

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Parks for All 2021 Comprehensive Plan
Virtual Park Summit—Lunch time Office Hours

6/15/2020

12:00-1:00pm

MPRB Staff Present: Carrie Christensen, Madeline Hudek, Alyssa Gilmore, Adam Arvidson

CAC Present: Lolita Davis Carter

Public Present: There were approximately 2-3 members of the public.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Adam Arvidson opened up the meeting, he gave a quick overview of the presentation about the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, where we are at in the project timeline, the goals of the Virtual Park Summit, and what the next steps will be moving forward. He reminded folks that the presentation would be available on the Project Page [here](#).

OFFICE HOURS DISCUSSION

MPRB Staff passed the mic to a person present from the public.

(Public; *in chat*) Provided several suggestions for strengthening the language for policies (specifically those related to wildlife, habitat, and migratory birds).

Staff Note: These specific comments were recorded on the online comment board [here](#); and will be compiled with the rest of the feedback following the Virtual Park Summit.

(Public) Priority is Parks for All Living Beings. Wants to know what it would take for staff to prioritize the protection of other sentient beings we share the land with.

(Project Staff) Asked for clarification, meaning prioritization above other policies?

(Public) No, within the plan itself. Recognizes the plan will always have to maintain a balance between human demand and ecological health. Feels disappointed because it doesn't seem like there has been an expansion within the documents on how animals, wildlife and birds play a role in the park system. Feels like a key gap in the ideas is the recognition of the Mississippi Flyway. Sees some mention of ideas in the Ecological Systems Plan. Would like to see more priority given to protecting migratory birds; recognizing that we are fortunate to live in an area with global significance for wildlife. Would like to see language around protecting migratory birds and educating the public.

(Project Staff) Thanked them for their feedback, recognized that they are directly influencing the Comprehensive Plan by showing up. There are reviews being done on the Ecological System Plan now, expect there will be changes to the text of that plan, as well as the policy ideas presented at the Park Summit when they show up in the Draft Comp. Plan. The policy ideas were generated out of workgroups and community meetings. The feedback that staff is hoping for is exactly what was just provided; staff is looking for gaps, and areas where ideas can be strengthened. Recognize that a lot of feedback from the community is consistent with what was just shared. Thanked them for providing feedback in the chatbox that has specific wording. Outlined the next steps of the process, which is to streamline all the feedback and make

revisions to the policy ideas when drafting the Comprehensive Plan. Thinking also about high level goals and strategies that are emerging from the feedback. There hasn't been substantial change over the past month or so because staff isn't producing new content yet. Project is at an interim step where staff are utilizing public feedback to vet the ideas that have come up.

(Project Staff) Directed attention to a few ideas that speak specifically to migratory birds, habitat, and the Mississippi Flyway specifically (Ex. C48). Language around these ideas can be strengthened in the next iteration.

(Public-- who has been a part of the Climate Resilience Workgroup) Asked for clarity on how the Ecological System Plan and Comprehensive Plan relate, and how they are different from one other, how much overlap is there between the two plans?

(Project Staff) Provided background on the Ecological System Plan, a project that was initiated 6 years ago. The Ecological System Plan is meant to be a finer grained document, that serves to direct staff on a small-scale level. The Comprehensive Plan sits higher in the power map (it has broader, more overarching policies). The Ecological System Plan outlines directly what to do and is implemented and tracked on a more regular basis. The Comprehensive Plan gives guidance to the creation of documents like the Ecological System Plan. It just so happened that the two projects ended up on similar timelines; but they are separate (each has had its own Community Engagement, Process, CAC, etc.). After the Park Summit project staff will go through the feedback and policy ideas and see what is appropriate in scale for the Comprehensive Plan and what should live in other plans like the Ecological System Plan. There are a lot of policy ideas that are presented that are already included in the Ecological System Plan.

(Public) Sees the overlap. It seems that some parts of the Comprehensive Plan are very broad without concrete goals or timescales, so it serves more as a policy DIRECTION document, rather than it being strict. Good assessment?

(Project Staff) Yes!

MPRB interjected to ask new members of the public in attendance if they would like to see the overview presentation of the Comprehensive Plan, or if they had any comments to add. Reminded everyone that Project Staff was present to take comments, and questions and generally help people as best as possible to navigate the Virtual Park Summit.

