Regional Parks System Additions Project: Process Update
2020 Timeline for Regional Park System Additions

Review criteria, seek advice

- February and March
  - February 26 - Implementing agency (I.A.) partner meeting
  - March 5 - MPOSC info item
    - Process focus
  - March 26 - I.A. partner meeting
    - Draft application

Propose action to release Policy Plan amendment for public comment, open public comment period

- August
  - August 6 - MPOSC business item
    - Propose action to release Policy Plan amendment for public comment on Aug. 26
  - August 17 - CDC business item
    - Propose action to release Policy Plan amendment for public comment on Aug. 26
  - August 25 - MC business item
    - Release Policy Plan amendment for public comment through Oct. 30 and set public hearing date for Oct. 19
  - August 27 - I.A. partner meeting

Develop, submit applications

- April and May
  - April 9 - MPOSC info item
    - Draft application
  - April 20 - CDC info item
    - Draft application
  - April 22 - Launch system additions application
  - April 30 - I.A. partner meeting
  - May 7 - MPOSC info item
  - May 18 - CDC info item
  - May 20 - system additions application due
  - May 28 - I.A. partner meeting

Initial review, feedback - Draft staff recommendation

- June and July
  - June 4 - MPOSC info item
    - Outline agency proposals
  - June 25 - I.A. partner meeting
  - July 2 (+/-) - MPOSC info item
    - Draft recommendation
  - July 20 - CDC info item
    - Draft recommendation
  - July 30 - I.A. partner meeting

Update on comments, open public hearing - Close public comment period and public hearing

- October and November
  - October 1 - MPOSC info item
    - Update on comments rec’d to-date
  - October 10 - CDC info item
    - Open public hearing
  - October 29 - I.A. partner meeting
  - October 30 - Public comment period and public hearing close
  - November 5 - MPOSC info item
    - Update on comments rec’d and themes
  - November 16 - CDC info item
    - Update on comments rec’d and themes

Summarize public comments, propose Policy Plan amendment adoption

- December
  - December 3 - I.A. partner meeting
  - December 3 - MPOSC business item
    - Summary of public comment, how it has impacted staff recommendation; propose Policy Plan amendment adoption
  - December 7 - CDC business item
    - Summary of public comment, how it has impacted staff recommendation; propose Policy Plan amendment adoption
  - December 9 - MC business item
    - Summary of public comment, how it has impacted staff recommendation, Policy Plan amendment adoption
**Regional Parks Policy Plan**

**Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy**

“Identify lands with high-quality natural resources that are desirable for Regional Parks System activities and put these lands in a protected status, so they will be available for recreational uses and conservation purposes in perpetuity.” (pg. 65)
Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy  

- **Strategy 1: Priorities** (pg. 67)
  - “Future Council designation of lands… should emphasize… natural resource features, access to water bodies…”

- **Strategy 2: Geographic balance** (pg. 68)
  - “Proportionate distribution tied to population distribution patterns will be an important consideration when exploring system additions.”
  - “Legislative directive is clear that regional parklands should be of ‘regional importance’… Lands that serve only a municipality or neighborhood are not considered to have ‘regional importance’”
Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy

• Strategy 4: New regional trails (pg. 69-72)
  – “Must serve a regional audience”
  – “Should not duplicate and existing trail”
  – “Should connect two or more units of the Regional Park System”
  – “Should connect state or federal recreational units”

• Strategy 5: Special recreation features (pg. 72)
  – “Be unique and complement or enhance the services already offered by the regional system”
  – “Not duplicate or compete with recreation facilities adequately provided by the public or private sector”
June 4 MPOSC information item

• Introduction by Council staff
  – Number and type of proposals received
  – Map of proposals in the context of existing, planned and proposed system

• Brief presentations by Implementing Agencies
  – Approximately four minutes per proposal

• Initial Commission feedback

• Next steps
  – Council staff review
  – Draft recommendation in July
Takeaways from April 30, 2020 Agency partner meeting

• Council staff are likely to receive 25-30 system addition proposals from across the region.

