

Information Item

# **Public Comment Summary Report and Draft Recommendation for the Draft Amendment to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan***

November 16, 2020

Joint Meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Community Development Committee





# Agenda

- Public Comments
- Public Comment Report
  - Traditional Engagement
  - Demographic Analysis
  - Public Engagement Pilot
  - Comment Summary
- Policy Refinements



Whitetail Woods Regional Park



# Draft Amendment Public Comment Timeline

## Invite

August - September

## Engage

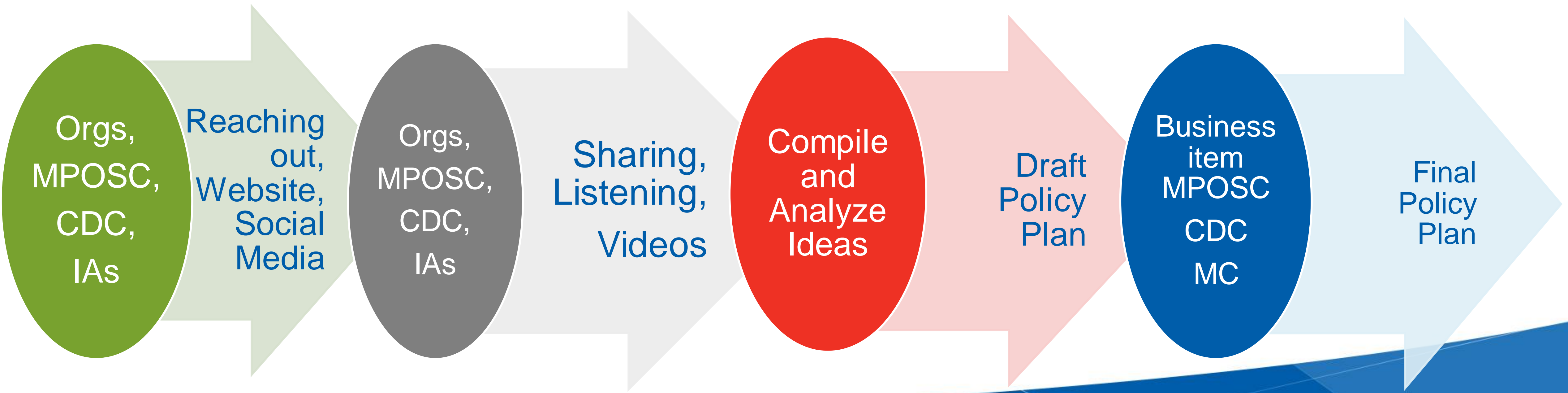
September - October

## Refine

November

## Approvals

December





# Public Comment Log

## Overall Counts:

190 comment submittals

180 commenters

## Commenters:

- 2 Implementing Agencies
- 4 Cities
- 28 Organizations - 34 submittals
- 145 Residents - 148 submittals
- 1 Council Staff - 2 comments

## Public Hearing:

1 Implementing Agency

1 Organization





# Public Comment Summary Report



- Traditional Engagement Demographic Analysis
- Public Engagement Pilot
- Public Comment Themes and Responses



# Assumptions Informing Engagement Process

- At the start of this process, Council Members and MPOSC Commissioners encouraged staff to innovate during the public comment period.
- Staff created a two-pronged approach:
  - Traditional public engagement
  - Public engagement pilot effort



Members of Urban Roots discussing draft Amendment



# Traditional Engagement Demographic Analysis



Wabun play area at Minnehaha Falls Regional Park

## Respondents:

- Only survey respondents were included.
- Public engagement pilot participants were not included.
- 110 respondents out of 180.

## Baseline Assessment:

- A first-time analysis.
- Describes who is responding and where in the region they live.
- Tested a traditional method of engagement.
- Many learnings for future engagement.

