

Minutes

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: July 15, 2024

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

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| ☒ Chair, Robert Lilligren, D7 | ☐ Peter Lindstrom, District 10 | ☒ Tenzin Dolkar, District 15 |
| ☒ Vice Chair, Susan Vento, D11 | ☐ Chai Lee, District 13 | ☒ Wendy Wulff, District 16 |
| ☒ Judy Johnson, District 1 | ☒ Toni Carter, District 14 | |
| ☒ Reva Chamblis, District 2 | | |

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Chair Lilligren called the regular meeting of the Community Development Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Wulff, to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2024, regular meeting of the Community Development Committee. **Motion carried.**

Information

1. Parks Research Update: Regional Parks System 2023 Annual Use Estimate & 2025 Visitor Study (Darcie Vandegrift 651-602-1669; Ismael Ramirez 651-602-1831)

Staff provided a more detailed explanation of the methodology and findings for the 2023 use estimate, staffing changes in parks research, and an update on the 2025 Visitor Study.

The Metropolitan Council has prepared annual use estimates for the Regional Park System since 1995 in partnership with the ten regional park implementing agencies.

The Council bases its estimates of parks and trails visits on counts of visitors entering regional parks and trails from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The count is a collaboration between all ten regional parks implementing agencies, whose staff conduct the summer counts, and Council staff who complete the analysis.

An estimated 69.4 million visits were made to the Regional Parks system in 2023 representing a 0.6% increase from 2022. The increase was smaller than in previous years, partly due to typical variations in research methodology and inclement smoky and hot weather in 2023. 71% of the visits were to regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features. The rest were to regional trails. The most visited regional park was Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, with 7.5 million visits. Other top-visited parks include Mississippi Gorge Regional Park with 3.8 million visits and both Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park and Como Regional Park, Zoo & Conservatory hosting 3.5 million visits. The most visited trail was the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail with

about 2.9 million visits, followed by Lake Links Regional Trail with 1.1 million visits and Cedar Lake Regional Trail hosting 947,000 visits.

The Council uses a four-year rolling average of counts to ensure a representative sample of each park and each trail. Off-season visits (winter, spring, and fall) are based on a survey asking visitors how often they visit during off-season months. The most recent survey was completed in 2021.

The next Visitor Study will be completed in 2025. The 2025 Parks and Trails Visitor Study aims to collect data from visitors to all Regional Parks and Trails System units during the summer of 2025 to inform planning policy, assess equitable usage, and update state funding formulas. As of the beginning of July, a scope of work will be submitted to recruit a consultant who will provide the data for the study. We expect that the consultant will be hired by January 2025, a pilot survey will be completed by April 30, 2025, and the final survey will be administered between May 26 and September 1, 2025, with a final report due by October 8, 2025.

2. Imagine 2050 Community Development Policy Update (LisaBeth Barajas 651-602-1895; Angela R. Torres 651-602-1566; Todd Graham 651-602-1322; Sarah Berke 651-602-1198; Emmett Mullin 651-602-1360)

Staff presented information on the Imagine 2050 Community Development Policy Update. Staff highlighted recommended density approaches, density policy decisions, themes of recommended commitments, preliminary and proposed local forecasts, 2050 Housing Policy plan objectives, Regional Parks and Trails policy stakeholders/partners' feedback, significant changes to the Parks policy, and next steps.

Council Members and staff discussed the updates for these policy/program changes.

3. Livable Communities Act Program Update (Sarah Berke 651-602-1198)

This information item provided an update on the timeline and proposed outcomes for this project, and progress to date.

In March 2024, Committee members discussed a planned approach to considering possible program changes for Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant programs in 2025. As part of this approach, the Committee discussed and approved goals for the process, and a plan to hire a consultant. The consultant would provide program evaluation, facilitation, and planning services, ultimately delivering a report evaluating the impact of the LCA program and opportunities for improvement to better meet the two identified goals:

Ensuring the **alignment** of program design with the regional goals identified for the forthcoming Imagine 2050 regional development guide: Our region is equitable and inclusive

Our communities are healthy and safe

Our region is dynamic and resilient

We lead on addressing climate change

We protect and restore natural systems

Encouraging broad **participation** from communities in the region and reducing barriers to entry to the grant programs

Council Members and staff discussed the updates for these program changes and next steps.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Community Development Committee meeting of July 15, 2024.

Council Contact:

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