Parks and Recreation: Equal Access for All

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Research Analyst

Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Mississippi River Forum

September 25, 2015

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MN & Twin Cities Region

- **Consistently high ranks**:
  - Best State in the Nation (2015)
  - Best State for Business (2015)
  - Best State for Women (2015)
  - Top State for Children (2015)
  - Best Park System in the Nation (2013/2014)
  - Healthiest City in the Nation (2015)
  - Top City for Biking (2014)
- ***The Miracle of Minneapolis***

  (Atlantic Magazine, March 2015)
  - "No other place mixes affordability, opportunity, and wealth so well."

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Current Racial/Ethnic Disparities

"If growing racial inequalities are not addressed, Minneapolis could find itself one of the nation's poorest cities when it comes to racial politics and urban decline."

(Source: Nickrand, 2015. Minneapolis' White Lie. *Atlantic Monthly*.)

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Current Racial/Ethnic Disparities

- Minnesota and the Twin Cities region:
  - **Highest racial disparities in the nation**
    - Education
    - Criminal justice
  - **No reductions in disparity rates since 2000:**
    - Criminal justice
    - Education
    - Health
    - Economic opportunities

(Source: *Disparity Analysis: A review of disparities between White Minnesotans and other racial groups, 2013*)

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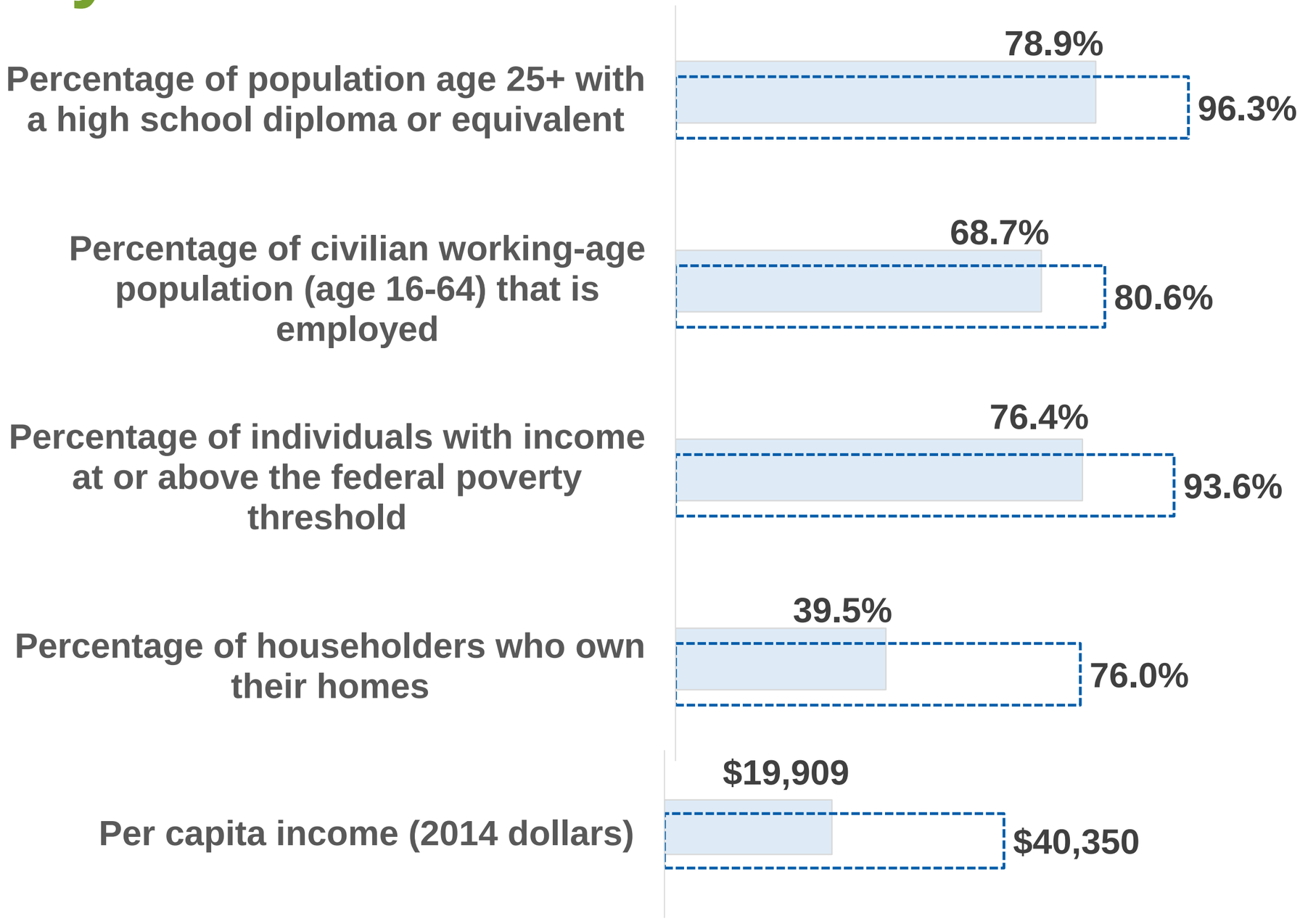
Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the 16-County Twin Cities Metro



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014.

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MN Obesity and Diabetes Rates by Race/Ethnicity

