

## Metropolitan Park and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: May 20, 2014

**Subject:** 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Discussion and Confirmation: Revisiting Recommendations for Strengthening Equitable Usage of the Regional Parks System

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statute 473.147

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Raintry 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

That the Metropolitan Council incorporate the set of policy concepts in Attachment A into the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* which aims to enhance equitable usage of the regional parks and trail by all our region's residents, such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status.

### 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.

Metropolitan Council's recently developed regional vision document, *Thrive MSP 2040*, puts forward five outcomes, one of which is equity. *Thrive MSP 2040* states that "**the Metropolitan Council will use equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments, and explore its authority to use its resources and roles to mitigate the place-based dimension of racial, ethnic and income-based disparities**" ([Thrive MSP 2040](#), p. 20). Further, it also puts forward additional policy direction, specifically related to equity and the regional parks system. *Thrive MSP 2040* states 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 spent the last six months conducting research and engaging stakeholders to identify a set of policy concepts for the Council to consider. Several activities were undertaken to identify potential policies specifically directed to enhance equitable use of the Regional Parks System. The activities undertaken include (but are not limited to): a) a large stakeholder meeting (with representatives from park implementing agencies, MN Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service and Trust for Public Land), b) one-on-one meetings (e.g., with park

implementing agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy groups and Legislative oversight bodies) and c) polls with regional park visitors.

Staff presented a set of stakeholder driven equity-related policy concepts at the April 7<sup>th</sup> joint meeting of the Community Development Committee (CDC) and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC). Staff presented a total of 19 equity-related policy concepts. Council and Commission members discussed the concepts presented. The outcome of that discussion resulted in several equity-related policy concepts suggested for continued discussion.

On April 15, staff met with the Thrive Work Group, which is comprised of five Council members, to further discuss the equity-related policy ideas that emerged from the joint CDC/MPOSC meeting. The policy concepts presented, and found in Attachment A, were supported in full and recommended for confirmation.

On April 22, staff presented the 13 proposed equity-related policy concepts, found in Attachment A, at a special MPOSC meeting. MPOSC members discussed the 13 equity-related policy concepts. After an initial discussion, the public was invited to speak. Several regional park implementing agencies spoke to the need for more time to meet with staff to discuss the policy concepts and to identify any unintended consequences. MPOSC postponed recommendation of the equity-related policy concepts and directed staff to schedule a meeting with regional park implementing agencies and other interested stakeholders.

The Council hosted a meeting on May 9 with partners and stakeholders. The meeting was facilitated by two representatives from Mobius, Inc. The meeting objectives, as delineated by the facilitators, were as follows: 1) create shared understanding of differing stakeholder viewpoints about both the potential contributions and any unintended consequences of the proposed equity-related policy concepts, 2) identify priorities among the contributions and unintended consequences for consideration, and 3) clarify next steps in decision-making. In sum, 28 individuals participated in the conversation. Thirteen participants were representatives from the all ten of the regional park implementing agencies, while 15 were representatives from external partners, community-based organizations, or advocacy groups. The two-hour meeting allowed each person, one by one, to share their perspectives as it pertained to both the contributions of the proposed equity-related policy concepts and their unintended consequences (Attachment B). Time did not permit for the second meeting objective, as described above. The meeting concluded with staff identifying next steps. Based upon consensus shared across the various participants, additional language was added to the last equity-related policy concept under the convening and information section (italicized and highlighted in yellow).

### **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.

### **Funding**

N/A

### **Known Support / Opposition**

At the Joint MPOSC/CDC meeting on April 7, Lynnea Atlas-Ingrebretson, Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Chair, spoke in favor of the equity-related policy concepts, most notably those related to the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Three letters were sent to MPOSC members, which can be found in Attachment C.

## Attachment A

### Policies Aimed to Strengthen Equitable Usage of the Regional Parks System

The policy ideas which seek 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 fall into three broad categories: 1) funding and investment, 2) regional parks system planning and 3) convening and information.

