Information Item

Youth & Parks Research Proposal

July 9, 2019

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
Outcomes

• Data to enhance Regional Park System for youth and families
• Expanded youth voice in creation of System priorities
• Replicable model of innovative stakeholder inclusion. Increased Council capacity
• Inclusive experience for youth and parents to experience regional parks
• Youth interaction with park staff, MPOSC, Council staff
• Youth capacity in research practices, civic engagement, public speaking
Why youth and parks research matters

- Expertise not captured in traditional research or community engagement.
- A key equity issue
- Health and well-being enhanced by Park and Trail use
- Youth park visitation is a key priority of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
- Future of Regional Parks System depends on new generation of support

Photo: Youth & Civic Engagement Research Participants Genesis Buckhalton and Noura Abu Ghosh in program facilitated by Vandegrift in January 2018.
Why youth participant action research?

- A methodological approach in which young people research issues that directly affect them to define issues and create change.
- The research process itself becomes a way of changing social practice.
- Builds new ways of connecting diverse stakeholders to influence planning.
- Expand the pipeline of future parks/planning researchers through an experiential research opportunity.
Key Themes to Explore

Access
Organizational, recreational, and social access to parks by youth

Values tied to and motives for park visitation
Experiences during park visit (focus group or workshop)

Priorities
Preferred outdoor recreational activities and desired amenities.

Which programming and facilities are most important?

Barriers
What prevents youth from accessing parks and/or having positive experience?

Changes that would improve access for key subgroups and youth in general
Process Overview

- **Qualitative**: Highlights interconnected processes, produces rich description, and presents alternative viewpoints.
- **Participatory**: Method shown to have positive outcomes for youth
- **Relational**: Connects diverse stakeholders to the production of knowledge used in planning, parks administration, and regional government.
- **Defining**: Expands concept of access
- **Collaborative**: Local organizations with preexisting relationships of integrity with youth will be paid collaborators in this project.
Youth & Parks Research Project Timeline

**Preparation**
(July – Sept)
- Stakeholder engagement
- Project team, partnerships
- Design workshop, focus groups

**Generating data**
(Sept-Oct)
- 2-3 weekend focus groups held at regional parks
- Day-long workshop held at regional park with audit/observation, reflection, and analysis

**Analysis & sharing**
(Nov – Mar)
- Team reflection on process and data
- Youth present findings to stakeholders
Outcomes - Review

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