

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: September 4, 2018

Subject: Visitor Demographic Information for Regional Parks and Trails

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Recreation Activities and Facilities-Strategy 3

Staff Prepared/Presented: Raintry Salk, Principal Researcher (651-602-1669)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

None; information and discussion only.

Background

The Metropolitan Council contracted with ISG to conduct a visitor study in the Regional Parks System during the summer of 2016. The study collected data from regional park and trail visitors within all regional parks and trails open to the public. A total of 5,459 regional park and trail visitors participated in the survey with statistically valid results available for each regional park implementing agency.

Council staff presented the results to members of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on [December 6, 2016](#). The presentation highlighted results from the [2016 Regional Parks System Visitor Study Report](#) and focused on visitor characteristics, including socioeconomic and demographic information, primary recreational activities, and other variables of interest.

Recently, Council staff have analyzed the 2016 visitor study data in greater detail across socioeconomic and demographic groups. Staff will present a review of Regional Parks System users and provide new detailed information on population segments who are not using the Regional Parks System in proportion to the population, including a focus on race, ethnicity, age, income, ability, gender and educational attainment. The presentation will further address demographic differences, as compared to population, among regional parks and regional trails as well as by regional park implementing agency.

Thrive Lens Analysis

As the visitor study collects information directly from park users, it permits the exploration of several *Thrive MSP 2040* outcomes. This presentation will focus on the outcome of Equity, as it will explore where disparities in regional park and trail use exist.