Creating a Healthier Community through Parks: Equity Considerations

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Research Analyst
Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Active Living Hennepin County
March 13, 2017
Why Parks??

- Increase healthy behaviors (Shores & West, 2010; Sugiyama, Francis, Middleton, Owen, & Giles-Corti, 2010)

- Increase leisure time physical activity (LTPA) for children and adults (Floyd, Spengler, Maddock, Gobster, & Sau, 2008)
  - Park proximity & park quality key correlates to physical activity (Floyd et al., 2011; Kaczynksi et al., 2014)
Disparities in LTPA & Parks

LTPA—
• Race and ethnicity
• Educational attainment
• % of lifetime in US
(See Li & Wen, 2013)

Parks—
• Race & ethnicity—availability, features, and quality (Vaughan et al., 2013)
• Children & youth—use patterns (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009)
• Access, quality, use
Park Use

- Disparities—federal, state, regional and local level
  - Examples:
    - Yosemite NP *(NPS, 2014)*
    - MN DNR, State Parks & Trails *(Kelly, 2012)*
    - Met Council, Regional Parks System *(ISG, 2016)*
    - Minneapolis, Bloomington, & Three Rivers Park District *(ISG, 2016)*
Deeper Understanding of Park Use

- Explore non-utilization of regional parks and trails among distinct select communities of color within the region.

Specifically, sought to explore:
- Preferred outdoor recreational activities and desired amenities
- Perceived barriers that prevent use of the Regional Park System
- Issues or concerns about the Regional Parks System
- Recommendations and suggestions to enhance visitation
# Preferred Outdoor Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walk/Hike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Picnic/BBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Use Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Swim/Go to Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spend Time with Friends/Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>View Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rest/Relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Celebrate/Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Preferred Outdoor Activities by Focus Group Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African American Focus Groups</th>
<th>African Immigrant Focus Groups</th>
<th>Asian Immigrant or Asian American Focus Groups</th>
<th>Hispanic/ Latino/ Latina Focus Groups</th>
<th>Diverse Composition Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Picnic/BBQ</td>
<td>Use Playground</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Celebrate/ Party</td>
<td>Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bike</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Picnic/BBQ</td>
<td>Use Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Basketball*</td>
<td>Be with Family</td>
<td>Rest/Relax</td>
<td>Be with Family</td>
<td>Swim/Go to Lake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Park Visitation Barriers: All Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Why it is hard to visit a Regional Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fear/Safety Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of Transportation Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Language Barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Map Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No One to Go With</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cultural or Religious Insensitivity/Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Desire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Suggestions to Enhance Visitation: All Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suggestions to increase visitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increase Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Address Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create Ambassador Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increase and Diversify Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide More Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Add or Enhance Playgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enhance Nature Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Address Dog and Goose Waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Clean Restrooms/Facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Suggestions to Enhance Visitation by Focus Group Type

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<td>1</td>
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<td>Address Safety</td>
<td>Create Ambassador Program</td>
<td>Increase Awareness</td>
<td>Increase Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase/ Diversify Programming</td>
<td>Increase Awareness</td>
<td>Address Safety</td>
<td>Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Clean Restrooms</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Add/Enhance Playgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces</td>
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<td>Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces</td>
<td><em>Address Dog Waste</em></td>
<td>Address Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Impacts

• Policy Development: *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

  – Question: What do we do as an organization that perpetuates inequity?
    • What policies, practices, and procedures produce and maintain inequity?

  – 13 policy arenas to enhance equity
    • Convening and information
    • Funding and investment
    • Planning and design
    – Feedback solicited by participants, where possible
Summary

- Importance of parks and trails in leisure time physical activity
- Inequitable impacts/benefits of parks and trails across various subpopulations
- Use equity lens in planning & development
  1. What are the desired results and outcomes?
  2. Data: What does the data tell us?
  3. How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
  4. Who will benefit from or be burdened? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
  5. What is your plan for implementation?
  6. How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?
Questions?

