

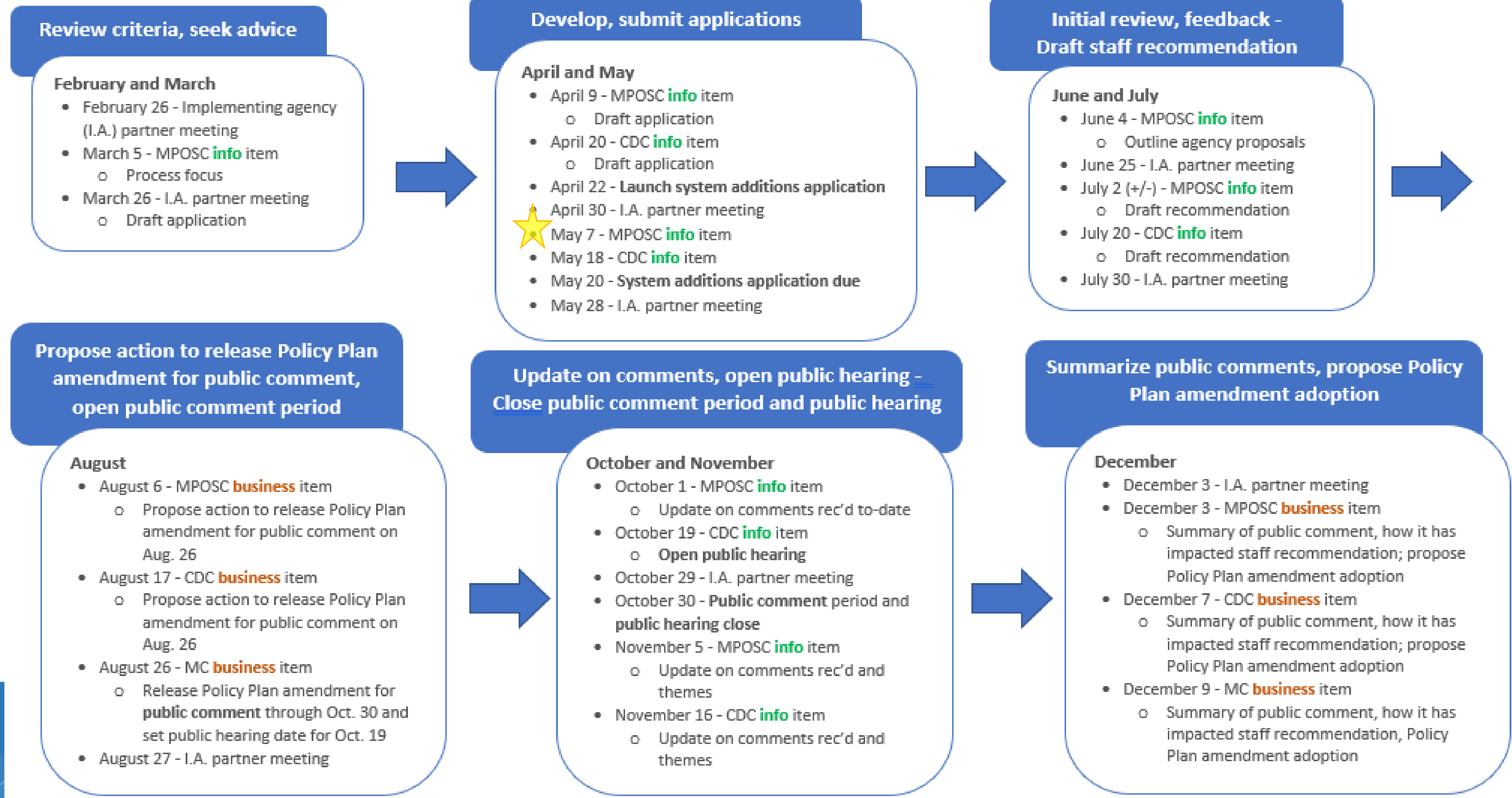
Regional Parks System Additions Project: Process Update