(Public) Was involved in the previous Comprehensive Plan and has been engaged with this process. Interested in staying and listening to the conversation this afternoon. Interested in the Ecological System Plan and how it integrates with the Comprehensive Plan.

(Project Staff) Went over the timelines of both the Comprehensive Plan and the Ecological System Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Timeline/Process Overview: Began thinking about the 2021 Comprehensive Plan in December of 2018. Made the critical decision to have the Comprehensive Plan be an internally driven and managed project, going to be staffs labor of love, didn't hire consultants. During the summer and winter of 2019, staff did hundreds of park engagement events out in the field, talking to people, asking them for their dreams for the park system. In the early months of 2020, a variety of workgroups, CAC, and topical focus groups were convened and met to develop all the policy ideas that are out right now for the Park

Summit. The Park Summit is meant to allow time for everyone who has been involved in the project and who wants to be involved in the project to review those policy ideas. Project Staff are asking for help identifying the gaps/areas to strengthen, and the overlaps/connections. Once the Park Summit ends, Project Staff will start to develop a draft plan that includes the feedback from the Park Summit. This draft plan will be more digestible and will go out for public comment with more specific engagement at that time. Project staff will look at where the draft needs to be positioned in terms of its scale, and it will be revised again based on the public comment. Then it will move forward with adoption by the end of the year so that there can be a new plan in place by 2021.

(Project Staff) Highlighted the importance of the Comprehensive Plan now, when confronting a pandemic, heightened questions around equity and public safety, etc. It's important to have a Comprehensive Plan in place that can handle these kinds of situations and help us respond in the future. Part of the process for the Comp. Plan was identifying sets of futures that the MPRB would likely have to respond to. Now thinking about adding another future related to public health. Multiple crises are coming together at once, might not abet completely. Pandemics are more frequent, epidemic scale issues in full force (asthma, diabetes—affect populations inequitably). Assessing what is parks role in the very things we are experiencing today, so MPRB knows where to stand/what direction to take when they happen again.

Ecological System Plan Timeline: Ecological System Plan is in its final stages. It's currently moving toward adoption, meant to be going forward before the Comprehensive Plan; by doing so we then understand what is already covered by the Ecological System Plan and what gaps the Comprehensive Plan can fill in (where is overarching policy reinforcement needed).

(Public; *in chat*) Disagreed with several policies developed by the Community Advisory Committee that they do not believe should be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

(Public) Provided context for why they disagreed with policy ideas. Doesn't believe that affordable housing is in the mission of the MPRB. Believes that seeing the idea that the MPRB would evaluate land holdings and transition unusable parcels to affordable housing would damage the park system. Believes that in the case a parcel isn't usable for park use it should only be considered to enhance ecological function and habitat. Shouldn't be considered housing except for wildlife. Believes that urban development concerns are out of range of the park board. Goals of Minneapolis 2040 need to be separate policy areas than the MPRB. Only support housing within the other levels of government. Believes MPRB doesn't have enough staffing or credentials to consider how housing interacts with open space.

(Project Staff) This is a good example of a DIFFERENCE that we are asking folks to identify. Looking for points of contradiction between the workgroup's ideas, things that aren't possible for the MPRB to accomplish on its own. Wanted to honor the diverse perspectives and expertise provided by the Workgroups, CAC, YDT, etc. and present all the ideas without too much presorting. Project staff will look further into what is feasible, exploring potential, engaging with Commissioners.

(Project Staff) Know that there are policy ideas right now that cannot live in the same plan because they are in conflict with one another. Made the conscious decision to honor all the ideas coming forward so they can be involved in community discussions like this one. Appreciate

hearing this perspective but need to acknowledge that there are people who believe this needs to be within the lane of the Park Board. Needs to be a continued conversation that's had.

(Public) Thanked staff for allowing her to speak up because she knows staff is listening to her voice and her opinion for what she expects the MPRB to do. Appreciate the opportunity to highlight the differences in thought.

MPRB staff asked the Climate Resilience Workgroup Member if they had any specific thoughts on any of the Climate Resilience Policy Ideas.

(Public) Theme within the ideas: difficult for her to look at the ideas and envision how it gets actualized and what steps are needed to do that. It seems like there still needs to be a lot of work done; have to develop the metrics for policy ideas, who's accountable, what the counter measures are if the metrics can't be reached (Ex. B34). Thinking about how to make policy ideas more specific, but not sure if the Comprehensive Plan is the place to add specificity (significance, metrics, processes).