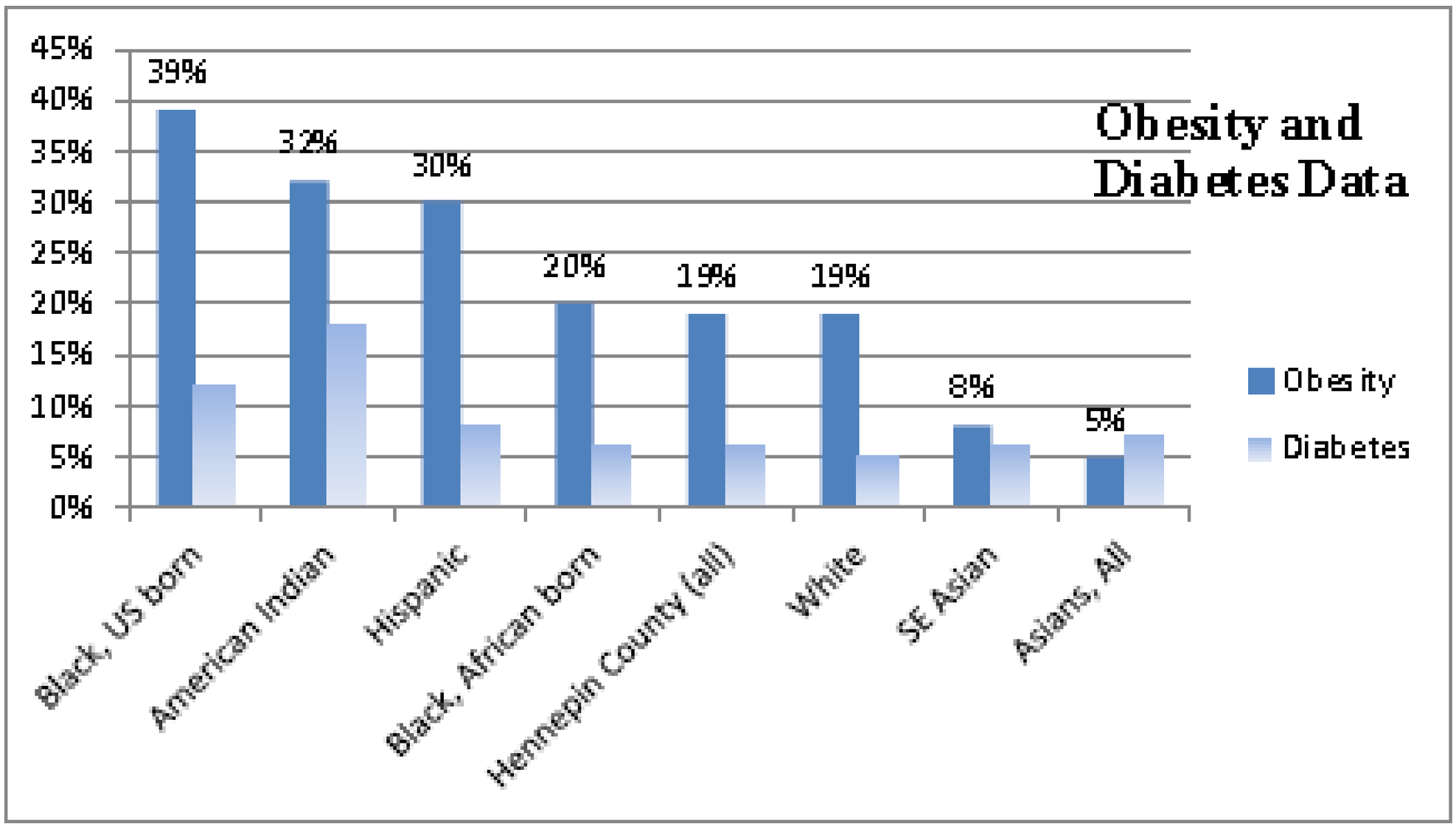
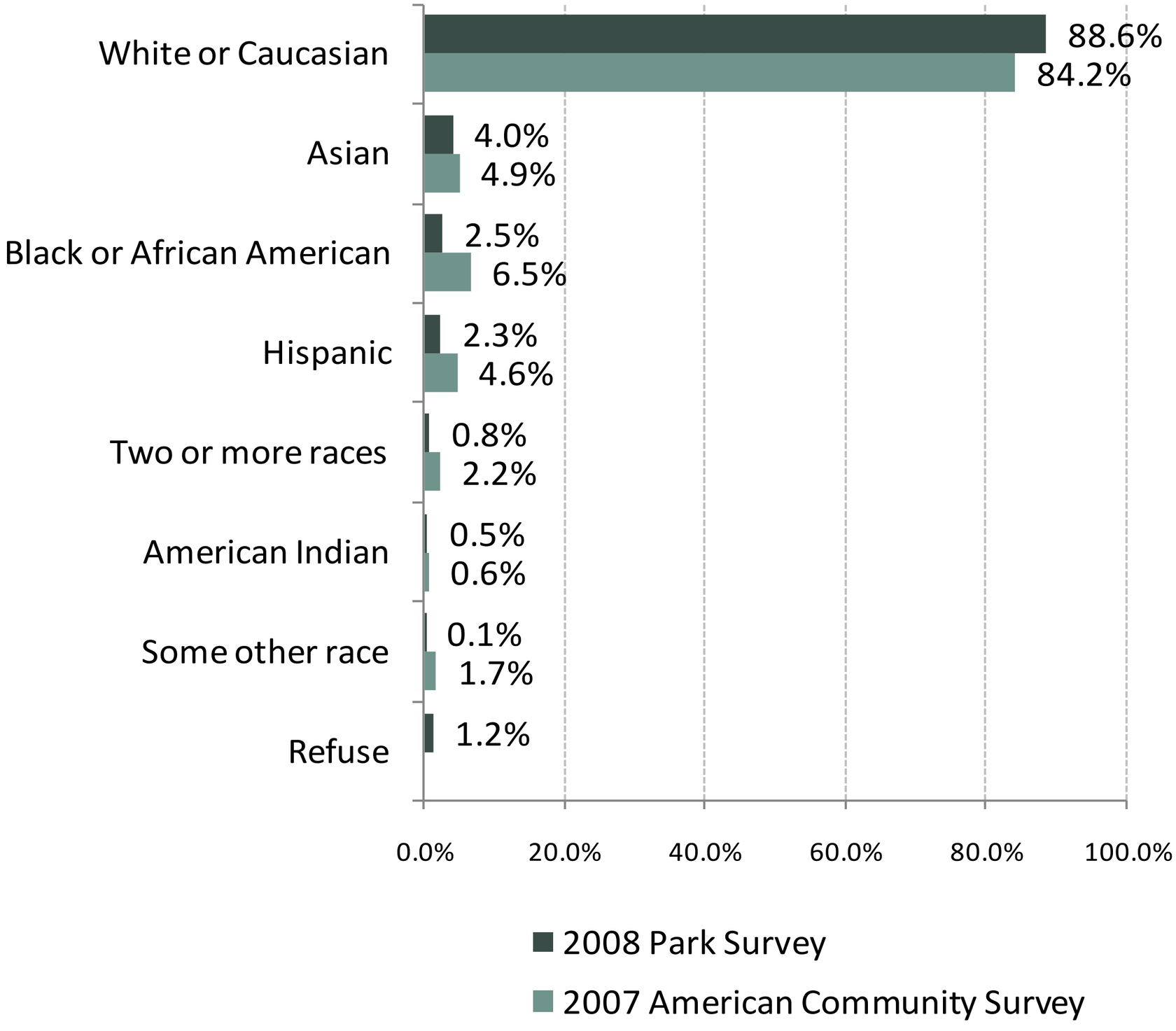


