

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: December 5, 2019

**Subject:** Overview of the System Additions project

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

**Policy/Legal Reference:** *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Chapter 3: System Plan and Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy and Strategies

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

None; information and discussion only.

### Background

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* commits the Council to convening a region-wide discussion about system additions in 2019. In Chapter 3, 2040 System Additions are referenced as the last of the six components that make up the System Plan, which all together “comprise the vision for the Regional Parks System in 2040.” The other components that make up the System Plan include:

- Existing Regional Parks System facilities
- Planned Regional Parks System facilities that are not yet open to the public
- Regional Parks System Boundary Adjustments
- Regional Park Search Areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors

As stated in Chapter 4, “the Council’s role in this effort is to convene an evaluation process where the proposed idea may be considered within a larger context, recognizing all system additions increase the total cost to complete the Regional Parks System...”

Council staff formally initiated the system additions project with regional parks implementing agency partner staff on October 31, 2019. Following initial remarks by Community Development Director Lisa Barajas and a presentation on “Minnesota’s Changing Climate” by Senior Climatologist Kenny Blumenfeld, implementing agency partners were asked to provide their input on three questions:

- What are your expectations and hopes for the system additions process?
- What are your initial plans for 2020 additions, expansions or modifications to the regional park system?
- What questions or concerns do you have about the system additions process?

Council staff reconvened with implementing agency partner staff on November 25, 2019 and continued the discussion of system additions. In addition to reflecting back the themes of the input provided at the previous meeting and a presentation on “Forecasted Demographic Changes in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area” by Research Analyst Todd Graham,

implementing agency partners were asked to provide their input on three additional questions:

- Reflecting on the presentations you heard on demographic trends and climate change, how do you think these trends influence the Regional Park system overall?
- Reflecting on the presentations you heard on demographic trends and climate change, how do these trends influence your agency's specific ideas/initial plans for system additions?
- What other factors inform or influence your agency's specific ideas/initial plans for system additions?

Following a facilitated discussion of these questions, Planning Analyst Colin Kelly provided a draft of the system additions process (see Table 1) to include, broadly, three main phases over a period of approximately 10 months:

- Introduction and exploration
- State of the system, policy review, and proposal submittal
- Council committee process and public engagement

Council staff respectfully request the guidance of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission with regard to the overall system additions process, and to provide input on the first and third questions posed on October 31, 2019:

- What are your expectations and hopes for the system additions process?
- What questions or concerns do you have about the system additions process?

### **Thrive Lens Analysis**

Council staff is optimistic the System Additions project will advance each of the Thrive outcomes over the lifespan of the project, but particularly Stewardship, Equity, and Livability. Stewardship advances the Metropolitan Council's longstanding mission of orderly and economical development by responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, and making strategic investments in our region's future. Regional Park System additions that protect natural resources, adapt to changing conditions, and serve future residents advance this outcome.

Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. System additions that thoughtfully consider the specific context of geography and demographics have the potential to powerfully impact a variety of underrepresented groups. Bridging facilities are an area of particular interest in advancing the Equity outcome.

Livability focuses on quality of life and experiences in our region, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes the Twin Cities metro area a great place to live. System additions that create more opportunities for residents to recreate in the regional park system improve residents' quality of life.

Table 1: DRAFT 2019-2020 Regional Park System Additions Process

<b>Scale</b>	Global, national, state, region	Regional Park System, Implementing Agencies, proposed system additions	Regional Park System, Implementing Agencies, recommended system additions
<b>Phase</b>	Introduction and exploration	State of the system, policy review, and proposal submittal	Council committee process and public engagement
<b>Focus</b>	<p>Regional context, large-scale trend areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Social</li> <li>• Financial/sustainable funding</li> </ul> <p>Overall process</p>	<p>State of the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing and planned Regional Parks, Park Reserves, Special Recreation Features, and Regional Trails</li> <li>• Proposed Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors</li> </ul> <p>Policy, criteria, considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Parks</li> <li>• Park Reserves</li> <li>• Special Recreation Features, Bridging Facilities</li> <li>• Regional Trails, Regional Bicycle Transportation Network</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	<p>Review, refine, and recommend system additions through the Council committee process including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC),</li> <li>• Community Development Committee (CDC), and</li> <li>• Metropolitan Council (MC)</li> </ul> <p>as well as via a 60-day public hearing and potentially other community/public engagement.</p>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Hopes</li> <li>• Questions</li> <li>• Concerns</li> <li>• Initial plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies propose additions via one-page application, brief presentations to MPOSC as information item</li> <li>• Staff, MPOSC review and provide feedback</li> <li>• Agencies refine proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOSC → CDC → MC</li> <li>• 60-day public hearing</li> <li>• Adjust proposals, if needed</li> <li>• MPOSC → CDC → MC</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Shared understanding of regional context, process	Shared understanding of existing and planned system, policy and criteria	Council adopts recommendations, <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> is updated
<b>Timing</b>	Oct. 2019 – Jan. 2020	Jan. 2020 – Apr. 2020	May 2020 through Aug. 2020