Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

Resolution 2021-309

Resolution Approving Parks for All, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2021 Comprehensive Plan

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) is the steward of the Minneapolis park system;

Whereas, MPRB was created by the Minnesota Legislature in April 1883 and has the authority to manage and operate park facilities;

Whereas, MPRB has a Comprehensive Plan that sets the policy direction for the agency, and this plan had a timeline of 2007-2020 and is in need of updating;

Whereas, MPRB has completed a comprehensive planning process for the system that includes input from the community, MPRB staff, Commissioners, and agency partners;

Whereas, *Parks for All,* the new MPRB Comprehensive Plan, along with the organization's commitment to implementing it, ensures the Minneapolis park and recreation system will continue to be essential to the quality of life in Minneapolis and play a vital part in supporting the health and well-being of Minneapolis residents and visitors;

Whereas, *Parks for All* sets MPRB's agency policy direction and provides guidance in developing policy, establishing or changing programs and services, setting the annual MPRB budget, and creating park improvements over the next decade and a half;

Whereas, The MPRB project team has refined the draft comprehensive plan document based on comments received from MPRB staff, Commissioners, and from the general public during a comment period that concluded on July 18, 2021;

Whereas, A public hearing has been scheduled to allow additional public comment on the final Plan; and

Whereas, This resolution is supported by the MPRB 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan, which envisions "Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs."

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners approves *Parks for All,* the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2021 Comprehensive Plan; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

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TO: Planning Committee

FROM: Michael Schroeder,

DATE: October 20, 2021

SUBJECT: Resolution Approving Parks for All, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2021 Comprehensive Plan

BACKGROUND

This Board action considers approval of "*Parks for All,"* the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Note that the final *Parks for All* document is not attached to this Board action due to its size. Rather, please note that it will be posted on the project webpage in concert with the public release of the Board agenda.
https://www.minneapolisparks.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/current_projects/mprb-comprehensive-plan/

Parks for All is the MPRB's agency policy direction based on shared values with the community, agency staff, and elected officials. It will provide guidance in developing policy, establishing or changing programs and services, setting the annual MPRB budget, and creating park improvements over the next decade and a half. The Plan builds on what works now while identifying gaps in programs, services, and strategies that need to be filled. *Parks for All* focuses on the park system as a whole and does not make specific recommendations for individual parks. The Plan builds from master plans, other policies and activity plans, strategic directions, and community input gained during the last three years of engagement across the entire system, all of which incorporate more specific recommendations. The extensive engagement process was intended to develop a path toward a future that reflects the values, expectations and dreams of the communities served by the Minneapolis park system and MPRB Commissioners and staff.

Comprehensive Plan Overview
The *Parks for All* document is organized into four sections:

1. What is *Parks for All*?
2. Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Strategies
3. Implementation and Measurement
4. Appendix

Process for Tabulating Public Comment
A Draft *Parks for All* document was presented to the Board of Commissioners on November 4,

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2020, during an approximately nine-month open public comment period that ended on July 18, 2021. Since that date, staff has been tabulating public comments and considering potential plan changes as a result of the nearly three-year community-engaged planning process.

During the public comment period, the Draft *Parks for All* document was made available to the public online with extensive outreach, with limited in-person or physical copy distribution due to COVID-19 pandemic guidelines and restrictions. Respondents were able to comment via the online survey, community virtual open houses, a student engagement portal, and by contacting the project manager directly by e-mail, phone, or regular mail.

This section of the Background explains how the public comments were tabulated and analyzed. Tabulation and analysis followed five basic steps:

1. MPRB staff read the words of each **commenter**, no matter how it was received (a "commenter" is an individual who chose to respond to the Draft Comprehensive Plan).

2. Commenters' sentiments were put into a spreadsheet, with each separate **comment** having its own line (a "comment" is a single sentiment on a single aspect of the Plan). A particular commenter may have more than one comment. For instance, a commenter may, in a single response, raise concerns about one item, support another, and oppose a third. These three comments would be tabulated separately.

3. MPRB staff grouped comments into **themes**. Each theme has a particular stance on a particular aspect of the Plan.

4. Each theme was assigned one of 4 **categories**, which defines its impact on the Master Plan. The categories are:
    a. **Low Impact**: Draft plan can be modified by staff to provide additional background or clarification.
    b. **Moderate Impact**: Modifying the draft plan requires broader internal conversation and research due to lack of community consensus, potential changes to MPRB operations not represented in the draft plan, and topics that are politically sensitive.
    c. **High Impact***:* Addressing the theme would fundamentally change the underpinnings of the plan or the existence of the Park Board itself, likely requiring additional community engagement.
    d. **No Impact:** No modifications to the draft plan are required because themes either support an aspect of the plan, refer to implementation or future projects, or are outside the scope of the plan.

