

Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: December 04, 2025

Topic

Parks Research Update: Park Equity Tool Refresh

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: *2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

Staff Prepared/Presented: Ismael Ramirez, Principal Researcher (651-602-1831) and Magdelyn Herzig, Research Intern.

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

The ten regional park implementing agencies are responsible for conducting long-range planning for each of their regional parks and trails. Part of the long-range planning requirements must include an equity analysis and engagement summary. The Park Equity Tool is one of the Council's primary resources to support that work. The tool provides census and Council data showing who lives near each park and trail and how those demographics are expected to change. This information helps agencies understand nearby communities to ensure their equity analyses help inform their outreach strategies, programming, and research. While it offers valuable context, the tool is meant as a starting point and does not replace engagement with prioritized stakeholders or on-the-ground knowledge of agency staff. Its development aligns with Imagine 2050 goals to strengthen the equitable use of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Rationale

The Council recently completed a major update and refresh of the Park Equity Tool, giving agencies a more reliable, accessible and up-to-date source of demographic information. The tool helps align planning across the region and complements the local expertise of the park implementing agency staff.

Imagine Lens Analysis

The updated tool supports Imagine 2050 by making demographic patterns clearer and easier to use, helping agencies identify underserved communities and ground their planning in equity. It strengthens collaboration across the regional system and supports more equitable use of parks and trails.