Figure 3: Obesity and Diabetes Disparities

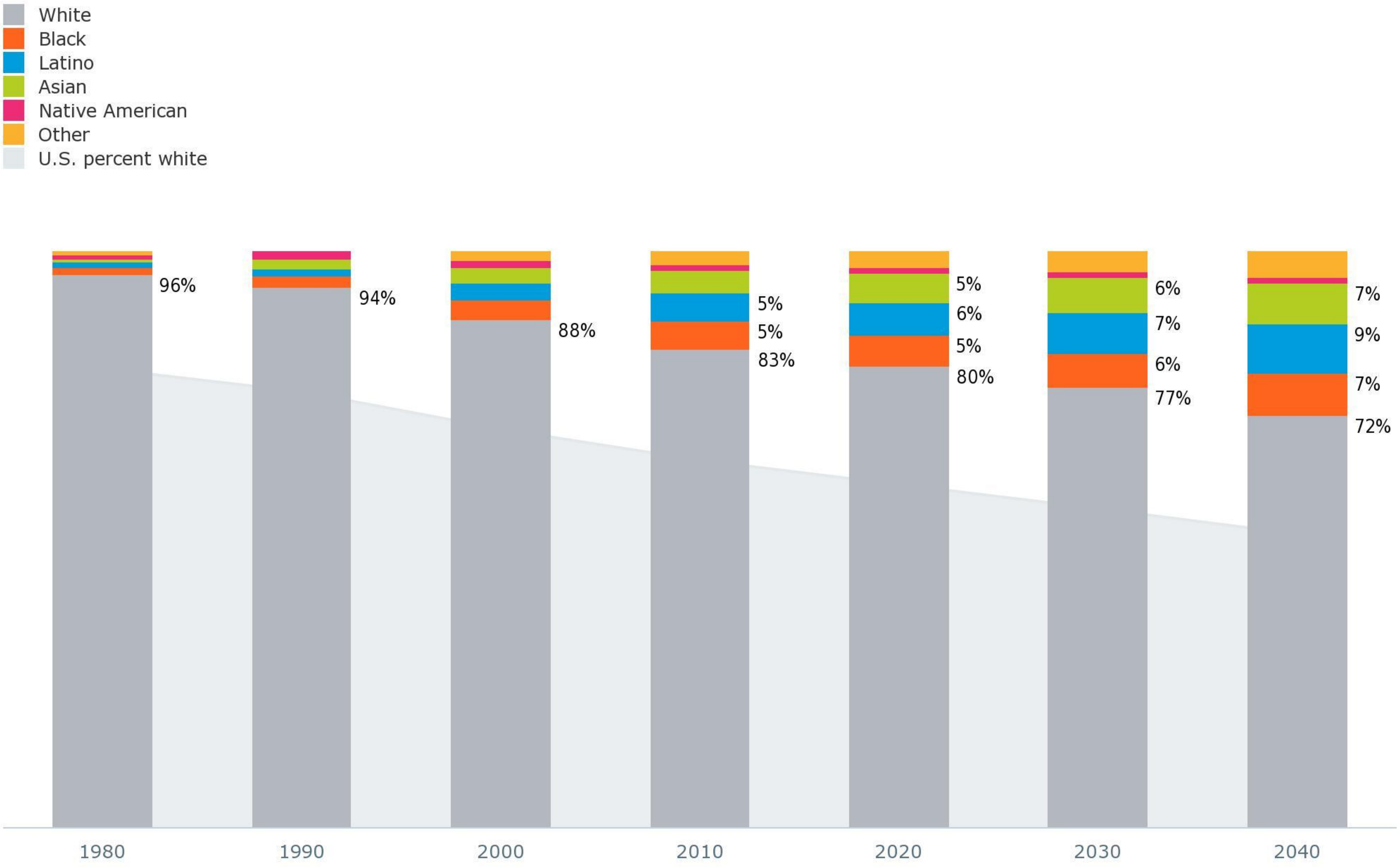
Source: "The Unequal distribution of health in the Twin Cities". Wilder Foundation, 2010.

Regional Park Use by Race/Ethnicity



(Source: Metropolitan Council. Regional Parks 2008 Survey)