# Traditional Engagement Demographic Analysis

## Select Segment, Survey Response Demographics

Disability: 92% No 8% Yes	Age: 20% 18-34 56% 35-54 24% 55+ (6% current students)	Race: <1% Black <1% Indigenous <1% Multiracial 97% White	Gender: 71% Women 29% Men 1% Non-binary (1% transgender)
---------------------------------	--	--	--



# Public Engagement Pilot



- Prioritized underserved populations of the Regional Parks System
- Reached out to 90 youth oriented and outdoor recreation organizations





# Prioritized Organizations

## 6 Deeper Conversations

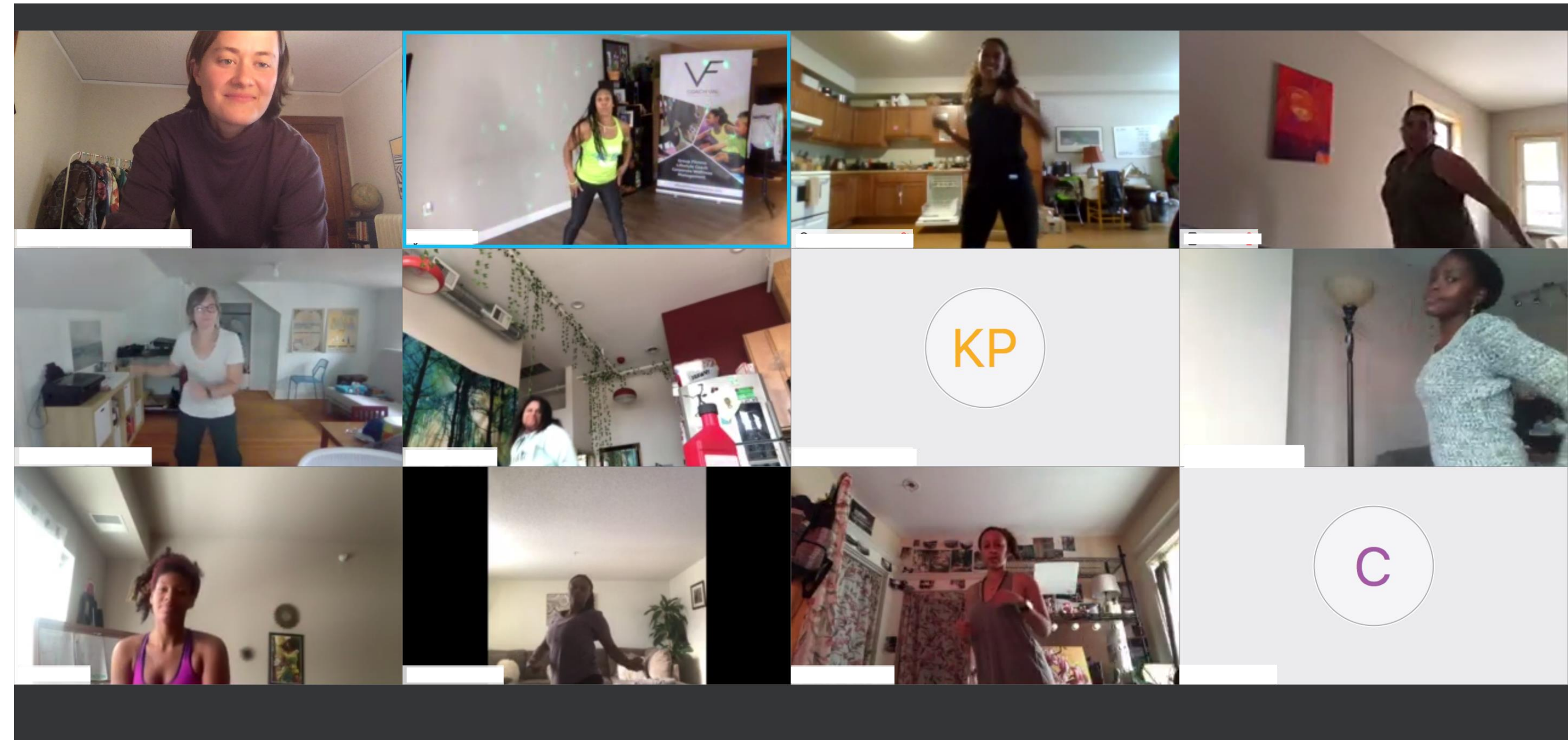
- Urban Roots
  - 8 mixed race youth, 13 hours
- Cycle Sisters
  - 10 women (70% black, 20% Indigenous, 10% white) from North Minneapolis, 1.5 hours
- Outdoor Latino Minnesota
  - 3 Latinx youth, 4 hours
- Saint Paul Indians in Action
  - +/- 8 Native American organization leaders, 1 hour
- South Eastsiders Community Organization
  - +/- 12 residents, 1 hour
- League of Women Voters of Minnesota
  - 35 women, 1 hour