#### *Funding and Investment*

- Create a set-aside grant program with Met Council park bonds for capital projects that specifically aim to address strengthening equitable usage of the regional parks system
  - The amount available for the program would vary from year to year
    - Based on the amount remaining after our obligated matches are met (e.g. State bond match, Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant matches)
    - Staying within our \$7 million annual bonding limit and \$40 million overall cap
- Require agencies to identify the direct impact their funding requests would have on strengthening equitable use
  - Through the use of an equity impact analysis
    - Would not to be used as a screening tool, but as a means to get agencies to think about equity in their capital projects, programming, and other Council grant funded expenditures
    - Would apply to capital improvement program (CIP) and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (PTLF) grant programs
- Require a certain percentage of each agencies' share of their Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations be used to "connect people to the outdoors" (one of the four pillars of the 25 year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan)
  - The types of funding expenditures considered to "connect people to the outdoors" include programming, events, staff, training, among others
  - Since inception, only 3% of metro funding has been spent to "connect people to the outdoors", while 62% has gone toward acquisition and development and 33% has gone to "taking care of what we have"
    - By contrast, the DNR allocated 17% of their PTLF appropriations to "connect people to the outdoors"
- Begin Met Council staff involvement in the prioritization of grant funding for the CIP and PTLF grant funds, using equity as defined by the Metropolitan Council as a lens
  - In drafting the list of how those dollars are spent, the agencies are currently the sole responsible parties for reviewing and prioritizing their respective list

#### *Regional Parks System Planning*

- Revise the description of a Special Recreation Feature to allow a "bridging facility"
  - Could allow for a pilot project to test the waters on accommodating changing recreational preferences
  - Would allow for experimentation to try new things that attract diverse users
  - Would still need to serve a regional audience, but would not require the size commitment of a regional park (100-500 acres) or a park reserve (1,000+ acres)
- Allow and encourage the following design elements to be included in a regional park or trail master plan:
  - Amenities suited for the aging population and those with limited mobility
    - Siting amenities close to parking lots or points of access, such as picnic areas or short, looped trails
    - Providing benches at appropriate intervals
  - Picnic areas suitable for emerging recreational patterns of use
    - Picnic areas that accommodate mid-sized groups of 15-25

- Does not need to be a formal picnic shelter—could be a number of picnic tables that can be grouped together
      - Would not require an advance reservation
      - Does not replace picnic areas that require reservations—both options would be offered
    - Large open ball fields that could accommodate a variety of pick-up games
    - Clustering of amenities that would allow for multi-generational groups
      - Provide amenities for all ages in a centralized area
        - Such as picnic areas near playgrounds and open ball fields
- In developing a regional park or trail master plan, require regional park implementing agencies to conduct community engagement that seeks to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and includes diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and immigrant statuses
  - The language from the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) may want to be used here instead for consistency across Metropolitan Council plans. The current CEP draft states the following: “Engagement efforts should work to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers **and include diverse races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, and socio-economic and disability statuses**”

### *Convening and Information*

Several ideas were brought forward through stakeholder engagement that may not translate into specific policies as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, but are based in the Thrive principle of collaboration. These activities will require the Metropolitan Council to provide additional funds or resources.

- Provide community engagement assistance to regional park implementing agencies to engage diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and immigrant statuses in developing a regional park or trail master plan
  - Several regional park implementing agencies have indicated they would need assistance to engage these audiences, at least initially
- Provide regional-level research related to changing recreational preferences and demographics
  - Expand prior efforts to include garnering information related to social class, educational status, age cohorts, disability status, etc.
- Conduct region-wide visitor survey on a more consistent basis
  - Currently only conducted once every decade
    - Systematic data collection for all regional park and trail units is costly
- Create a Met Council funded regional parks system ambassador program
  - Intent would be to build awareness of the regional parks system
    - Bringing parks to the people and people to the parks
    - Focus on enhancing participation among non-park users
- Develop an integrated web application with an activity/park finder feature
  - Currently do not have a regionally focused, centralized site that provides regional parks and trail details
    - Links provided to park implementing websites currently, which also include their other system components (e.g., golf courses, city parks, county parks, sports complexes, etc.)
- Conduct quarterly “best practices” meetings with regional park implementing agencies, **partners, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups\***
  - Coupled with an integrated, multimedia platform to facilitate continuous learning, institutional memory and enhanced dialog

\* Italicized and highlighted language added May 12.

