

Parks to People Plan

Bringing parks, trails and nature-based offerings to where people live

March 2, 2023

Met Council Parks & Open Space Commission





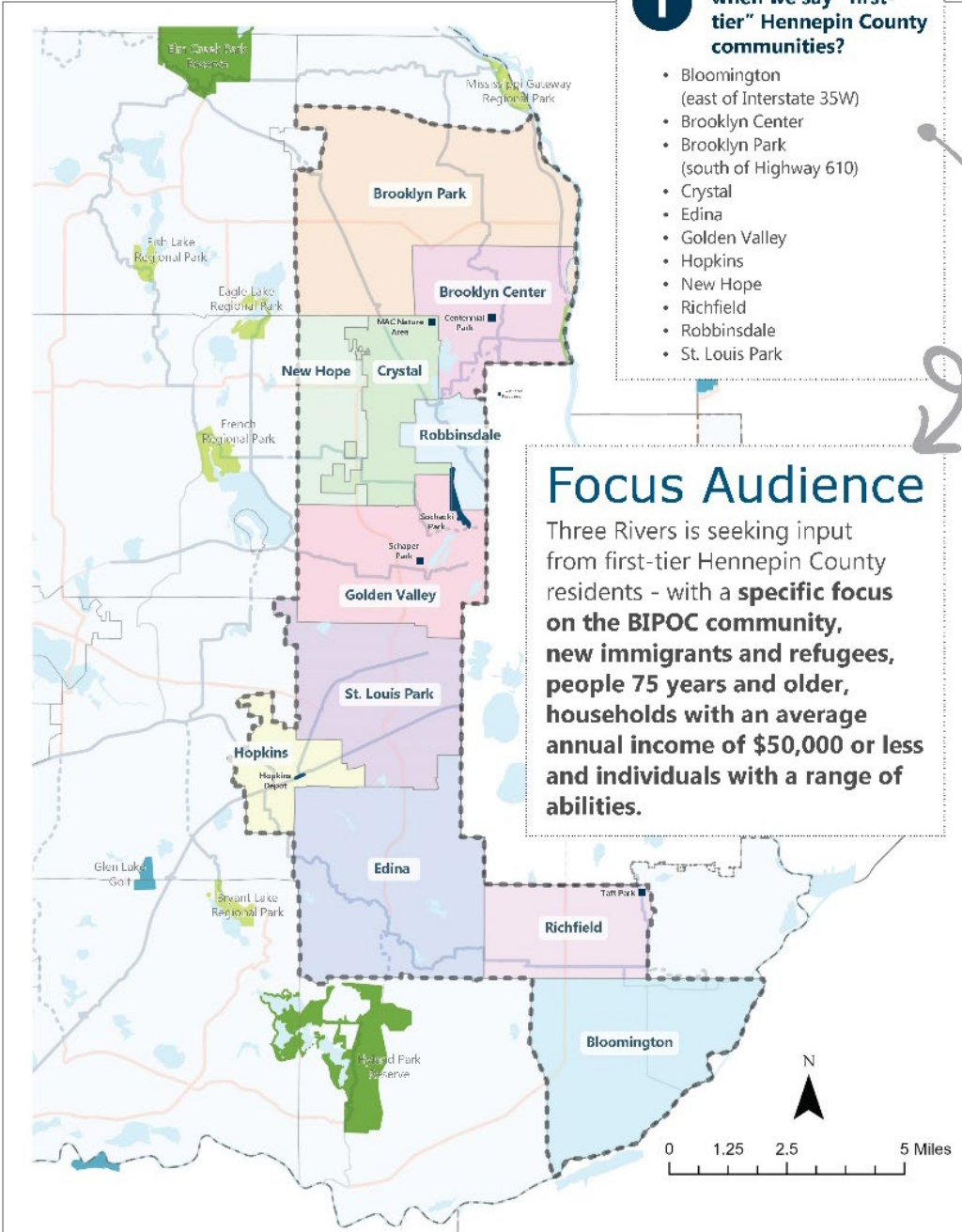
OVERVIEW

PLAN VISION for Three Rivers

- **To connect Hennepin County first-tier suburb community members with nature every day.** One way to do this is to focus on bringing parks, trails and nature-based offerings to where people live.