Racial/Ethnic Composition: MN

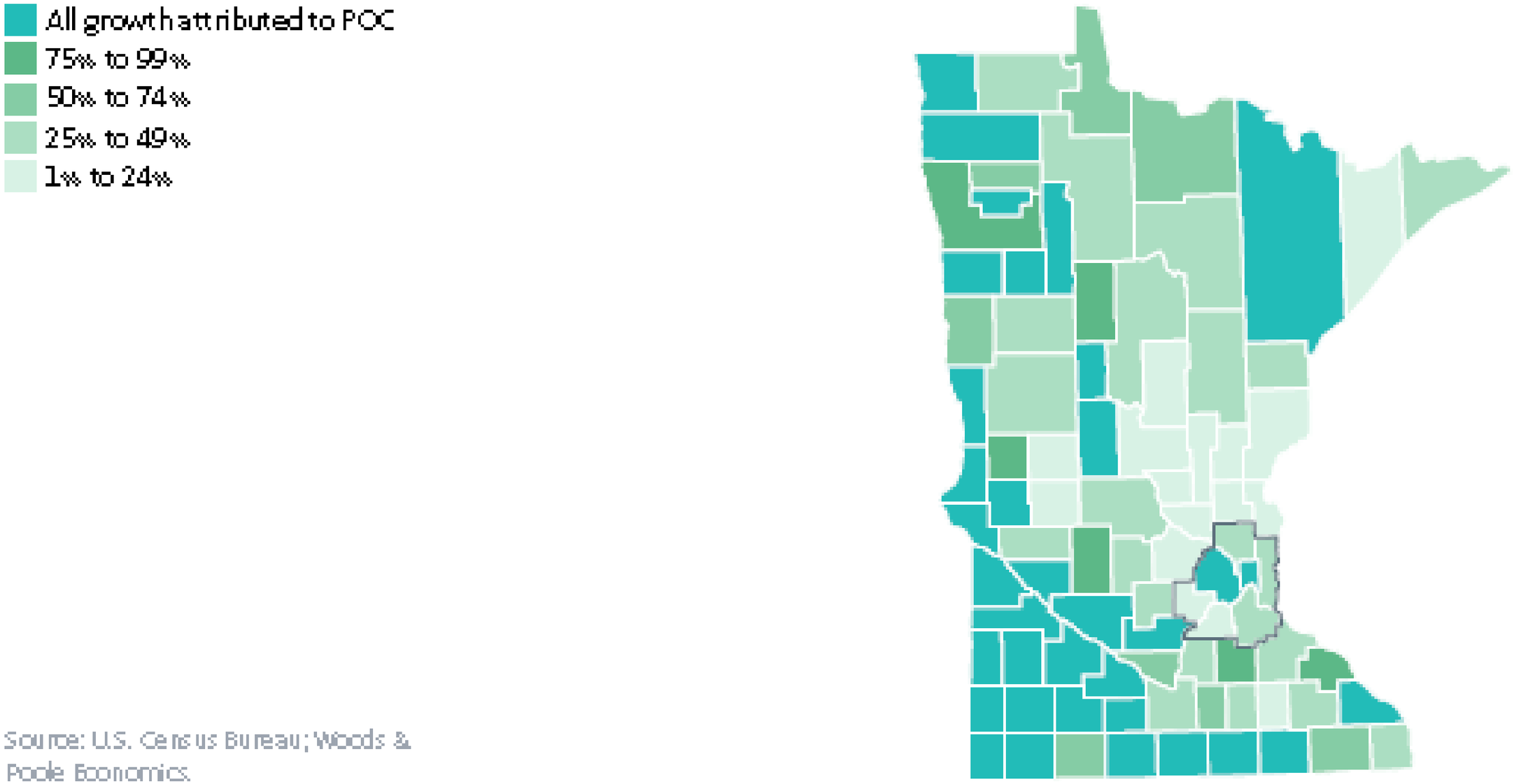


U.S. Census Bureau; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

Communities of color will continue to drive Minnesota's population growth.

Share of Population Growth Attributable to People of Color, 2010 to 2040

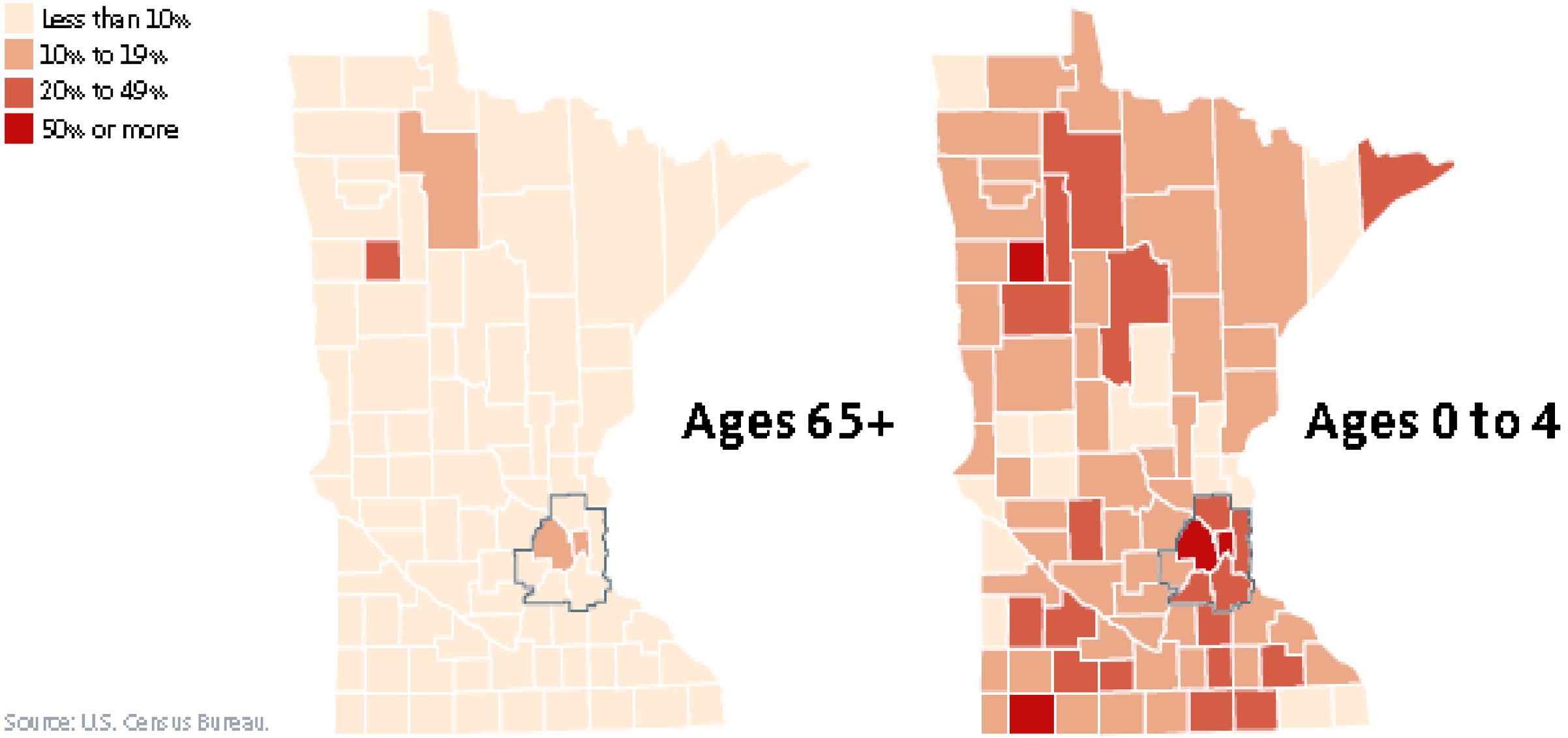


Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Woods & Poole Economics.

Source: Minnesota's Tomorrow, 2014

Minnesota's youth are much more diverse than its seniors.

Percent People of Color by Age, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Source: Minnesota's Tomorrow, 2014

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How are you addressing racial and ethnic disparities in your work?

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How effective are you at engaging or working with communities of color?