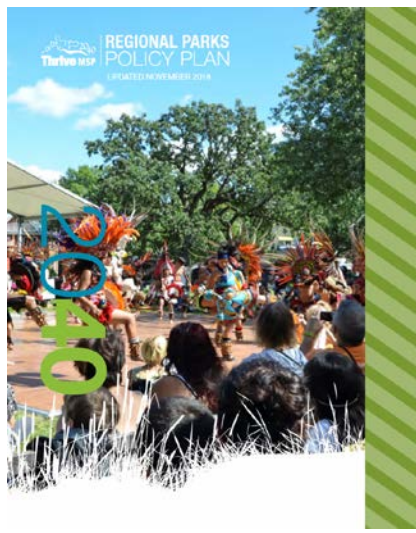
May 7, 2020

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



2020 Timeline for Regional Park System Additions





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)

Regional Parks Units must meet all criteria	Park Reserves Units must meet all criteria	Special Recreation Features * Required
Draws visitors from across the region	Draws visitors from across the region	Draws visitors from across the region
Provides for geographic balance	Provides for geographic balance	Provides for geographic balance
Conserves a diversity of high-quality natural resources, either naturally occurring or human built, that support outdoor recreation activities	Conserves a diversity of high quality natural resources that support outdoor recreation activities	* Provides a unique high-quality outdoor recreation experience
At least 100 acres; typically, 200-500 acres	At least 1,000 acres	* Provides a natural resource-based and scenic setting offering a compelling sense of place
Accommodates a variety of outdoor recreation activities	80% of unit managed as natural lands that protect the ecological functioning of a native landscape	* Demonstrates the existence or potential for drawing a regional audience
		Serves as a bridging facility, intended to attract and introduce new outdoor recreation users to the Regional Parks System
		Has a unique managing or programming effort
		* Complements the Regional Parks System

(pg. 66)