PRINCIPAL PLAN GOAL

- **Identify opportunities for new “bridging” initiatives** which may take the form of parks and/or programming. These bridging initiatives must be in concert with Three Rivers mission to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural-resources base park system.



AUDIENCE

CITY INVOLVEMENT & ONGOING OUTCOMES

- 11 Hennepin County first-tier communities
 - Focused audience within those 11 communities
- Continually engaging city managers, park directors, and community outreach staff to provide opportunity for input and guidance.

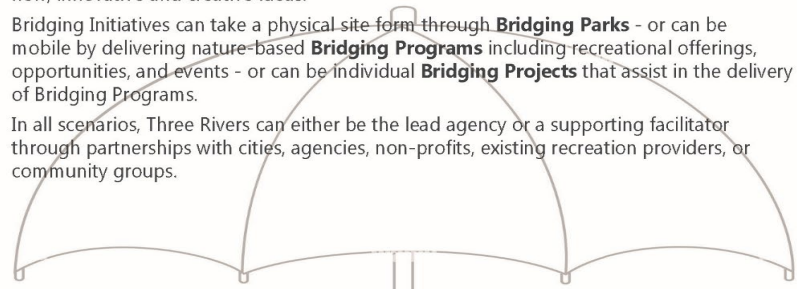
DRAFT

BRIDGING INITIATIVES

Bridging Initiatives are special recreation features that are intended to attract and introduce new outdoor recreation users who are underrepresented to the Regional Park System and help to address inequities that contribute to lower participation rates through prototyping new, innovative and creative ideas.

Bridging Initiatives can take a physical site form through **Bridging Parks** - or can be mobile by delivering nature-based **Bridging Programs** including recreational offerings, opportunities, and events - or can be individual **Bridging Projects** that assist in the delivery of Bridging Programs.

In all scenarios, Three Rivers can either be the lead agency or a supporting facilitator through partnerships with cities, agencies, non-profits, existing recreation providers, or community groups.



Bridging PARKS

Overview

Bridging Parks are physical, stand-alone sites that are nature-based land holdings (including but not limited to; existing local parks, properties with natural resources potential/value etc) or sites nested within an existing regional park, park reserve, special recreation feature or regional trail.

Must provide opportunities for visitors to be introduced to nature, offerings, and the regional park and trail system.

Service Area

Located within a 10 min walk/ bike to areas of concentrated underrepresentation based upon Hennepin County's Population Vulnerability Composite mapping.

Bridging PROGRAMS

Overview

Bridging Programs attract and increase positive use of public spaces through the delivery of introductory or specialized nature-based education programs, recreation offerings (i.e. archery programs, swimming lessons etc) and special events. Mobile bridging programs must be connected to a base regional park or park reserve.

Must provide opportunities for visitors to be introduced to nature, offerings, and the regional park and trail system. Requires reporting to measure success.

Service Area

Offered within a 10 min walk/ bike to areas of concentrated underrepresentation based upon Hennepin County's Population Vulnerability Composite mapping. Preferred to be held at 1st tier locations, or secondarily at off-site locations when transportation is provided (i.e. horseback riding).

Bridging PROJECTS

Overview

Bridging Projects are individual, specialized support facilities that assist in the delivery of Bridging Programs. Examples include: programming teaching shelter, mobile programming RV that also serves as weather shelter, restoration or planting site used for education.

Service Area

Located within a 10 min walk/ bike to areas of concentrated underrepresentation based upon Hennepin County's Population Vulnerability Composite mapping. If Bridging Project is mobile, such as a support RV, the investment must be used exclusively for its intended service area.