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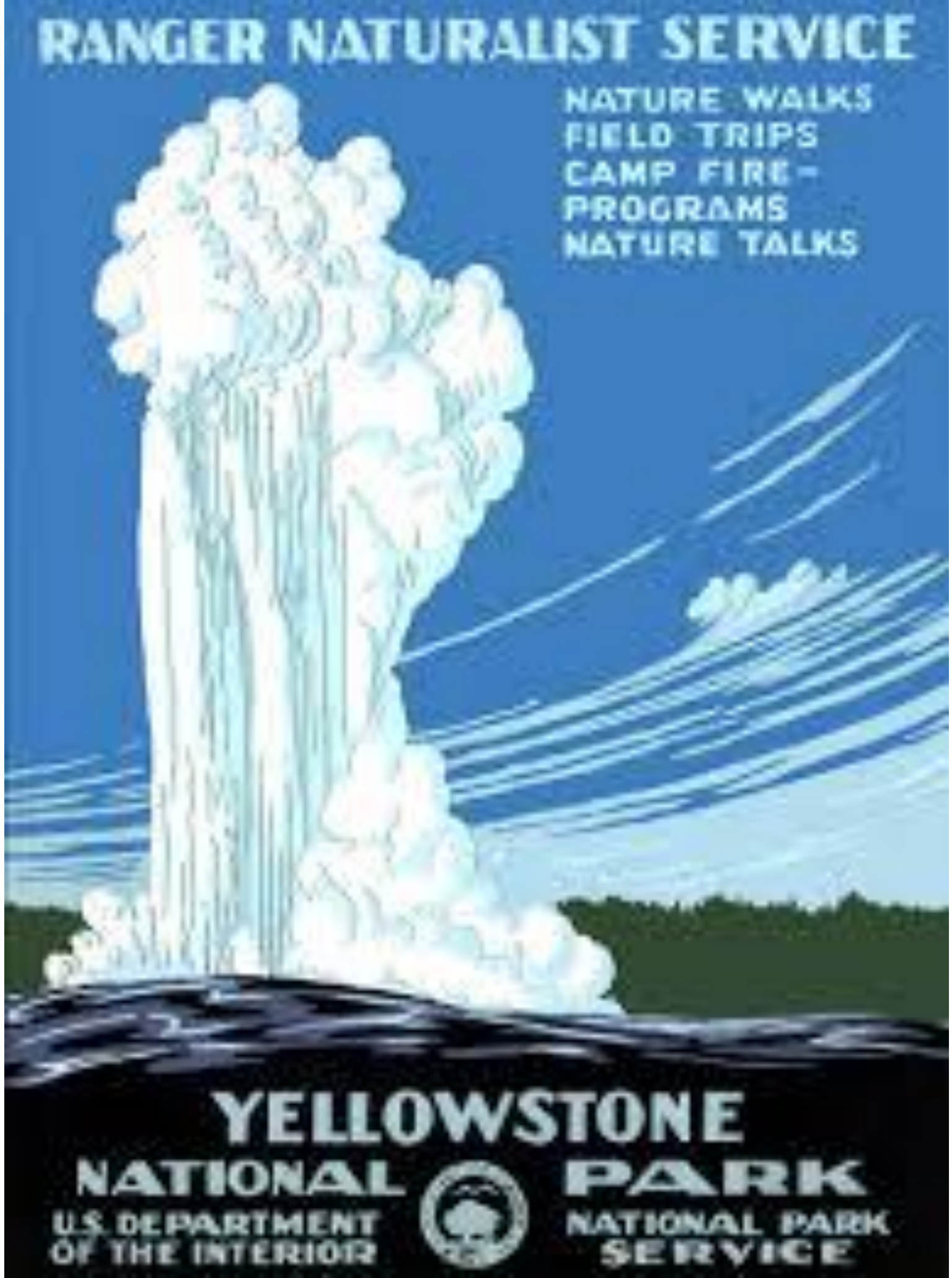
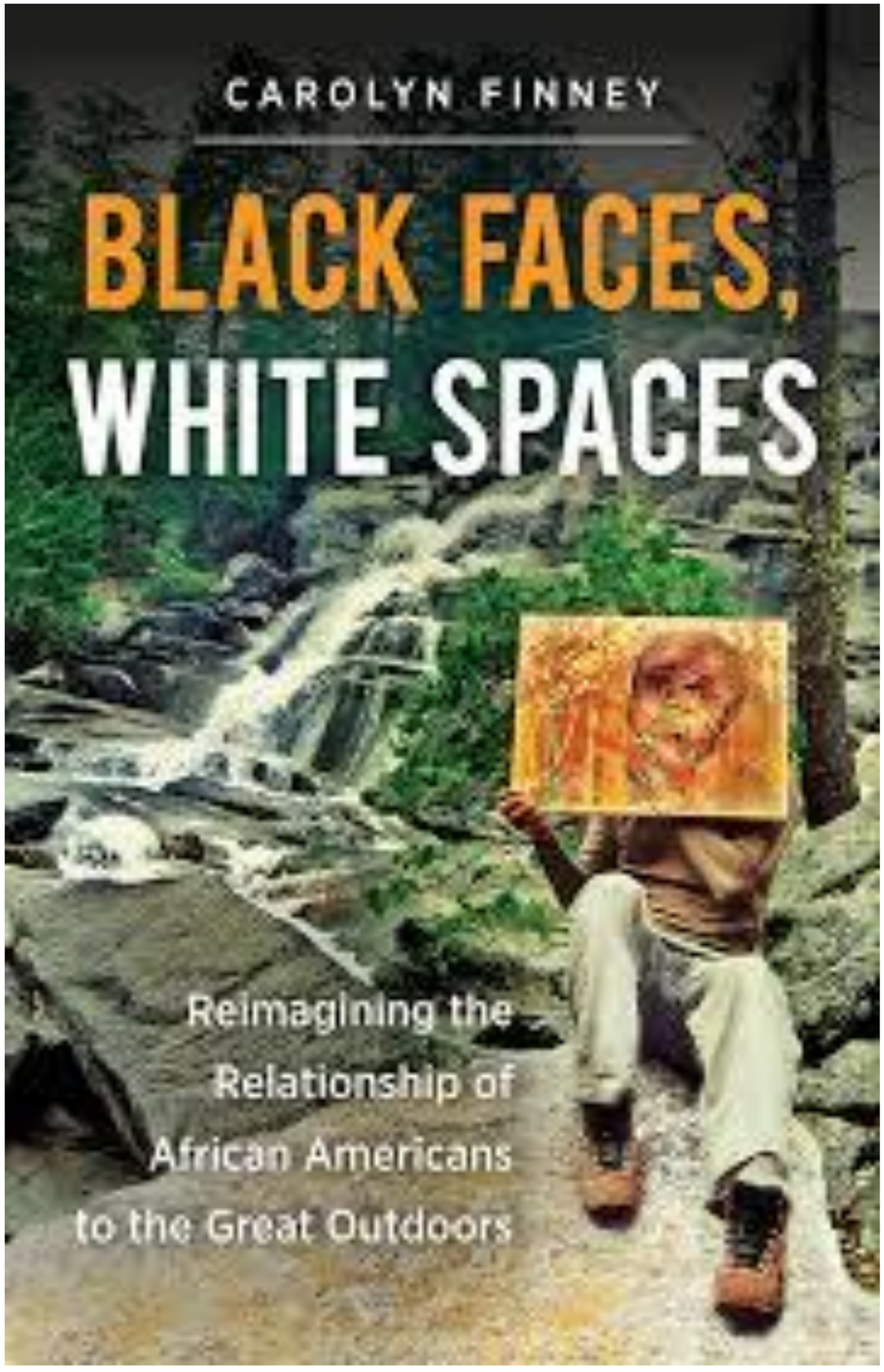

