

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: October 19, 2020

Subject: Public Hearing on the draft amendment to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. § 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner (651-602-1029) and Emmett Mullin, Regional Parks Manager (651-602-1360)

Division/Department: Community Development/ Regional Planning

Proposed Action

No action—Public Hearing to begin at 4:00 p.m.

Background

Minnesota Statutes 473.147, subd. 1 directs the Metropolitan Council (Council) to plan for the Regional Parks System. As part of the 2018 update of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (RPPP), the Council committed to convening a region-wide discussion about system additions in 2019. This effort began in October 2019 and continues to the present day through the public comment period on the draft amendment to the RPPP. In addition to adding or expanding regional parks and trails, this draft amendment adds new policy language to strengthen equitable access and proposes a new future study on the history of the land where the parks and trails are located.

The Council has consulted with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, Community Development Committee, Land Use Advisory Committee, and Regional Park Implementing Agencies as part of the system additions discussion and the other policy additions included in the draft amendment to the RPPP. This plan amendment builds on the policy direction established in the most recent policy plan update adopted in 2018, as well as the direction provided in *Thrive MSP 2040*.

The draft plan amendment was released for public comment on August 26, 2020. The public record will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2020. The draft amendment of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* is available for review on the Council's website at: www.metrocouncil.org/parksplan.

Rationale

The public hearing will offer partners, stakeholders, and the public an opportunity to formally comment in person on the RPPP draft amendment.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The RPPP draft amendment advances the *Thrive MSP 2040* Outcome of Livability through increasing access to natural resource-based outdoor recreation, which enhances the quality of life throughout the region. It also advances the Thrive Outcome of Equity through strengthening equitable use of the regional parks system by reducing barriers to participation across race, ethnicity, income, and ability. These two outcomes were key considerations in scoring proposed additions to the regional parks and trails system.

Funding

Updating the RPPP is a regular part of the Community Development Division budget. The System Addition recommendations included in this Amendment will

increase the total estimated cost to complete the system from the 2018 *Regional Parks Policy Plan* estimate of \$2.1 billion to a new total of \$2.3 billion. The implementation of these new units will proceed at the speed of available funding and the costs will be borne by the Regional Park Implementing Agencies, who are the owners and operators of the Regional Parks System.

Known Support / Opposition

The purpose of the public hearing is to learn more about the known support and opposition for the language in the RPPP draft amendment.