Minnesota's Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model](#)

Examples from outside the region:

[Seattle's Racial and Social Justice Initiative](#)

[Governing for Racial Equity Conference](#)

[King County's Equity Infographic](#)

Examples of Racial Equity Analysis Toolkits:

[Seattle's Racial Equity Toolkit](#)

[King County's Equity Impact Review](#)

[Race Forward's Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)

[Minneapolis Public School Board Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment](#)

Equity in parks and recreation:

[National Recreation and Parks Association Social Equity Pillar](#)