RANGER NATURALIST SERVICE
NATURE WALKS
FIELD TRIPS
CAMP FIRE-
PROGRAMS
NATURE TALKS
YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL PARK
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE

White Area – 1976 © Hulton Archive / Getty Images


CAROLYN FINNEY
BLACK FACES,
WHITE SPACES
Reimagining the
Relationship of
African Americans
to the Great Outdoors

Cycling
WEEKLY
ALL NEW
GROUPTESTS, RIDES, FEATURES, ADVICE, UK RACE RESULTS & COMMENT
50 WAYS TO LOSE WEIGHT
Insider's guide to:
Dartmoor Demon
2015 bike buyer's guide
We ride with
Chippenham & District Wheelers
Froome wins first clash with Contador
Dream shoes: 9 pairs rated
£2.99
Trott is best Brit at Track Worlds

Bicycling
DARIO PEGORETTI HAS SOMETHING TO TELL YOU
P. 68
THIS IS YOUR YEAR
TO GET LEANER, STRONGER, FASTER, HAPPIER
(AND POP WHEELIES)
HOW TO GET MUD OUT OF A WHITE KIT
OUR EDITOR'S SIMPLE SECRET TRAINING PLAN
TURN YOUR COFFEE INTO ROCKET FUEL
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ADAM SCHEPPS OUTSPRINTED DEPRESSION. HIS INSPIRING STORY— AND 4 MORE
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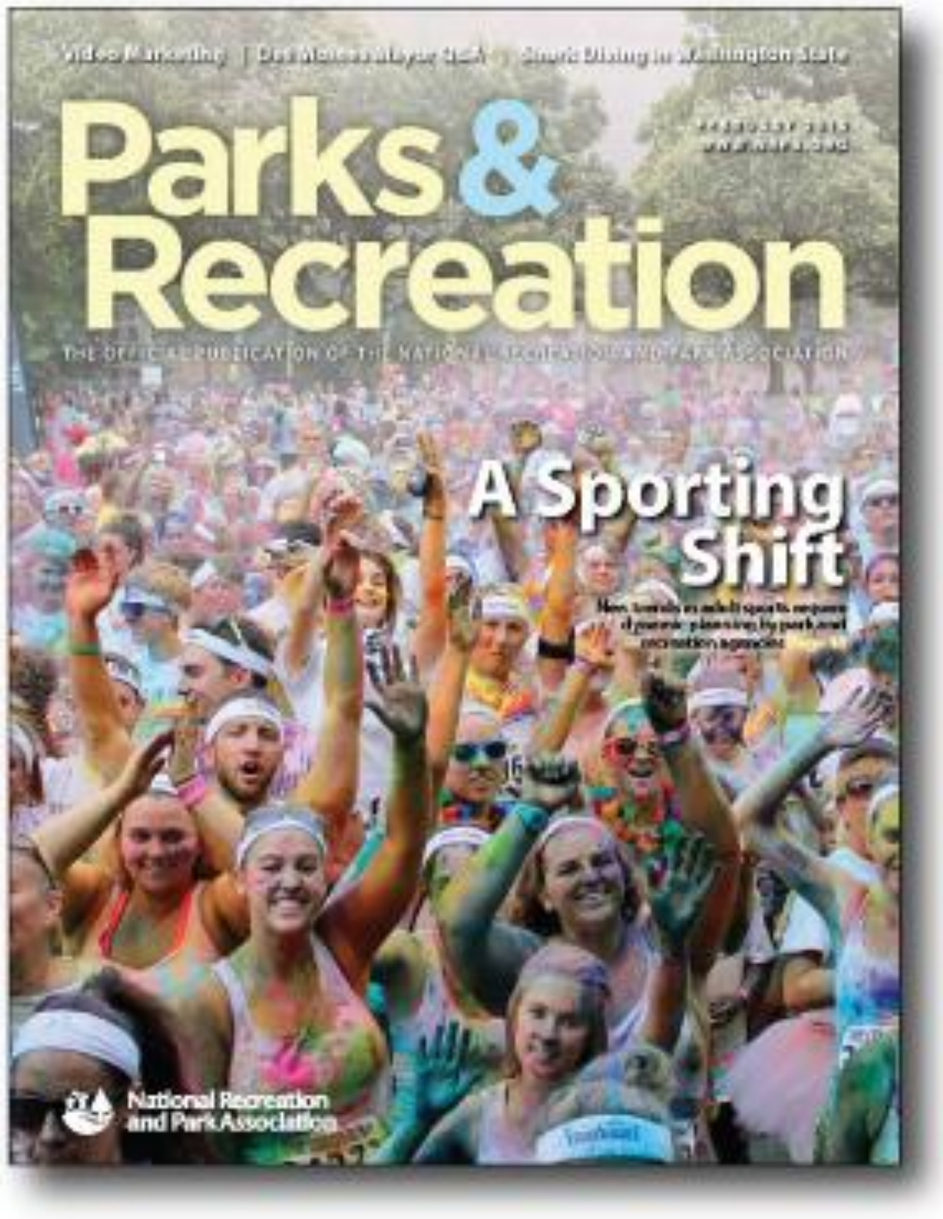
THE TRUTH ABOUT PALEO
Outside
TRAVEL SPECIAL
2015 GUIDE TO SUMMER
27 PERFECT WEEKENDS
QUICK & EASY ADVENTURES
MY SON AND THE BEAR
MAKE FITNESS FUN AGAIN
MADNESS IN THE JUNGLE

13 mountain routes you have to walk this spring
TRAIL
3 PEAKS CHALLENGE
The skills, routes and gear you need for...
SNOWDON
SCAFELL PIKE
BEN NEVIS
8 PAGE FOLD-OUT GUIDE!
20 PAGES OF KIT
WALKING THE SPIDER
Tackle a NEW Lakeland epic!
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
Stunning sunsets & silent summits – guaranteed

EXTRA MAGAZINE!
101 BEST RACES + 5k, 10k, HALF-MARA, MARATHON & ULTRA
TRAIL Running
No.1 for off-road running
FIRST MUD RACE
Train the right way in 4 weeks
What your body goes through on a MARATHON
Fast Track Stamina
Pro advice to double your distance for all levels
6
How burgers speed up recovery!
Tim Olson: 'I'D BE DEAD WITHOUT TRAILS'
69
PRODUCTS TESTED + DO YOU WEAR THE RIGHT SHOES?