5. MPRB staff generated a response to each comment theme. These are tabulated in one of the attached matrices, which are described in the following section.

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Public Comment Summary

Public comments are included with this action in several attachments:

- The **Public Comment Themes and Responses** (*Attachment A*) is a list of all 417 public comment themes, their impact level, and a brief description of how the theme has been addressed in the final Comprehensive Plan.
- The **Public Comment Log** (*Attachment B*) is a list of all 1453 public comments—as summarized by MPRB staff—with commenter names, themes, methods of transmittal, and dates of transmittal. This file is sorted by theme, then by comment method, then by commenter. The summaries were generated by MPRB staff.
- The **Comment Files** (*Attachments C to I)* are compilations of the full unedited text of public comments, separated by the method of transmittal.

To examine a particular theme and the exact comments that resulted, use the following process.

1. In the Public Comment Themes and Responses (*Attachment A*), find theme in the "Theme" column.
2. In the Public Comment Log (*Attachment B*), find the theme in the "Theme" column. In the "Comment Summary" column are more specific descriptions of the actual comments.
3. Note the commenter and method associated with comment.
4. Open the Comment File (*Attachment C to I*) and go to responses to read the unedited texts.

It is important to note here that MPRB staff did not consider public comments to be votes on aspects of the Plan. Comments were grouped into themes and each theme was considered—even if the theme had just one single comment.

Draft Plan Modification

The final *Parks for All* Comprehensive Plan for Board consideration has taken extensive comment into account. It has not, however, changed significantly from its draft form. Many of the comments received were supportive of the Plan or aspects of the Plan (105 themes, or 25% of all themes, supported some aspect of the Plan). Substantive changes to the Plan (anything beyond grammatical or minor clarifying remarks) are tabulated in **Attachment A:** Public Comment Themes and Responses (in the "Response" column).

The following items that were Moderate Impact Themes are noted below, along with how they were resolved in the final draft of the Plan. These themes may inspire additional discussion:

- *Focusing the scope of the Plan:* Staff reduced the number of strategies overall by eliminating redundancies and modified strategies that are overly prescriptive or operational in nature;

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- *Concern about accountability, implementation, and capacity after adoption:* Additional information in Chapter 3 was added on implementation, tracking, and measurement. Strategies were screened for being actionable and balanced with some that are aspirational to support the work of the agency now and to encourage strategic growth;
- *Concern around park land disposition:* The current comprehensive plan has land acquisition and disposition guidance, and *Parks for All* also needs to provide guidance. The initial draft included strategies about land acquisition and disposition, but with the Addendum that was issued in April 2021, the nature and context of the guidance shifted from a Strategy to a Guideline in Chapter 3. The Guidelines are not priorities but provide necessary direction if and when land acquisition or disposition occurs.
- *Suggestion to prioritize natural areas over recreational access:* In several instances there was community feedback that called for a prioritization of nature and wildlife in the park system over other functions and roles of the parks, including human recreation and access. There were several strategies that were strengthened to include more language on climate change, invasive species management, natural areas, and environmental health, based on that feedback. However, the first two years of engagement for the comprehensive plan called for a balance of nature and recreation, and the plan continues to acknowledge that MPRB should operate on a continuum, not prioritize one over another.
- *Concern about updated mission:* The mission statement was updated to include language that strengthens MPRB's commitment to equity and the ecological systems of the region. There were minor modifications made to the final proposed mission to clarify the core function of MPRB.
- *Suggestion to prioritize maintenance of current assets over creating new parks:* There was a strong call throughout the planning process and during the public comment period for MPRB to maintain the current system with care rather than focusing on expansion or building new amenities. There are numerous goals and strategies that intend to support this sentiment. However, in key areas it is important to acquire and develop new parks, as guided by master planning efforts to fill park gaps and ensure equitable access to park land.
- *Concern for entrepreneurial approach to services:* The role of partnership, sponsorship, and entrepreneurial approaches in the parks are largely seen as an important part of filling service and facility gaps in the future. However, these approaches need to include explicit commitments to equity, transparency, and mission focus, which the updated Plan names explicitly.
- *Support for equity with clearer definitions and actionable strategies and language:* Equity is not only named as a core value and goal in Parks for All, but it is integrated into the current context and numerous strategies throughout the plan. The final Plan strives for actionability and specificity in terms of who should be the focus of an equitable systems approach and how that work will be accomplished, without being overly prescriptive.

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In order to address those themes that would **Moderate Impact** on the Plan, MPRB staff, in consultation with leadership across the agency, have made modifications based on internal review and research on best practices in park and recreation. However, the MPRB Commissioners may alter the Plan if they so choose.