## Attachment B

Facilitator Produced Bulleted Summary Points Made by May 9<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Meeting Participants

### *Current Contributions of Proposed Equity-related Policy Concepts*

- Engaging whole communities
- Listening to stakeholders
- Many proposals are low cost
- Focused effort—equity plan, intentionality, accountability
- Acknowledge contribution of connecting people to nature
- Supports effective partnership and collaboration
- Bring awareness
- Important concepts
- Directive, additional funding for equity goals
- Appreciate additional funding
- Appreciate Met Council support at legislature
- “Bridging” facility providing flexibility and experimentation
- Set-aside grant
- Providing important ideas-“what to do”
- Today’s conversation—bringing people/stakeholders together—good planning process
- Met Council highlighting well-being, quality of life
- Met Council sees the connected system
  - Acknowledges power of policies to equity = “software” = engagement
- Underserved communities will see commitment
- Dakota County reaching out broadly
  - Single moms
- Important conversation with intention to equity
  - Policy concepts
  - Important direction
- Commitment to equity and to find root causes of inequity
  - Parks potential to save lives/well-being
  - Build community
- Specific language in Legacy funding policy and \$
- Met Council providing direction
- Policies for convening important
- Appreciate Met Council support
- Met Council support for immigrant population access to parks
- We are learning from each *other* [sic] about to reach out—policy coordination
- Encourages experiments for outreach
- Will help us know if we are hitting the mark

### *Desired Consequences\* of Proposed Equity-related Policy Concepts*

- Ways to institutionalize multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Better baseline of information to measure results regarding intentional impacts
- Connect this initiatives with other (national) initiatives focused on healthy communities/wellness focus

- We need to understand what communities need
- Encourage commitment for underserved community
  - Software” commitment as well as infrastructure
- Easier access to regional parks for carless people
- Ensure accountable collaboration
- Build on enthusiasm of staff to connect kids to nature
- Stable and additional funding regarding equity
- Met Council prioritizing more flexibility
- **Real** focus on accountability for equity policies, especially regarding immigrant communities engagement
- Implementation engages a diverse community of stakeholders
- Regional park system are step two beyond local parks
- Attention to detail around access that builds on existing policy and practices (need to know)
- Met Council needs to focus on local parks as park system
- Broaden focus to include what regional parks are already doing (well communicated)
- Ensure we learn from experience at all levels local, regional, state (seamless system)
- Ways to know if we are hitting the mark
- Flexibility in measuring impact of connecting people to the outdoors
- Flexibility in accessing funding for getting outcomes
- Attention to sustaining infrastructure
- Acknowledge all four pillars as contributors to equity
- Avoid “mission creep”
- “Who” is broad enough to include all
- Broaden creativity and relationship development
- Parent involvement/engagement is authentic/effective
- Use of equity assessment used to help increase equity and measure results
- Keep in view that disparity is a much larger issue, not just parks and rec

\* Unintended consequences were transformed by the facilitator, in dialogue with the speaker, into desired consequences

**Attachment C**  
**Letters Sent to MPOSC Members**

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) Members,

Over the course of the last year and a half, the Thrive Work Group, comprised of Council members Chavez, Commers, Schreiber, Rummel and Vaneyll have been the core Council member group meeting weekly with Council staff to develop *Thrive MSP 2040*. Since the *Thrive MSP 2040* draft was completed last month, we have shifted our focus to ensure the vision, outcomes and principles captured in *Thrive MSP 2040* are implemented.

On April 15, we had the opportunity to meet with the staff preparing the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. They shared several stakeholder driven policy ideas related to the *Thrive MSP 2040* charge 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”.

The policy ideas staff presented were strongly supported by the Thrive Work Group. As such, we encourage MPOSC to recommend the set of policies that will be presented at the MPOSC special meeting to be held on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. In particular, we strongly encourage you to recommend incorporation in the revised Parks Policy Plan policy ideas related to funding and investment. We will do little to improve equitable usage of the Regional Parks System if our strategy fails to include our role in influencing the funding of and investment in our Regional Parks System.

