

# Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting Date:** March 2, 2023

## Topic

Three Rivers Park District's Parks to People Plan, Status Update

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District A, Monica Dillenburg; District C, Cana Yang District 2, Reva Chamblis; District 5, Molly Cummings ; District 6, John Pacheco Jr.
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> : Chapter 4, Siting and Acquisition; Chapter 5, Planning
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Parks

## Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

## Background

Ann Rexine, Principal Planner with Three Rivers Park District, will present information on the agency's Parks to People Plan. Maggie Heurung, Associate Planner, and Jonathan Vlaming, Associate Superintendent, will be present for questions and discussion.

The Parks to People Plan is a long-range planning process that will help Three Rivers define and unify park and recreation services for Hennepin County's first-tier communities. The plan's primary goal is to identify opportunities for new "bridging facilities" - a new kind of special recreation feature for the Regional Parks System.

The Parks to People Plan is a direct result of a Three Rivers Park District's *2040 System Plan* goal to better serve first-tier communities who have the least access to Three Rivers' facilities.

Bridging Facilities are meant to provide progressive, nature-based experiences for new users to become familiar and comfortable with spending time in regional parks. Bridging Facilities, in relation to Three Rivers planning, can be:

- Bridging Parks: Physical, stand-alone sites that are nature-based land holdings.
- Bridging Programs: Mobile recreational offerings, nature-based education, and events.
  - Bridging Projects: Individual, specialized support facilities that assist in the delivery of Bridging Programs.

Bridging initiatives, in most cases, will be based on partnerships with cities, agencies, schools, non-profits, existing recreation providers or community groups. Bridging initiatives are not designed for a one-sized-fits all approach, but instead invite creativity and innovation. They seek to build on community strengths, interests, and establishing partnerships with the communities they serve. Their inclusion within the Regional Parks and Trails System allows them to be eligible for regional and state development and operations resources.

At this Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, Three Rivers will share their Parks to People Plan progress, specifically community engagement preliminary findings, gap analysis methodology, and process for Bridging Facilities recommendations, Plan preparation, and next steps.

Three Rivers Park District anticipates submitting the plan for Council review and approval in fall 2023 or winter 2023-2024. The Council will review the plan against the requirements contained in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, particularly Chapter 4, Strategy 5 (Siting and acquisition / Special recreation features) and Chapter 5, Strategy 1 (Planning / Long range plan requirements).

#### **Questions for the Commission**

- What are your thoughts and questions regarding the draft Parks to People Plan?
- How would you like to be engaged on this topic going forward? Are you interested in participating in future meetings to review bridging initiative proposals, etc.?

