



Regional Parks System: Proposed Policy Direction

For confirmation August 28, 2013

Overall direction

The Metropolitan Council recognizes the strategic importance of the regional parks system in preserving significant natural resources and enhancing the quality of life in the region.

The Council recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing the strong legacy of regional parks planning and the collaboration with the 10 implementing agency partners which own and operate the regional parks system. Through these partners the Council has invested \$592 million in regional and state funds over 40 years to acquire and develop regional parks and trails, which currently draw over 45 million visits each year.

The Council also recognizes the changing demographics of the region and the corresponding demands on the regional parks system, and is committed to addressing future needs through research, analysis and action in collaboration with the implementing agencies.

Thrive goal-level language for regional parks and trails

The regional parks system contributes to a vibrant, prosperous, equitable, livable and sustainable region.

Thrive policy-level language for regional parks and trails

The Council will work with local, regional and state partners to provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy communities, and enhances quality of life in the region.

The Council will collaborate with local, regional and state partners to:

- Improve and protect regional recreation open space for use and enjoyment today and into the future.
- Expand the regional park system to conserve, maintain and connect natural resources identified as high quality or of regional importance, consistent with the Regional Parks Policy Plan.
- Fund the regional parks system in a manner that makes the best use of public investment.
- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails.
- Foster greater integration of water sustainability, and bicycle, pedestrian and transit considerations with the regional parks system.
- Promote multi-modal access to regional parks, trails and transit network, where appropriate.
- Encourage local governments to plan for open space along transitway corridors.

Additional detail about regional parks system policy will be developed and adopted in the Regional Parks Policy Plan.