2015 PADDLE GUIDE + 4 CROSSOVER KAYAK REVIEWS
CANOE & KAYAK
WHAT'S NEXT
+ PET DRONES // BAG-OUT BOATS // DIY MAPS // THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFE



"Even with all that color there is a lack of diversity. How ironic..."

(Matt Brubaker, Graphic Designer, Parks & Recreation Magazine)

The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations

Mainstream NGOs Foundations Government Agencies

Dorceta E. Taylor, Ph.D.

University of Michigan, School of
Natural Resources & Environment
Ann Arbor, Michigan

PREPARED FOR GREEN 2.0
JULY 2014

Lack of Diversity: Environmental Organizations

Caucasians across Different Types of Environmental Organizations (%)

	Conservation/ Preservation Organizations	Government Agencies	Environmental Foundations
Board membership	95.4	93.1	86.7
Executive Director	96.4	87.2	82.4
Paid staff	88.0	87.6	84.5
Staff hired in the last three years	87.2	88.3	82.9
Interns in the last three years	77.5	85.0	63.6

- “You can’t change people by using your value system if they have a different value system than you do. ***The underlying assumption…is that the only reason a person in his or her right mind would not go camping and hiking is because they didn’t know about it or have the money or transportation.*** That’s been the assumption for well over 40 years, which means ***the perception is: We need to go out and change or fix the people who just don’t know what a great deal this is and tell them what a great deal this is and they’ll come, when in fact, the challenges are much deeper than that***.”

Mickey Fearn, former National Park Service Deputy Director of Communications

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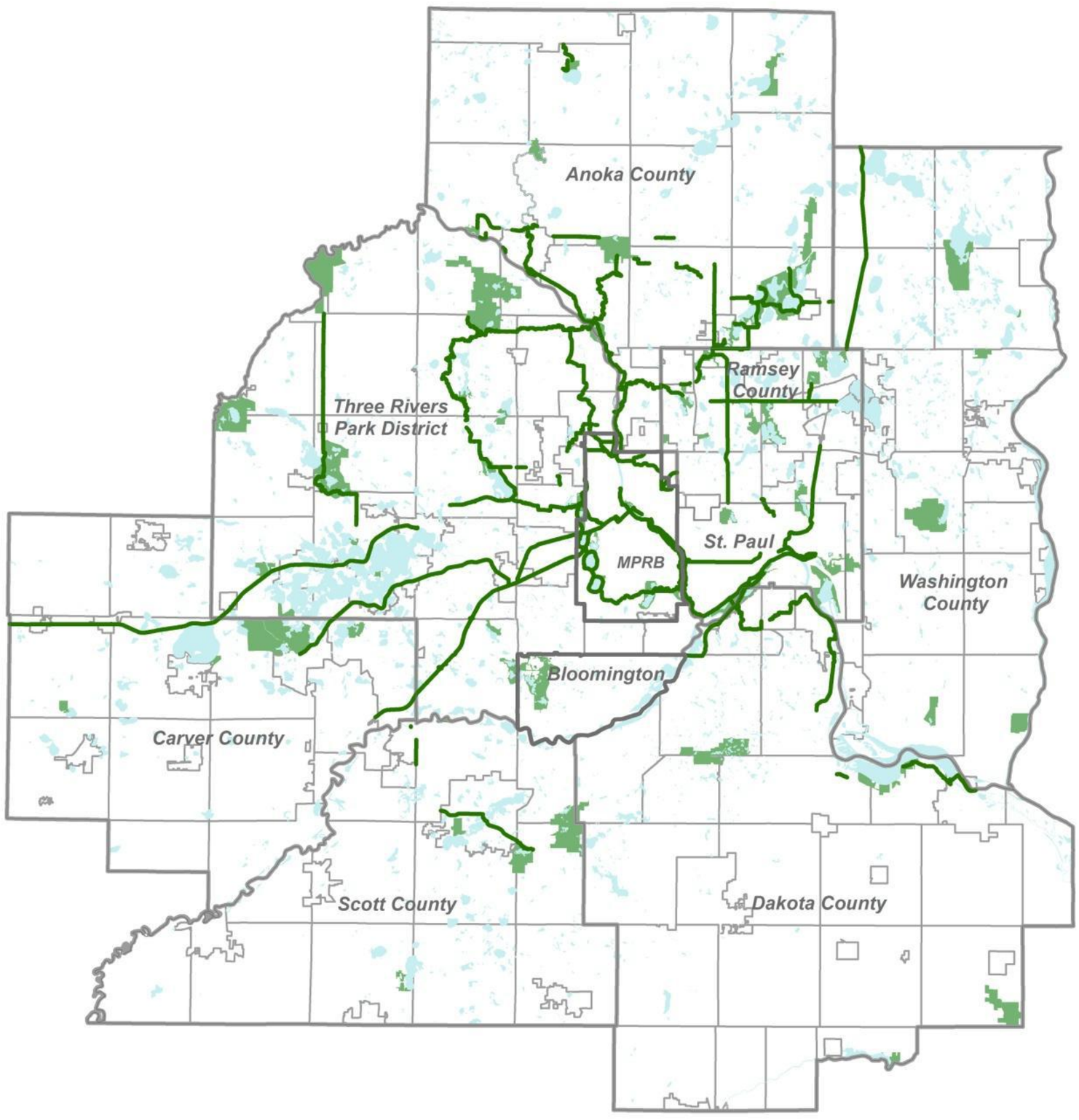
Thrive Direction for Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks Policy Plan

- **Strengthen equitable usage** of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status

Lake Elmo Park Reserve—
Washington County

Dakota Rail Regional Trail—
Three Rivers Park District

Regional Parks System Facilities Open to the Public (2014)



Regional Parks System

7 Metropolitan Counties

- 54,000 acres
- 340 Regional Trail Miles
- 42 Regional Parks
- 12 Park Reserves
- 8 Special Recreation Features

2014-2015 Effort

- Explore non-utilization of regional parks and trails among distinct subpopulations within the region.

