

2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update on Special Recreation Features, Master Plans and System Protection

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2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- Updates on Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) discussions
 - June 2
- Special Recreation Features
- Regional parks and trails master plans
- Regional Parks System system protection

Special Recreation Features

Regional Park System Components

- Park Reserves
- Regional Parks
- Regional Trails
- **Special Recreation Features**

2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- **Special Recreation Feature (SRFs):**
 - “Regional parks system opportunities not generally found in the parks, the park reserves or the trail corridors” (p 3-58)
- Special recreation features proposed for inclusion into the regional parks system must (p 2-18):
 - **Be unique and complement or enhance existing services**
 - **Function within the existing management structure of the regional parks system.**
 - **Not duplicate or compete with recreation facilities**
 - **Not drain funds from other facilities in the system**
 - **Demonstrate regional importance**
 - **Undergo master plan approval process**

Current SRFs

- Como Zoo —St. Paul
- Marjorie McNeely Conservatory (at Como RP) —St. Paul
- Square Lake —Washington County
- Noerenberg Gardens —Three Rivers Park District
- Gale Woods Farm —Three Rivers Park District
- Silverwood —Three Rivers Park District
- The Landing —Three Rivers Park District
- Kingswood —Three Rivers Park District





Description in 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- Parks Classification Table for local and regional facilities
 - SRF—an “area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as golf course, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, gun club, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archeological significance” (p 3-61)



Description in 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- Parks Classification Table for local and regional facilities
 - SRF—an “area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as ~~golf course~~, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, ~~arena, gun club,~~ **hunter training education facility**, downhill ski area, ~~and~~ sites of historic or archeological significance **and bridging facilities. Bridging facilities are viewed as facilities that are intended to assist with the introduction into a specialized or single-purpose recreational activity in an effort to enhance participation in outdoor recreation”**

(p 3-61)

Master Plan Requirements

Master Plan Requirements

- **Minnesota Statute 473.313 requires each regional park implementing agency to prepare a master plan that is consistent with the Council's policy**
 - *Council requires individual master plans for each regional park, park reserve, regional trail and special recreation feature.*

Importance of Master Plans

- **Determines:**

- Capital projects eligible for funding
- Land parcels eligible for acquisition

- **Ensures:**

- Protection of recreation and open space
- Adherence to Council policies

2040 Regional Park Policy Plan

- **Calls for Master Plan Requirements Revisions**

- **Justifications:**

- **Policy concepts confirmed by MPOSC**

- Concepts related to equitable use and multimodal access

- **Provisions in MN Statute 473.351**

- Metro Regional Parks O&M Funding
 - Provide adequate drinking water supplies

- **Funding of contamination cleanup**

- 2013 amendment to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan



Changes 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Language

Attachment A

Proposed new text highlighted in yellow; proposed deletions red strike through

- Master plans requirements in regional parks, park reserves or special recreation features (pp 2-30 to 2-31)
- Master plans for linking trails (p 2-32)
- Master plan for regional destination trails or greenways (p 2-33)
- System Protection Strategy 4

System Protection

System Protection Goal/Policy

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

- Has been in the Regional Parks Policy Plan since 1991



System Protection Strategies

Conversion of Regional Park System Lands to Other Uses

1991:

“Lands in a regional park, park reserve, trail or special recreation feature will not be converted to a use other than acceptable recreation open space”

2001:

“Lands in the regional park system will only be converted to other uses if approved by the Metropolitan Council through an equally valuable land or facility exchange.....”



System Protection Strategies

“Conversion of Regional Parkland to Other Uses” changed to “Release of Restrictive Covenants”

2010:

“Restrictive covenants are placed on regional parks system lands, trail and greenways to ensure that these lands area available for regional park uses, and that the regional investment in these lands is protected. **Under certain exceptional circumstances, the Metropolitan Council will release restrictive covenants on regional park land if an equally valuable land or facility is added in exchange for the released park land.**” (p 2-47)

Issues

- Since 1974, Council has invested over \$616,000,000 in State and regional funds for land acquisition and capital improvements in the Regional Parks System
- Would only protect land that has been purchased with regional funds
- 31,000 acres of existing parks brought into the regional system in 1974



Strategy Changes

- System Protection Strategy 2 title will change from “Release of restrictive covenants” back to “Conversion of regional parks system lands to other uses”
- Strategy language would change back to “Lands in the Regional Parks System will only be converted to other uses if approved by the Metropolitan Council through an equally valuable land or facility exchange.”

Equally Valuable Land or Facility Exchange

- **“Equally valuable land”**
 - Contiguous to the park or trail containing the land proposed to be exchanged
 - Land has comparable or better natural resource characteristics
 - Land provide comparable or better recreation opportunities than the land being converted
 - In exceptional circumstances, the Council may accept as equally valuable land the addition of land to another unit of the regional parks system where no other reasonable alternative exists and where all other provisions of this policy can be met.

Equally Valuable Land or Facility Exchange

- **Equally valuable facility”** is defined as an exchange of land for facilities when recreational benefits and/or natural resource benefits are increased as a result of the exchange.

For example, some land within a regional trail corridor may be exchanged to widen a highway if a highway department constructs a trail overpass or underpass of the widened road at no cost to the regional park implementing agency.

2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Next Steps

- June 24
 - Draft complete
 - Redlined copy presented to MPOSC members & regional park implementing agencies
- July 1
 - MPOSC meeting: discuss redlined copy of draft 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
- Request to schedule public hearing:
 - August 5: MPOSC
 - August 18: CDC
 - August 27: Council