RECOMMENDATION

MPRB staff recommends approval of *Parks for All,* the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

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This action supports the 2007-2020 MPRB Comprehensive Plan through Vision 3:

Vision Theme 3: Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs

Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.

HISTORY:

09/29/21 Planning Committee DEFEATED

Motion to Table Resolution 2021-309 Failed on a Roll Call Vote.

09/29/21 Planning Committee POSTPONED

Motion to Postpone Resolution to October 20, 2021, Approved on a Roll Call Vote.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A-Public Comment Themes and Responses (PDF)
- Attachment B-Public Comment Log (PDF)
- Attachment C-Online Survey Responses (PDF)
- Attachment D-12.1.2020 CAC Meeting 5 Notes (PDF)
- Attachment E- Public Comment Period Community Listening Session Feedback (PDF)
- Attachment F - Email Comments (PDF)
- Attachment G- Letter Responses (PDF)
- Attachment H-Board Meeting Public Comment (PDF)
- Attachment I-Student Surveys (PDF)
- Oct 20 Commissioner Proposed Amendments (PDF)

Prepared By: Carrie Christensen, Senior Planner, Strategic Planning
Review:
Cindy Anderson Completed 09/20/2021 11:18 AM
Adam Arvidson Completed 09/20/2021 12:37 PM
Michael Schroeder Completed 09/20/2021 1:21 PM
Jennifer Ringold Completed 09/20/2021 2:44 PM
Al Bangoura Completed 09/21/2021 2:23 PM
Planning Committee Completed 09/29/2021 6:40 PM
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Pending 10/20/2021 5:00 PM

Theme	Theme Impact	Response	# of Comment
Concern about accountability after adoption	low impact	Added lanugage to Implementation and Measurement intro about accountability and the Implementation Plan to clarify what will be driven by commissioners and shared with community. There will also be a dashboard online to report on plan progress, as outlined in the in Implentation chapter.	4
Concern about community being able to use the plan	low impact	Will do a launch of the plan that includes public education on how to use it and how MPRB plans to stay accountable to the plan.	4
Concern about community driven metrics	low impact	Updated language in Chapter 3 on Measuring Progress based on comment.	1
Concern about Implementation and Measurement	low impact	Additional language added to Implementation Chapter to strengthen and clarify. Some comments related more to implementation actions that will/may inform Implementation Planning after the Board adopts the comprehensive plan.	24
Concern about infrastructural barriers to park access	low impact	Masterplans advocated for safer crossings/addressing barriers	1
Concern about lack of focus on golf.	low impact	Strategies included about golfing and golf courses as well as enterprise fund that relate to golf.	1
Concern about lack of Indigenous perspectives and practices in plan	low impact	Explained more about Indigenous perspectives in the planning process and strengthened Indigenous-related strategies.	1
Concern about negative impacts on migratory birds and protected or endangered species	low impact	Strengthened mention of migratory birds and other protected or endangered species in strategies, current context, and futures.	1
Concern about park use.	low impact	Strategies to encourage a range of spaces in the park including passive recreation and areas for gathering or events are integral to the plan.	1
Concern about partnerships	low impact	added langauge to 4.1 to make it clearer	1
Concern about public health and safety	low impact	Clarified and strengthened strategies related to public health and safety that embraces several modes and perspectives on safety, health, and welcome in the parks.	2
Concern about water quality	low impact	Added langauge to 6.1 based on suggestion.	3
Concern around equitable levels of service for programming	low impact	intention is that this is included in rec system LOS guidelines	1
Concern for lack of capacity for waste management	low impact	Look at the strategy about closed loops, is this feasible	1
Concern regarding park funding and use	low impact	The MPRB is a park system that serves a regional as well as local population currently and into the future.	3
Concern related to park planning and circulation	low impact	Strategy modifed to clarify intent related to circulation and role of MPRB.	1
Concerns around accessibility	low impact	Strengthened and clarified language on accessibility.	2
Opposition to change in vision	low impact	Added language to vision about preserving parkland. Removed redundant language to shorten vision.	2
Opposition to expanding computer hubs in parks	low impact	changed 7.22 to broaden	2
Opposition to private use of parkland	low impact	Plan includes specific requirements around divestment of land, all other MPRB land remains public (even concessions, enterprise areas)	2
Suggestion for additional information in appendix.	low impact	The org chart is temporal in nature and will not be included in the appendix as it may not be relevant in a few years.	2
Suggestion for additional metrics	low impact	Metrics modifed and added based on comments.	21
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 1	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	2
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 2	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 3	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 4	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 5	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 6	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 7	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 8	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1
Suggestion for additional metrics and indicators under Goal 9	low impact	Made edits and updates to metrics and indicators based on comments.	1

Attachment: Attachment A-Public Comment Themes and Responses (2021-309 : Parks for All Comprehensive Plan Approval)