Metropolitan Council

Information Item

Committee of the Whole



Meeting Date: February 21, 2024

Topic

2050 Parks Policy Plan Update

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)

Emmett Mullin, Parks Manager (651-602-1360)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Parks

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

The Council continues its work on developing the 2050 Regional Development Guide, *Imagine 2050*. The current Regional Development Guide, *Thrive MSP 2040*, along with the Council's system and policy plans, help guide the orderly growth and development of the Twin Cities metropolitan region. System and policy plans include the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*, and the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*.

At today's meeting, Council Parks staff will share an update on the development of *Imagine 2050* and the *2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, including a parks policy plan timeline (Figure 1) and draft regional parks and trails objectives (Figure 2). Staff will seek Council Members' advice on draft objectives and emerging policies and actions.

At the February 1, 2024, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, staff shared an updated set of draft regional parks and trails objectives, and a summary of feedback from recent discussions with Commissioners and Regional Park Implementing Agencies. Council staff asked for the Commission's advice on priorities to achieve the draft regional parks and trails objectives.

Staff will continue to engage with the Council committees throughout the project to provide updates on the planning process and seek Council Members' and Commissioners' guidance and feedback.

Minnesota law requires the Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the Regional Parks Policy Plan at least every four years (Minnesota Statutes, section 473.147). The policy plan was last updated in December 2020. Completion of the policy plan update is expected in late 2024 or early 2025.

Planning

2023 Quarter 2

2023 Quarter 4

Planner's Forums, Council-Agency

plan development

Coordination with the Regional Development Guide Process, Other Council Systems and Policy Areas

Ongoing Engagement: Council Committees, Implementing Agencies, Community Groups, Stakeholders, Public

work groups

· Initial policy and

Initiation

2022 Quarter 4 -

2023 Quarter 2

Scoping

Existing conditions

Draft system vision, mission, and values

Draft community,

stakeholder, and

public engagement

Close

2024 Quarter 3 -

Final draft (~90%)

plan complete (August '24)

Public comment

Public hearing (Sept. '24)

· Plan refinement · Council approval (Feb. '25)

period

2025 Quarter 1

Draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives

Parks Policy Plan Timeline – Summary

Execution

2023 Quarter 4 -

2024 Quarter 2

Continued policy and

plan development

complete (May '24)

Draft (~60%) plan

· Plan refinement

WORKING **REGIONAL GOALS**

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

DRAFT **PARKS OBJECTIVES**

Foster Equity and Belonging

Connect people with community, natural, and cultural landscapes to better support their physical mental and emotional well-being.

Take Care of What We Have

Reinvest in existing regional parks and trails to maintain and enhance visitor experiences

Meet Future Needs

Meet the growing demand for regional parks and trails through strategic and timely land acquisition and development.

Adapt and Mitigate

Increase the region's resilience to climate change by adapting land management practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Protect and Restore

Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the wellbeing of all living things.

EXISTING PARKS POLICIES

Siting and Acquisition Identify lands with highquality natural resources

that are desirable for Regional Parks System activities and put these lands in a protected status, so they will be available for recreational uses and conservation purposes in perpetuity

Planning Promote

master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions

System Protection

Protect public investment in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role as long as a need for it can be demonstrated

Recreation Activities and Facilities

Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors while conserving the integrity of the natural resource base within the Regional Parks System on which these opportunities depend

Finance

Provide adequate and equitable funding for the Regional Parks System units and facilities in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.

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