In closing, we thank you for your time and willingness to serve the Council in an advisory capacity as MPOSC members. The Council feels very strongly about the outcomes delineated in *Thrive MSP 2040*, including equity, and appreciate the work you do to help us to implement it through your assistance in the development of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Sincerely,

Gary Vaneyll

On behalf of Thrive Work Group Members

Steven Chavez, Jon Commers, Sandy Rummel and Lona Schreiber



April 22, 2014

Mr. Robert Moeller  
Ms. Barbara Schmidt  
Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission  
C/O Metropolitan Council  
390 North Robert Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Subject: Metropolitan Council's Proposal on Regional Park Use Equity

Dear Mr. Moeller and Ms. Schmidt,

I am writing to provide you with feedback related to the Metropolitan Council's proposed actions intended to increase equity use within the regional park system. The following is intended to provide feedback on the proposals from a staff perspective; it does not represent the Scott County Board's position – the Metropolitan Council's process appears to be on an accelerated pace and has not allowed for this discussion.

To begin with, the goal of enhancing equitable usage of regional parks and trails is a goal all should support. However, the ultimate outcome of this process is not clearly defined in this proposal. What level of equity is our goal? Are we only focusing on the RCAP areas, and if so, are we excluding populations who live outside the urban core? The Metropolitan Council has an opportunity to be a leader in this effort. I would hope that the Council facilitates a process where the Implementing Agencies work collaboratively with the Council to achieve a common goal, rather than the Council imposing new rules and regulations in an attempt to achieve a yet-to-be-determined outcome.

Specifically related to the policy proposals, I offer the following feedback:

- *Create a set-aside grant program with Met Council park bonds for capital projects that specifically aim to address strengthening equitable usage of the regional parks system.*  
The Metropolitan Council and the Implementing Agencies have worked hard to develop an allocation process for the regional park funding that strives to allocate funding proportionately among the agencies based on services and needs. The agencies that are within areas targeted for equity use in this proposal already receive a proportionately higher percentage of funding, and the residents in these areas generally have access to multiple

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regional park services areas. If the Metropolitan Council chooses to use funding to address equity, the Council should pursue new funding sources and utilize existing formulas for allocating these dollars among agencies.

- *Require agencies to identify the direct impact their funding requests would have on strengthening equitable use.*  
I would support this recommendation, provided the practice not evolve to a criteria for funding decisions by the Metropolitan Council.
- *Require a certain percentage of each agencies' share of their Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations be used to "connect people to the outdoors" (one of the four pillars of the 25 year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan).*  
The analysis presented by Metropolitan Council staff related to this proposal was not reflective of what is happening with Parks and Trails Legacy Fund by Implementing Agencies. In the grant administration process, the Metropolitan Council categorizes funding into one four pillars: *Acquiring Land/Creating Opportunities, Connecting People to the Outdoors, Taking Care of What we Have, and Coordinating Among Partners.* In this process, many projects are categorized as *Creating Opportunities.* I would argue that in creating opportunities we are also connecting people to the outdoors – the two are interrelated. The Metropolitan Council should acknowledge that funding any of the categories also achieves the goal of connecting people to the outdoors. Do not create new rules forcing agencies to fund a specific category.
- *Begin Met Council staff involvement in the prioritization of grant funding for the CIP and PTLF grant funds, using equity as defined by the Metropolitan Council as a lens.*  
I would strongly object to this proposal without more clarification on what "involvement" means. The Implementing Agencies are in the best position to determine priorities for funding. While I support the Metropolitan Council facilitating the overall effort for equity, it shouldn't dictate how to get there by controlling how funding is invested.
- *Revise the description of a Special Recreation Feature to allow a "bridging facility".*  
I do not support revising the description of Special Recreation Feature. The Metropolitan Council and Implementing Agencies have worked hard to differentiate the services we provide from other agencies in relation to how funding is allocated at the state level. The current definition allows flexibility to pursue equity objectives while maintaining the integrity of the regional park system.
- *Allow and encourage the design elements to be included in a regional park or trail master plan [that work to address equity].*
- *In developing a regional park or trail master plan, require regional park implementing agencies to conduct community engagement that seeks to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and includes diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and immigrant statuses.*

I would support these initiatives and suggest that agencies are already doing this to a great extent in their master planning processes. In Scott County's recent master planning efforts, we worked hard on citizen engagement and acknowledged future population trends. Again, this is an area where the Metropolitan Council can help lead us collectively without implementing new rules and regulations.

