

Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: December 1, 2022

Topic

Equity Nudge: The Transformation of Indian Mounds Regional Park, City of Saint Paul

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> : Chapter 5, Planning
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner (651-602-1029)
Division/Department:	Community Development

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

The purpose of this information item is to present an update of the on-going work at Saint Paul's Indian Mounds Regional Park; no action is proposed at this time.

Indian Mounds Regional Park is centrally located in the Regional Parks System on the eastern side of downtown Saint Paul atop the bluffs of the Mississippi River. This 111-acre park consists of river bluff, steep slopes, rolling hills, woodlands, and grasslands. The implementation of the 2011 long-range plan for the park was paused as planning for a splash pad sparked questions about site impacts and appropriateness. In response to these concerns, Saint Paul developed a Cultural Landscape Study in collaboration with a consultant team, as well as extensive guidance from Tribal Historic Preservation Officers representing tribes who have associations with the sacred site. This work was funded by the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.

The Cultural Landscape Study found that the landscape of Indian Mounds Regional Park is a sacred place of burial with deep significance to the Upper Sioux Community, Lower Sioux Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, and other descendants. It is a cemetery built by ancestors of living people and home to the only known remaining burial mounds within the Minneapolis-Saint Paul urban core.

Ellen Stewart, Landscape Architect with the City of Saint Paul, in partnership with Franky Jackson, Lower Phalen Creek Project, will discuss the on-going work of implementing the Cultural Landscape Study recommendations as listed below.

- Rename the regional park
- Develop a memorandum of understanding with the related tribes to guide decisions, process, and maintenance of the site
- Implement the Phase 1 of the landscape condition and messaging plans
- Develop a plan amendment in the near future to update the long-range plan with the learnings from the cultural landscape study and the City's public engagement work