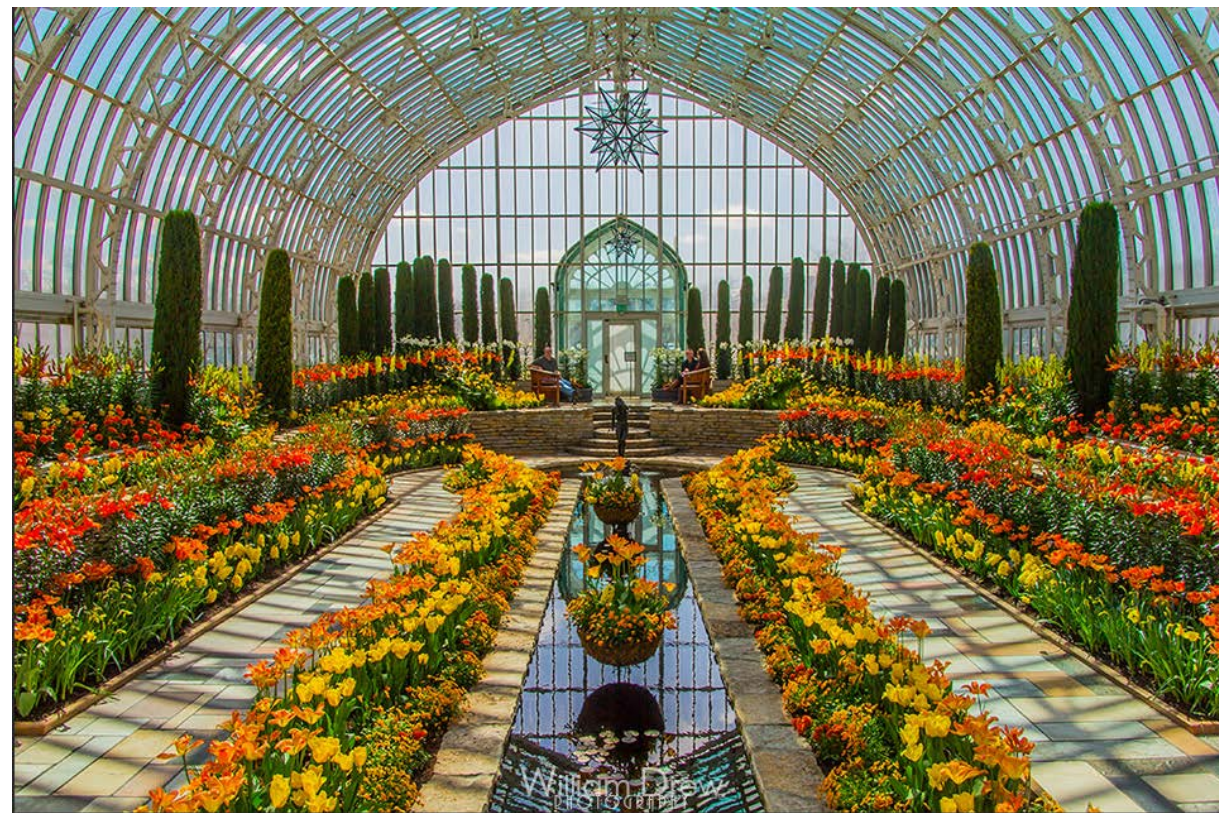
Regional Trails: General * Required	Regional Trails: Destination (also known as Greenways) * Required	Regional Trails: Linking * Required
Draws visitors from across the region	Draws visitors from across the region	Draws visitors from across the region
* Benefits the regional trail system and does not duplicate an existing trail	* Provides high-quality natural resource-based "destination" trail experience	Links two or more units of the Regional Parks System
Connects two or more units of the Regional Parks System	* Highly scenic and/or natural setting	Links to or complements national, state, regional, and/or other local trails
Serves as backbone to local trail network, with regional trail functioning much like regional highway that interconnects with more local arterials and local streets	* Extensively visually separated from road system (more than 50% off-road)	Links to or complements federal, state, regional, or multiple local parks, recreation facilities, and natural resource areas
* Fills a gap in the regional recreation system	No spacing minimums	* Should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. There are times when meandering linking trails will come in closer proximity to one another, but broadly speaking are not parallel
Connects to multiple public interest destinations such as schools, job centers, tourist destinations, historical, cultural, and architectural buildings and sites, and commercial districts	* Provides opportunities to conserve, enhance, or restore natural resources	May be on-road separated treadway
May utilize surface rights of utility corridors such as large sewer lines	May contain natural features in the greenway or adjacent to the trail treadway that provides important ecological services	

Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy *continued*

- 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’”