- *Convening and Information (multiple objectives)*  
This is really where I think the Metropolitan Council can help us thrive by being a leader in this effort. Metropolitan Council should commit the resources to accomplish these objectives effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with feedback. I apologize that I am not able to attend the April 22 meeting in person – I'm out of town this week. Patricia Freeman will be attending on my behalf and can speak to these points if needed.

Sincerely,



Mark Themig  
General Manager Scott County Parks

cc: Arne Stefferud, Metropolitan Council  
Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District



4/21/2014

Dean Johnston, Chair  
Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission  
Metropolitan Council  
390 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

**RE: Policies aimed to Strengthen Equitable Usage of the Regional Parks System**

Dear Chair Johnston,

Three Rivers supports equitable use of the regional parks system and has taken an active role in promoting use by underserved populations. The Park District's 2010 Vision Plan recognized the need to provide additional service and opportunities to minority populations, teens, the aging population, and to residents within the first ring of Hennepin County suburbs where there are no regional parks. Some of the actions the Park District is currently pursuing include:

- Expanding outreach programming in recreational and educational pilot projects in communities identified as being underserved;
- Exploring the concept of pocket parks and nature nodes along regional trails in underserved communities;
- Development of "Trails at your Pace" program featuring short, gentle trails specifically for the aging population, complete with benches spaced frequently and designed for people with tired knees;
- Organized discussions on the subject of equity with the ten implementing agencies and DNR leaders at the NRPA congress in Minneapolis to brainstorm issues and opportunities, followed by meetings of parks staff from across the region to discuss what has worked for them;
- Providing diversity and cultural awareness training of Park District staff; and
- Recent approval to hire a Community Engagement Coordinator on our staff to help all Park District staff improve their skills and knowledge for reaching out to diverse communities.
- Completion of an update Americans with Disabilities (ADA) plan for the Park District, with a dedicated funding amount each year for improvements.

These efforts have been paying off, especially in the use of our core recreation facilities. For example, Three Rivers' 2013 park visitor study draft data analysis indicates significant increases in use of picnic areas by African Americans at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (now 13 percent of picnicking visitors, up from 1 percent in 2008) and at French Regional Park (12 percent, up from 5 percent). Asian use of picnic facilities at French has increased from 14 to 21 percent and at Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, from 3 to 18 percent. At Carver Park Reserve, Hispanic use of picnic areas went from less than one percent to 14 percent. The story is similar for our creative play areas and swim areas, and is not limited to the parks mentioned in the example.

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Interagency discussions with individuals and leaders who have successfully engaged underserved populations indicate that the most critical component of equity is a direct relationship between each park agency and its underserved communities. This relationship allows for open communications, promoting awareness of what parks currently have to offer, identification of the perceived or real barriers to participation and how they can be removed, identification of the community's needs and desires, and development of a fiscally responsible plan that best addresses barriers and needs.

Three Rivers and several of the other park agencies have already begun this journey, and the use of the regional park system has changed in the last six years.

#### Suggested and Supported Council Policies

So what can the Council do to help Park Implementing Agencies strengthen equitable usage of the park system? The answer lies in two simple but powerful concepts. The Council can help bring people to parks, and the Council can help bring parks to people.

#### **Bringing People to Parks: Suggested Council Actions:**

1. Implement a region-wide marketing campaign to increase awareness of parks.
2. Implement regularly scheduled park-destination Metro Transit buses on weekends that bring underserved populations to the primary recreation areas within parks.