• To reduce the potential for “presentation fatigue,” Implementing Agencies would prefer to split the June MPOSC meeting into (at least) two sessions to better accommodate agency’s presentation of the proposals.
  – Staff will share proposals with the Commission ahead of the June meeting(s)
  – Staff considering different options to share agency proposal presentations fairly and effectively, including the order in which they are presented and pre-recording presentations

• Council staff will use the insights of the Commission to guide proposal evaluation after the June MPOSC meeting(s).
Next up: Bridging Facilities
Bridging Facilities

How we got here

• *Thrive MSP 2040 – Equity Outcome*
• *2015 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update*
  – Subset of special recreation feature
  – Focus on attracting and introducing new users
• *2018 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update*
  – Specifically call out underserved communities
• *2020 Agency-Council Staff Discussions*
Proposed Language Addition for 2020 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update

**Goal:** Bridging facilities introduce and link new regional park visitors and trail users across race, ethnicity, national origin, income, ability, age, and other pertinent characteristics. These facilities engage people with the wide array of opportunities that exist across the Regional Parks System, through innovative strategies and partnerships.
Proposed Language Addition for 2020 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Amend Chapter 4, Siting and Acquisition, Strategy 5: Special Recreation Feature

Background

• Different from local parks and community centers
• Purpose tied to introducing new visitors to the Regional Park System through intentional and dynamic strategies
• Help address inequities that exist in our region, such as lower participation rates from some communities.
• Encourage greater participation by the future stewards of our region – youth!
• Site close to target audience, including historically underserved communities
• Not designed as a one-size-fits-all approach
Proposed Language Addition for 2020 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update

Bridging facilities will:

• Provide a clear statement of purpose for what it is intended to accomplish
• Identify the population to be served and the inequity addressed
• Site the facility close to the desired population
• Have a Council approved master plan
  – Include awareness-building or marketing plan
  – Include a programming plan - active and passive
• Not be included in the annual use estimate.
Proposed Language Addition for 2020 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update

**Bridging facilities may:**

- Be a stand-alone facility, located in an area not currently well-served by existing regional parks, park reserves, and trails.
- Be nested within an existing regional park, park reserve, special recreation feature, or trail.
- Have a mobile element, to allow outreach to extend beyond the existing boundaries of the Regional Parks System, going into communities that have been historically underserved.
Takeaways from April 30, 2020 Agency partner meeting

• Strong support and excitement for increasing equitable use

• Some concerns remain for Bridging Facilities:
  – Have we clearly defined what bridging facilities are?
    • Adequately differentiate bridging facilities from local parks and community centers?
    • How to ensure “regional significance”?
  – Are Special Recreation Features adequate? What does the subset of Bridging Facilities add to the system?
  – Should bridging facilities be included in the annual use estimate? Current proposal does not recommend conducting counts. If the facility is successful, it will drive users to regional parks and trails.
Bridging Facilities continued

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Tamarack Nature Center
Bald Eagle-Otter Lake Regional Park
Next up: Boundary Adjustments
Boundary Adjustments

• Most boundary adjustments are considered through the system additions process
• Minor boundary adjustments can be accomplished through a master plan amendment or acquisition master plan amendment to provide a more timely and simplified process
  – Minor adjustments are sometimes needed for land exchanges, utility crossings, boundary corrections, and/or new acquisition opportunities
• There is a need to establish clear guidance on what constitutes “minor”
Boundary Adjustments continued

- Minor boundary adjustments will meet the following criteria:
  1. Be a maximum of 20 acres
  2. Be contiguous to a Council-approved master plan boundary
  3. Be consistent with the *Siting and Acquisition Policy* general criteria listed in tables 4-1 and 4-2 of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
Boundary Adjustments continued

Takeaways from April 30, 2020 Agency partner meeting

• Whether 20 acres is too much or too little may depend on the size of the park
• Would using a percentage be better? For example, allow boundary adjustments up to 10% of the total approved master plan acreage?
• For existing units, should boundary adjustments be handled through the master plan amendment process and not the systems addition process? This would allow for boundary adjustments to occur as they are needed, rather than just every four years.
• What about trails? What would be a “minor” trail boundary adjustment?
Thank you!