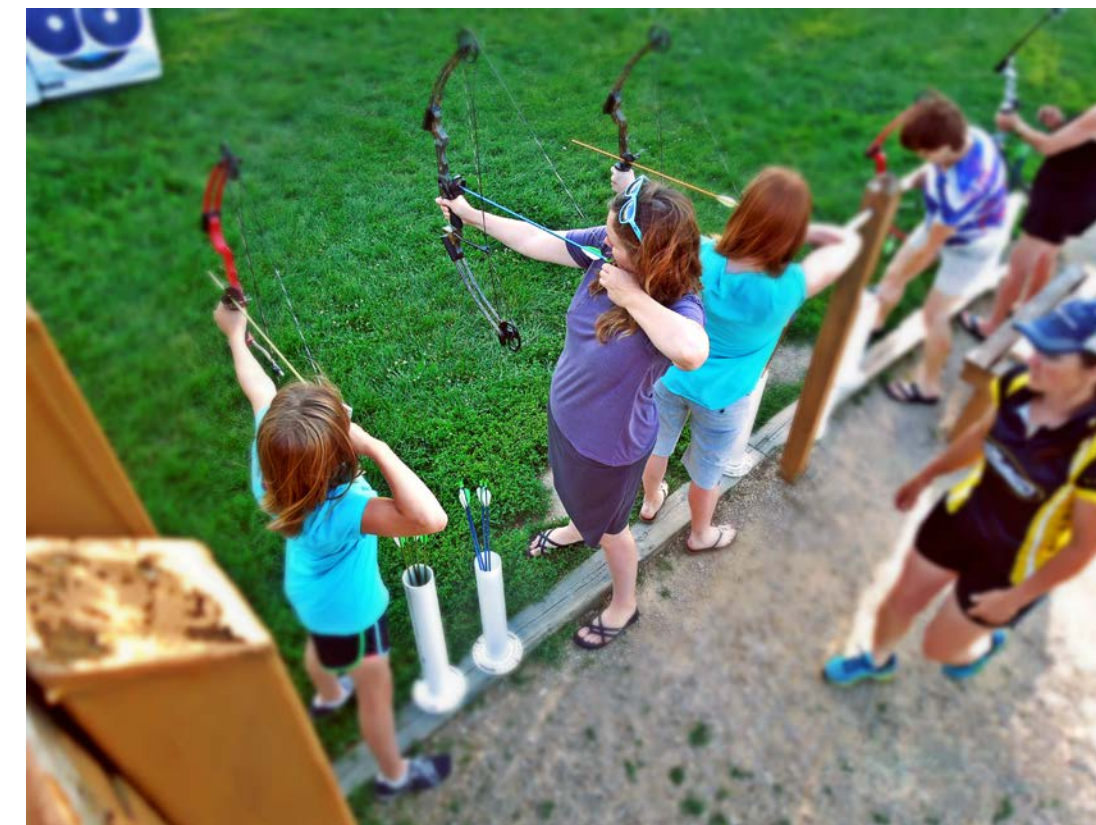
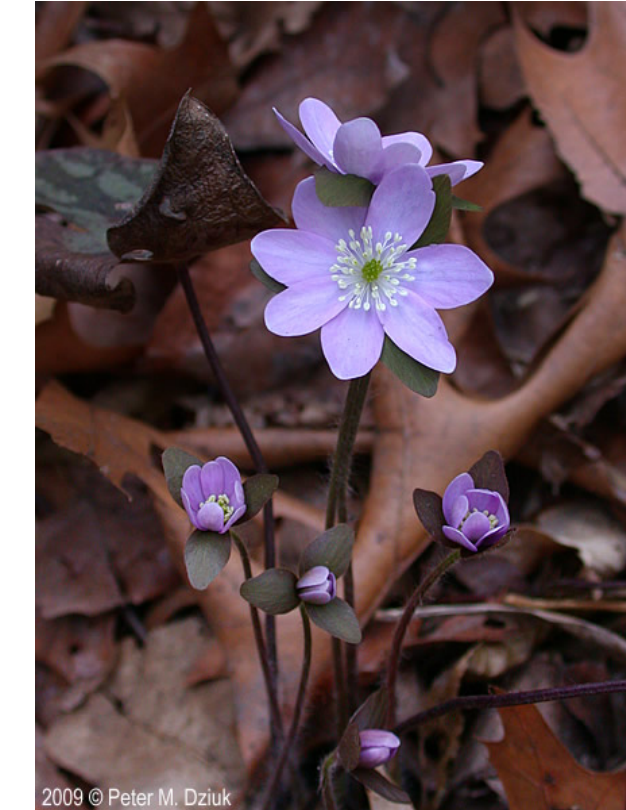
Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy *continued*



- 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



System Additions – Process Considerations

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).