DEFINITIONS

COMMON UNDERSTANDING for Three Rivers

- Bridging Initiatives 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 programs.
- Bridging Initiatives, in most cases, will be based on partnerships with cities, agencies, schools, non-profits, existing recreation providers or community groups.

ENGAGEMENT

PRELIMINARY INPUT

Voting Activity (2021)

- 42 events, over 2,000 people engaged and counting
- Interactive, colorful, fun engagement

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Focus Groups (2022)

- 16 focus groups with underrepresented community groups (incl. Black, senior, Latino/x, Asian, teen and low-income communities in partnership with 4 community liaisons and 3 organizations), 185 people engaged and counting.
- Funded through Hennepin County SHIP Grant

VERIFYING FEEDBACK

Piloting Bridging Programs (2023)

- 4 community facilitators will each help pilot 3 ideas from 2021-2022 engagement
- Funded through Hennepin County SHIP Grant



ENGAGEMENT

What we've learned from our first-tier community members from our targeted audiences:

- There is a strong interest in Three Rivers parks and programs.
- Those who are not participating in Three Rivers parks and programs are not participating because:
 1. They often do not have equipment that is expensive/intimidating for beginners,
 2. Three Rivers is not convenient to them, or
 3. They are unaware Three Rivers exists.

Parks to People Plan aims to fill those gaps.



NEXT STEPS

- Summarize Community Engagement themes & how they impact recommendations.
- Assess potential Bridging Initiatives suitability based on Three River's customized 'Equity Prioritization Tool' (based upon Hennepin County Climate Vulnerability Assessment data). Conduct gap analysis when there are unidentified opportunities.
- Recommend identified Bridging Parks and create framework for Bridging Programs and supporting Bridging Projects.
- Develop Bridging Initiatives prioritization, budgets, and strategies to implement.



TIMELINE

1

What People are Saying
Community Engagement

June 2021 - Winter 22/23

- City policy-maker meetings*
- City staff partner meetings

June 2021 - Ongoing

- **Voting activity** at community tabling events "What nature adventures would you like to try?"

June 2022 - Winter 2022/23

- Facilitated **focus groups** with underrepresented community groups
- City staff partner meetings

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What We Know Today
Existing Conditions

Sept - Feb 2023

City Snapshot Summaries

- Demographic profiles
- Community engagement feedback themes specific to individualized 1st Tier community
- General park facilities, programming and other amenities (bridging facilities) needs assessment based on:
 - Community engagement
 - City staff feedback (current projects and/or needs)

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What Analysis Is Needed
Identifying & Addressing Knowledge Gaps

Oct 2022 - Jan 2023

Plan Methodology

- Develop framework to address how will we use the following:
 - City park & rec needs/inputs
 - Community engagement themes
 - Activity-based rec offerings
 - Focus group preferences, barriers to participation, supports
- Develop customized equity matrix to review Bridging Facilities (adjust as necessary throughout Plan) proposals
- Develop methodology to review existing Partnership Parks
- Met Council submission requirements
- Plan document structure

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Where We Want to Go
Identifying Bridging Facilities Opportunities

Feb - Nov 2023

Plan Document Preparation Via Equity Matrix

- Engagement recommendations
- Gap analysis and recommendations
- Bridging Facilities identification: physical location/stand-alone facility, mobile/programming and partnerships identified and prioritized for investment based on equity methodology matrix
- Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for short (2024- 2026), mid (2025-2040) and long-term (2040)+ expenditures
- Plan document draft with revisions (TRPD will take ownership of Plan document at end of Phase 4)

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How We Review & Approve
Collective Agreement on Content

Fall/Winter 2023

1st Tier Review & Approval (11 cities)

- Meetings with each City, including staff, policy makers, commissions and other elected councils to share Plan, talk through proposed changes/additions/edits

Board Review & Release for 30-day Public Comment Period

Metropolitan Council Review & Approval

Board Adoption



QUESTIONS

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