  Specifically, the study 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

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Study Approach

- Partnered with community-based organizations
- Conducted ***region-wide*** **focus groups**
  - **Audio recorded**
  - **Transcribed**
  - Qualitative data analyzed
    - Coded
    - **Emergent Themes**

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Focus Group Composition

	Number of Focus Groups
Diverse Composition	5
Asian Immigrant/ Asian American	4
Hispanic/ Latino/Latina	3
African Immigrant	2
African American	2
Total	**16**

- Focus group size
  - Range: 5-36 people
  - Average=16 people
- **263 total participants**

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Participant Demographics

- 74.6% Female
- Age Range: 14-79 years old
  - Average age=39.6
- **Children:**
  - **72.4% had children under the age of 18**
    - **Range: 1-20 children**
      - **64.2% had four or less children**

47% of participants had never visited a regional park

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Participants Race/Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
African Immigrant	76	29.6
Asian Immigrant or Asian American	74	28.8
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	66	25.7
African American	28	10.9
Caucasian	11	4.3
Multi-Racial	1	0.4
Native American	1	0.4
Total	**257**	**100.0**

23 distinct primary languages

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Preferred Outdoor Activities

	Top Outdoor Activities: All Groups
1	**Walk/Hike**
2	**Picnic/BBQ**
3	**Use Playground**
4	Swim/Go to Lake
5	Spend Time with Friends/Family
6	Bike
7	Fish
8	View Nature
9	Rest/Relax
10	Celebrate/Party

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Preferred Outdoor Activities by Focus Group Type

	African American Focus Groups	African Immigrant Focus Groups	Asian Immigrant or Asian American Focus Groups	Hispanic/ Latino/ Latina Focus Groups	Diverse Composition Focus Groups
1	Picnic/BBQ	Use Playground	Walk	Celebrate/ Party	Walk
2	Bike	Walk	Fish	Picnic/BBQ	Use Playground
3	Basketball*	Be with Family	Rest/Relax	Be with Family	Swim/Go to Lake

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Who With?

- **Family**
- **Friends**
  - Very few: alone

- **Number of people typically with:**
  - Range: alone to 250 people
  - **Most frequently noted (same relative frequency):**
    - **Less than 5**
    - **15-20 people**

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“Park”

	What comes to mind when the word “park” is mentioned: All Groups
1	**Nature**
2	Safety/Security
3	**Amenities**
	Animals/Wildlife
4	**Playgrounds**
5	**Picnics/BBQ**
	Walk/Hike/Trails
6	**Celebrations/Fun**
	Bonding with Friends/Family
7	Solitude/Relaxation

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Park Visitation Barriers: All Groups

	Why it is hard to visit a Regional Park
1	**Lack of Awareness**
2	Time
3	Fear/Safety Concerns
4	Lack of Transportation Options
5	Language Barrier
6	Weather
7	Cost
8	Map Challenges
9	No One to Go With
10	Cultural or Religious Insensitivity/Discrimination
	No Desire

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"I think visibility is also huge…I mean to be honest with you, a lot of people are not even really aware about regional parks"

(Female African American focus group member)

"I was just watching it someplace, and I don't remember where, but they said Minnesota has got about 600 places where you can go camping and I only know of one."

(Male Diverse Composition focus group member)

"For me, for example, coming from a different country, I don't really know what exactly are the rules. Right? I don't know about the times, and I didn't even know they close the parks at night."

(Male Diverse Composition focus group member)

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“The thing is us Hispanics don’t know how to use the parks. We always go there to sit down and eat. We don’t know what activities can be done. Walking, for example”

(Latina focus group member)

“*I think for a lot of people, if it’s not part of your culture—I mean, if you didn’t grow up going to the park with your family, you’re not going to necessarily think about going to the park yourself and you’re not going to teach your kids to go to the park either, especially if there’s no opportunity to really understand like why would I go*”

(Female African American focus group member)

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Park Visitation Barriers: All Groups

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8	Map Challenges
9	No One to Go With
10	Cultural or Religious Insensitivity/Discrimination
	No Desire

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Suggestions to Enhance Visitation: All Groups

	Suggestions to increase visitation
1	Increase Awareness
2	Address Safety
3	Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces
	Create Ambassador Program
4	Increase and Diversify Programming
5	Provide More Events
6	Add or Enhance Playgrounds
7	Enhance Nature Quality
	Address Dog and Goose Waste
8	Clean Restrooms/Facilities

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How Do They Want to Hear It

	African American Focus Groups	African Immigrant Focus Groups	Asian or Asian American Focus Groups	Hispanic/ Latino/ Latina Focus Groups	Mixed Focus Groups
1	Local Organizations	Translated into Different Languages	Park Ambassador or Tour Guide	Local Organizations	Translated into Different Languages
2	Park Ambassador or Tour Guide	Friends	Friends	Targeted Newspaper	Local Organizations
3	Flyers/ Community Partnerships/ Targeted Newspaper	Flyers/Map TV Mail/Door Leaflet	Translated into Different Languages	Flyers/ Translated into Different Languages	Mail/Door Leaflet

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Suggestions to Enhance Visitation by Focus Group Type

	African American Focus Groups	African Immigrant Focus Groups	Asian or Asian American Focus Groups	Hispanic/ Latino/ Latina Focus Groups	Diverse Composition Focus Groups
1	Increase Awareness	Address Safety	Create Ambassador Program	Increase Awareness	Increase Awareness
2	Increase/ Diversify Programming	Increase Awareness Clean Restrooms Add/Enhance Playgrounds	Address Safety	**Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces**	Increase/ Diversify Programming
3	**Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces**	**Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces**	**Enhance Capacity of Gathering Spaces**	Address Dog Waste	Address Safety

“*We have to pray like five times a day, so we’re supposed to have a place that we can pray…women and men are different. Men can pray everywhere, like outside, something like that. But the women, they’re supposed to have like a little cover, maybe a small room, something like that*”

(Female African Immigrant Focus Group Participant)

“*If there’s not a lot of people, it’s a little scary. But if there’s a lot of people, it’s not scary*”

(Female Diverse Composition focus group participant)

Impacts

- “Authentic” Engagement
  - Clear, demonstrable evidence of contributions impacting decision-making

- Policy Development: 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
  - 13 policy arenas to enhance equity
    - Convening and information
    - Funding and investment
    - Planning and design

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Concluding Remarks

"How can we think about, talk about, and give birth to a society in which everyone belongs?"

(otheringandbelong.org)

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Questions?

Contact Information

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Report: *Regional Park Use among Select Communities of Color*