

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



Photo: Youth & Civic Engagement Research Participants Genesis Buckhalton and Noura Abu Ghosh in program facilitated by Vandegrift in January 2018.

- 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



# 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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