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(651) 602-1669

Reports: Regional Park Use among Select Communities of Color
2016 Regional Park Visitor Study
Current Three Rivers Regional Trail Network

The Numbers

- Over 150 miles of existing **regional trails**
- Over 150 miles of existing **park trails**
- 59 more miles of regional trail master planned
- Approximately 30 miles of trail studies to take place in the next year
Annual Visitation to Parks and Trails
The Numbers
## Modes of Use

### The Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITATION BY MGMT</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biking</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>3,298,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>672,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>260,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-line Skating</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>86,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>21,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4,339,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Winter Use
### The Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>November (15th-30th)</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>Dec-Feb</th>
<th>Nov-Mar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luce Line RT</td>
<td>11,052</td>
<td>12,590</td>
<td>10,182</td>
<td>17,470</td>
<td>46,095</td>
<td>40,242</td>
<td>97,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cedar Lake LRT RT</td>
<td>9,173</td>
<td>12,701</td>
<td>9,756</td>
<td>12,651</td>
<td>30,011</td>
<td>35,108</td>
<td>74,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Minnetonka LRT RT</td>
<td>7,068</td>
<td>8,960</td>
<td>10,826</td>
<td>9,442</td>
<td>19,438</td>
<td>28,958</td>
<td>55,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush Creek RT</td>
<td>5,589</td>
<td>6,556</td>
<td>5,032</td>
<td>8,054</td>
<td>27,215</td>
<td>19,642</td>
<td>52,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota River Bluffs RT</td>
<td>6,188</td>
<td>7,481</td>
<td>7,537</td>
<td>7,436</td>
<td>18,379</td>
<td>22,454</td>
<td>47,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota Rail RT</td>
<td>4,561</td>
<td>6,706</td>
<td>3,576</td>
<td>4,049</td>
<td>15,281</td>
<td>14,331</td>
<td>34,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,631</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,994</strong></td>
<td><strong>46,909</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,102</strong></td>
<td><strong>156,419</strong></td>
<td><strong>161,005</strong></td>
<td><strong>361,055</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Winter Use
The Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Winter Visits</th>
<th>Summer Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lake Minnetonka LRT RT***</td>
<td>29,228</td>
<td>87,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush Creek RT</td>
<td>19,642</td>
<td>93,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota River Bluffs LRT RT**</td>
<td>22,454</td>
<td>106,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota Rail RT*</td>
<td>14,331</td>
<td>145,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cedar Lake RT</td>
<td>35,108</td>
<td>157,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luce Line RT</td>
<td>40,242</td>
<td>167,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Visits

- Winter (December - February)
- Summer (June - August)
Active Living Focused Development
Interface with Regional Trails
Active Living Focused Development
Interface with Regional Trails
Three Rivers Community Engagement
Connecting to underrepresented park & trail users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Underrepresented visitors (difference from population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>People ages 45 or older (-15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest education attained (those 25+ years)</td>
<td>High school or less (-15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual household income</td>
<td>Incomes under $50,000 (-14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (those 18+ years old)</td>
<td>People of color (-5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of residency</td>
<td>Residents of: Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Eden Prairie, Edina, Minnetonka, Richfield, St. Louis Park (-2 to -4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information taken from Three Rivers Park District 2013 Park Visitor Study.
“Parks on the Go” Outreach
Connecting to underrepresented park & trail users

- 209 events in 2016
- Community Festivals/Events
- City day camps and playgrounds
- Nonprofit and school visits
- Farmers Markets
- National Night Out Events
- Cultural Festivals/Events
“Parks on the Go” Outreach
Playground Visits, Mobile Recreation & Non-Profit Visits
Park Partners

- Internal grant program to build strong relationships with cities, school districts, and non-profits
- Provide outdoor recreation/education experiences for underrepresented populations
Other Partners
Connecting to underrepresented park & trail users

- Programs and events hosted at Three Rivers
- Introduce new audiences to the parks
Contacts:

Danny McCullough, Regional Trail System Manager
Danny.mccullough@threeriversparks.org

Amanda Larson, Community Engagement Coordinator
Amanda.Larson@threeriversparks.org
Planning for Healthy Communities
Active Living Hennepin County
Quarterly Workshop
March 13, 2017
Active/Healthy Living Infrastructure