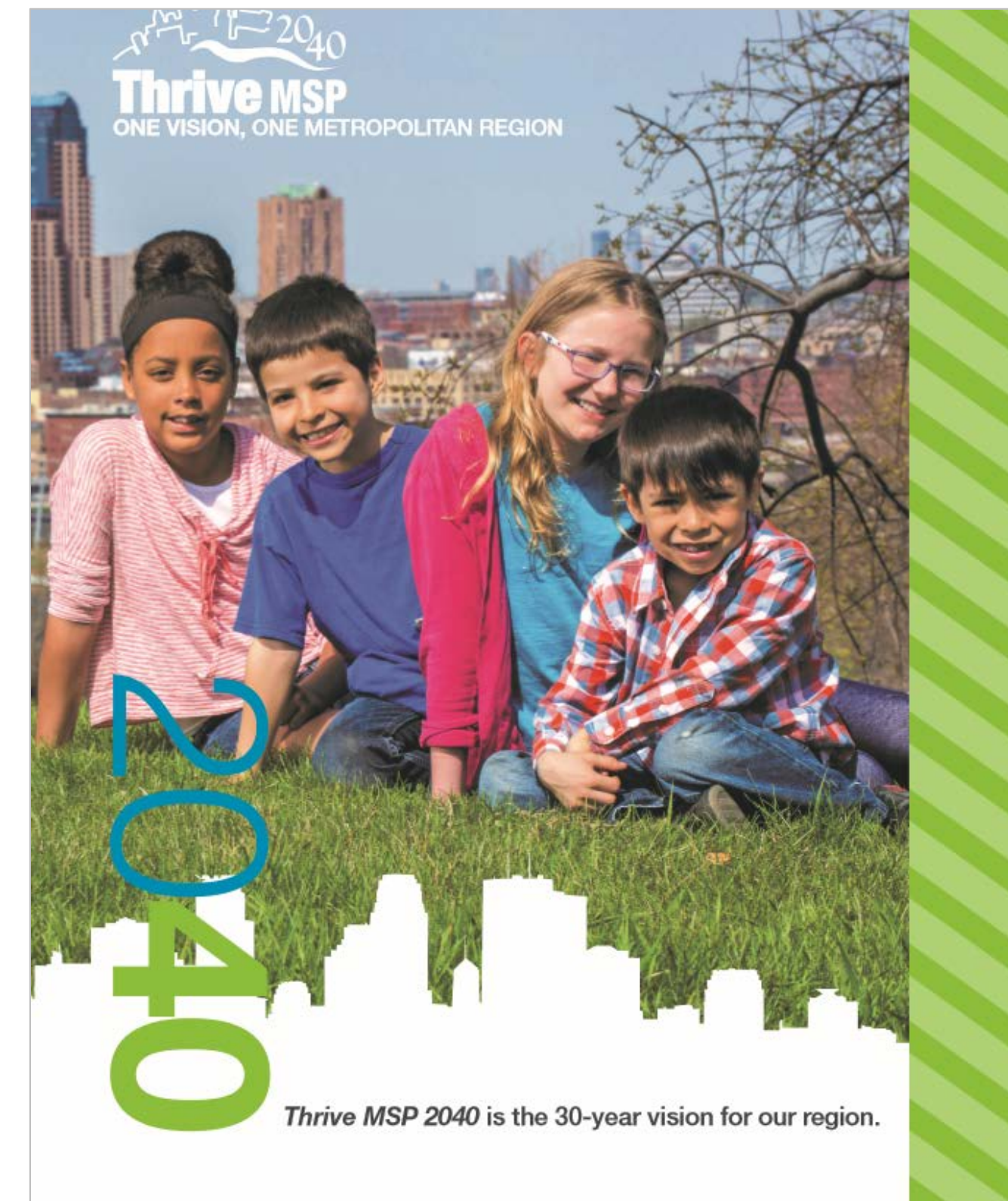


Next up: Bridging Facilities

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*



Bridging Facilities *continued*

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.

Bridging Facilities *continued*

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

Bridging Facilities *continued*

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.

Bridging Facilities *continued*

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.

Bridging Facilities *continued*

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?



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Thank you!