#### **Bringing Parks to People: Suggested Council Actions & Policies:**

3. Provide greater flexibility in what can be considered as a regional park or facility. This may include:
  - a. Accepting pocket-parks and nature-nodes along regional trails;
  - b. Accepting stand-alone regional recreation facilities that have been identified as a need by underserved communities;
  - c. Allowing facilities within regional parks that have historically not been considered appropriate but which are identified as a need by underserved communities.
4. Develop new regional parks adjacent to fixed transit stations.
  - Every LRT line should have a regional parks facility, and its primary recreation area, adjacent to at least one LRT station on the line. Flexibility in park acreage requirements will likely be needed to accomplish this goal.
5. Promote development of regional trails in underserved communities, ideally with pocket park and nature-node components.
6. Provide new funding for development of the facilities identified as needs by the underserved communities through a set-aside grant program using new Council funds above and beyond the \$7 million already committed to the parks program.
  - The existing backlog of park agency unfunded projects is large. The Council originally intended for the full \$7 million of Council funds to be spent each year, but has, in recent years, only assigned a proportionate amount of funds to match state funding. The recent influx of \$1.5 million for acquisition is appreciated and dealt with a critical need. The Council can show a strong commitment to equity through providing a new funding stream dedicated to that initiative.

(2)

**Regional Coordination Actions:**

7. Provide regional-level research related to changing recreational preferences and demographics, including region-wide visitor surveys every 5 years instead of every 10 years.
8. Conduct an assessment of the supply and demand for recreation facilities across all providers, including local, regional, state and federal facilities within the metropolitan area.
9. Conduct quarterly "best practices" meetings with local, regional, state and federal park agencies to discuss equity practices.
10. Provide community engagement assistance to regional park implementing agencies as needed.

**Council Policies in Attachment A that are problematic:**

A few of the proposed policies in Attachment A are currently problematic and are not supported by Three Rivers:

- A 1. Requiring agencies to identify the direct impact of their funding requests on strengthening equitable use.

*It is important for MPOSC and the Metropolitan Council to understand that the Council's research on parks and equity used a focus group approach, which is an excellent method for identifying themes and ideas. It does not provide any form of quantitative measure, so it is not possible to accurately identify the degree to the recommended actions would result in bringing underserved populations into the parks. In addition, Council data on use is now 6 years old and is not representative at the individual park-level. It is currently not possible to identify a direct impact for specific projects in specific parks.*

- A 2. Require a certain percentage of each agency's share of their Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations be used to "Connect People to the Outdoors".

*The claim that only 3 % of legacy funds are used by regional park agencies to "connect people to the outdoors" is incorrect. Discussion also seems to focus on programming as the cornerstone of this Goal, even though programming reaches only a tiny fraction of the public, and is only one of several suggested strategies to connect people to the outdoors. The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan specifically provides seven key strategies for Connecting People to the Outdoors:*

1. Welcoming environment
2. Access
3. Marketing
4. Quality
5. Programming and Special Events
6. Partnerships
7. Infrastructure and amenities

*The Legacy Plan indicates that the strategies in this category include projects such as development of new regional trails, redevelopment of existing facilities, and development of new infrastructure and amenities. These strategies are also found in several other goals in the plan. This makes sense – the best strategies serve multiple goals.*

(3)

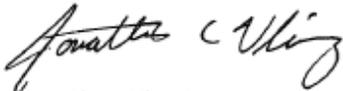
*Because many of the strategies (and their related investments to date) serve multiple goals, the distribution of investments cannot be shown as being mutually exclusive to each of the goals. A different method of analysis & reporting of the investments is needed. One approach would be to equally distribute each investment across the goals which it serves and then sum the partial investments under each goal. Another approach would be to simply sum the total investments that apply for each goal – which will create a total greater than 100 %, but which will show the true investments per goal.*

- A 3. Begin Met Council staff involvement in the prioritization of grant funding for the CIP and PTLF grant funds, using equity as defined by the Metropolitan Council as a lens.

*While this idea has merit, there is no defined method for prioritization, nor is there adequate quantitative data available on which to base a prioritization method. A rational and equitable approach to prioritization requires the methodology to be developed and the base data gathered prior to implementation. In addition, this proposed policy is redundant. The policy listed as #6 above (Creating a set-aside grant program with new funds) is the logical first step.*

The suggested and supported Council actions and policies listed above as #1 through #10 will provide what is needed to creatively and proactively address equitable use of the parks system. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Jonathan Vlaming  
Associate Superintendent  
Planning, Design and Technology

C: MPOSC Commissioners  
Arne Stefferud

JCV/jjs

(4)