- Trails & Sidewalks
- Recreation & Arts Programs
- Community Gardens & Farmer’s Markets
- Natural Areas
- Playgrounds
- Sport courts/fields
What and Who: Inter-disciplinary Approach

- Comprehensive Plan
- Alternative Transportation Plan
- Safe Routes to Schools Program
- Parks Master Plan
- Mn River Valley Master Plan
- Community Garden Study

- Planning
- Parks
- Public Works (Engr/Maint)
- Public Health
- Public Safety (Police/Fire)
- Outside Agencies
Comprehensive Plan – Technical Work Groups

- Parks
- Planning
- Public Works
- Public Health
- Community Facilities Element
- Fire
Challenges & Opportunities

Barriers
- Access
- Participation

Aging Facilities
- Equitable investment
- Low impact design

Changing Demographics
- Understanding changing demand
- Accommodating unique needs
Challenges & Opportunities

Sense of Identity & Community
- Create destinations
- Community engagement (events)

Stewardship
- Habitat protection
- Green infrastructure network
- Invasives management

Awareness
- Reaching under-represented audiences
- Leverage technology and social media
Creating Healthier Communities through Parks & Recreation

March 12, 2017
Staying Relevant

what's TRENDING?
Trend: The Wellness Approach

Wellness

Physical

Emotional

Spiritual

Social
More people living in cities

- **Community Gardens**
  - Shared Garden with Brooklyn Park
    - $50/plot
    - 20 x 20 plots
    - Diverse
      - 75% of the gardeners are people of color
      - Many immigrants
        - Kenya, Nigeria, Laos, Tanzania

- **Neighborhood Garden**
  - Raised Beds – Build in-house ($1100)
  - Water line - $1500
  - Lower Income Area
  - Use MN Food Group to provide seeds and plants to get gardeners started
Local is cool

- Butterfly Gardening
- Square Foot Vegetable Gardening
- Fall Yard & Garden Care
- Perennial Garden Basics
- Container Gardening
- Edible Gardening
- Sustainable Lawn Care
Reconnect with Parks/Nature

- Pokemon Go
- Partnerships with Three Rivers:
  - Bird hike
  - Archery
  - Mobile Go Van
- Free fitness in the parks
  - Will move to different parks throughout the summer
  - Use social media to announce locations
We’re not seniors!

- Don’t claim the senior status
- Larger senior populations
- Pickleball
  - Offer 3 days a week
    - 6 courts
    - 20-30 Daily
    - 75 + on a list
- Playgrounds not just for kids
  - Cross-generational
  - Addressing with are PSMP
Access to Fresh Produce

- Community Orchards
  - Fruits of the City
  - Edible Duluth
- Little Free Gardens
  - Fargo Moorhead Area
  - 4’x2’ garden box
  - Grown for anyone who wants or needs it.
- Incredible Edible Todmorden
  - TED Talk
  - Grow fruit, herbs and vegetables around the city.
  - Community herb gardens
What’s the Why?

ADULT TENNIS LEAGUES
Competitive tennis burns more calories than aerobics, inline skating or cycling. Compete against others in this recreational league where fun and fitness meet. You bring your racket and we’ll provide the structure and opportunity. Participants will play in a 7-10 week league where they can stay active and make social connections. Make this life-long sport part of your summer routine. Register by May 26.

YOUTH SOCCER K-5 LEAGUE
Soccer is a perfect combination of individual activity and team strategy in which players hone their skills and find ways to exhibit personal style, while at the same time, working closely as a team to achieve success. Teams will be formed based on registration date and upon coach availability. Games will be played in Crystal, Golden Valley, and Robbinsdale. Register by August 4.
Collaborate

- Find experts in the field to help make things happen.
- Lean on organizations with similar missions.
  - Ideas
  - Funding
- Tap into residents who have a passion.
  - Use to help push your message
Community Engagement

- Use Parks and Recreation to help engage the public
- Use many ways of engagement to market programs and services
- Have built strong positive relationships
- Access to specific groups
  - PSMP
  - Focus groups