(Project Staff) What may end up happening is that based on the recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan there would be a procedural tool developed following the plan. Any additional thoughts on criteria needed to add to the policy ideas?

(Public) A group of people could come up with measures. Make the measures explicit (add timesteps and goals). Might still not be able to enforce funding and workgroup formation around some of these policies. How will these metrics live on? How can accountability be built into policy ideas?

(Project Staff) Following the Park Summit, project staff is going to look at the connections across the topics (big themes, overlap, patterns) and use those connections to develop goals for the Comprehensive Plan. The policy ideas can be used as strategies to accomplish these goal areas. There will also be indicators and metrics attached to each of the goals. Still have feedback from the workgroups when they were developing policy ideas that has notes about how to measure and what success may look like. Will be incorporating this in the next steps during plan drafting.

(Public) Know that the public would be excited about participating in developing these metrics, giving input on what success looks like to their communities. Could have students work on these metrics; teach them how you take a vision and develop smart goals that are implementable.

(Project Staff) Affirming that yes, want to ensure that the process is accountable in a way that is publicly engaged, allow opportunities to weigh in along every step.

(Public) Another theme that was identified was that some of the policy ideas need to be strengthened so that the maximum benefits can be actualized. For example, B11 is about reducing waste, instead of saying reduce waste instead make goal ZERO waste. Other policies related to fleet and emissions and reductions where possible. Should instead say zero missions. Design language so it would be subject to individual passion; don't want to leave any room for "now is not the time". Set strict pathways forward.

(Public) Is there a deadline to engage with the project?

(Project Staff) The Park Summit is closing at 6pm on June 19th. However, the Park Summit is not the last opportunity to effect changes. The Virtual Park Summit is the digital replacement for what was meant to be a day long even with everyone involved. This is a finite period where

Project Staff are taking a look at what has been generated so far and trying to make sense of it. Folks will be able to review the draft plan and respond at that time as well.

(Project Staff) The Workgroups and CAC will also meet again formally when the draft plan is ready for review. Will have a meeting centered around feedback on the draft plan. Will have more events and ways to engage, beyond just a survey online, there will still be group engagement with the release of the draft.

(Public) What is the best way to engage? Should the specific policy alphanumeric be noted? Email project staff? Comment on specific sections?

(Project Staff) Went over the different ways to provide feedback—online survey, and online comment board. Showed the actual online survey, going over the formatting instructions included with every question (bulleted list; alphanumeric) can also write narrative. Visually making meaning of feedback via Miro. Engage in whatever way is easiest for you, it is staff's job to make sense of whatever that looks like.

Staff Note: Survey link, comment board link, and project staff emails were provided in chat.

MPRB Staff acknowledged that a member of the CAC was present, asked if she had anything she wanted to share at this time.

(CAC Member) Here to listen for the time being, check in with where the conversation is at

(Public) Encourage a paradigm shift toward the plan being “Parks for All Living Beings”. Need to get rid of the notion that there is false choice between supporting ecological function and supporting recreation. Seeing now with COVID that people are coming outside just to be outside. Believe that the MPRB needs to recognize that by building amenities, diminishing the opportunity for other kinds of recreation (environmental recreation). Hope nature isn't diminished to fulfill current interests.

(Project Staff) Honor everything that she said; wants to provide the counterpoint that for many populations' parks aren't currently relevant because they don't have access or parks don't have the kinds of facilities that are relevant to them. It is the duty of the MPRB to ensure that more people get the benefits of parks. The end goal is getting people to parks, have to be relevant in order to provide people with the mental and physical health benefits parks provide. Hard puzzle to solve because people love the natural systems and that's what provides value for them as well.

(Public; *in chat*) To the point of the person speaking, she provided a suggestion she had surrounding language improvements that provide strict direction around the protection of natural areas in relation to recreation.

THANKS AND NEXT STEPS

Project Staff thanked everyone for joining and outlined the schedule for the rest of the Virtual Park Summit. Project Staff also went over the next steps for the Comprehensive Plan following the Virtual Park Summit. Appreciate everyone showing up and their continued investment and advocacy around the park system.