# Engagement Learnings

- “Traditional” engagement approaches reach dominant culture audiences well!
- Reaching new audiences takes time, especially working with historically underserved audiences.
- If a relationship with an audience is cultivated only when the Council needs something, it will not be successful.



Zumba Class with Amanda, Ellie, and the Cycle Sisters



# Highlights: What we Heard

"Currently access to our parks seems to favor people with resources and plenty of free time. Boat ramps and bicycle trails being prime examples. Yet many people without those privileges go to parks to fish from shore hoping to catch dinner. Shore based anglers are treated like second class citizens in most parks."  
—*Resident*

We don't just want a pretty place, but one that feeds our soul, mind, body, and stomachs. We need to shift to regenerative practices with water, soil, and air mitigation, moving towards fruit bearing trees, spaces for gardens and harvesting, and canning and preserving classes in our regional parks. —*Cycle Sisters*

"Telling histories is meaningful. Then when visitors come, they know what land they're standing on, what it means to stand there, and who is connected to the land. When we visit a park, we want to know about all the events that happened there and how the land has changed."  
•—*Urban Roots*



# Public Comment Summary

- **Systems Additions:** Overwhelming support for the proposed 26 system additions.
  - Some concerns regarding the need to take care of the existing system before adding more.
- **Natural Resource Conservation:** Comments supporting prioritizing natural resource conservation over recreational use.
  - For example, proposal to change acreage threshold for designating park reserves.
- **Regional Trails:** Significant interest in regional trails and future of the trail system;
- **Water Trails:** Support for water trails, as well as some concerns.



Girl helps with bee survey during a joint Saint Paul Parks & Recreation/U of M program.



# Policy Plan Administrative Updates



- **Cost to Complete System:** Refined methodology that led to no change in estimated \$2.1 billion total cost.
- **Chapter 9 Work Plan:** Proposes the Cultural Historical Study to incorporate land acknowledgement.



# Policy Refinements

## Request for input on two topics:

- Proposal to study Bridging facilities during next Policy Plan update, to explore whether to count visitors as part of the annual use estimate.
- Proposal to change regional trail boundary requirement.



Minnehaha Falls Regional Park



# Question 1: Bridging Facilities

- **Special Recreation Areas, Bridging Facilities:**
  - Current draft language proposes NOT to include bridging facilities in annual use estimate.
  - If designed correctly, their success will be reflected in increased visitation in future use estimates.
- **Future Council Commitment:**
  - Council commits to returning to this topic during next Policy Plan update (2024) to explore whether to count visitors at bridging facilities as part of the annual use estimate.
- **Question:** Do you support this proposal?



# Question 2: Planning Regional Trail Boundaries

- **Current Requirements:**

- Agencies provide a list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, among other things.
- Agencies are not required to provide a map of the trail boundary beyond a simple “line”.

- **Proposed Additional Requirement:**

- Require agencies to provide a map that shows boundary of regional trail similar to regional park, calling out all associated acreage.

- **Question:** Do you support this proposal, mapping regional trail boundaries with known public inholdings and anticipated acquisitions?



# Next Steps

## Parks Policy Plan Amendment

Final Recommendation next  
month

- December 3: MPOSC
- December 7: CDC
- December 16: MC



November Morning, Chain of Lakes Regional Park



# Thank you

Emmett Mullin

Parks Manager, Community Development Division

[Emmett.Mullin@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Emmett.Mullin@metc.state.mn.us)

651-602-1674

Tracey Kinney

Senior Parks Planner, Community Development Division

[tracey.kinney@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:tracey.kinney@metc.state.mn.us)

651-602-1029

