

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: May 19, 2014

**Subject:** 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update on Promoting Multi-Modal Access

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statute 473.147

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jan Youngquist AICP, Planning Analyst (651 602-1029)  
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**Division/Department:** Community Development/Regional Parks and Natural Resources

### Proposed Action

Information item only. No action required.

### Background

Minnesota Statute 473.147 requires the Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide.

Thrive MSP 2040 includes policy direction for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, which states that the Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park implementing agencies and State partners to:

- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit network, where appropriate

Staff conducted a stakeholder work session on March 27 to brainstorm and discuss ideas with regard to the policy direction. The work session included Council staff representing regional parks and natural resources, local planning assistance, transportation planning, and Metro Transit; representatives from the regional park implementing agencies; the Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources; the Trust for Public Land; and the U.S. Department of Transportation on behalf of the National Park Service.

The ideas generated from this work session were compiled by staff and presented to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) at its meeting on April 22. Staff then organized these ideas into two categories: policy concepts for inclusions in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan and projects for Council staff to undertake as part of a future work plan, as shown in Attachment A. MPOSC discussed the policy concepts and project ideas at its meeting on May 6. Minor revisions were proposed by through testimony by regional park implementing agency staff. MPOSC accepted the proposed revisions and confirmed the policy concepts and project ideas.

### Rationale

Periodic updates to the Community Development Committee regarding the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Planning process are included in the 2014 work plan for the Community Development Committee as well as in the engagement plan for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

## **Funding**

N/A

## **Known Support / Opposition**

At its meeting on May 6, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission recommended that the Metropolitan Council incorporate the policy concepts identified in Attachment A into the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan and the project ideas into a future Regional Parks and Natural Resources Work Plan.

## Attachment A:

### Stakeholder-driven policy ideas aimed to promote enhanced multi-modal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit system, where appropriate.

These ideas have been organized into Policy Concepts for inclusion in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan and future projects for inclusion in the Regional Parks and Natural Resources Work Plan.

## Policy Concepts for Inclusion in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

### *Awareness*

- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to provide transit schedules and information at parks that are served by transit
- Include information on how to access a regional park or trail by transit on the regional park implementing agency website, where applicable
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to promote regional trails with the four existing Transportation Management Organizations
  - A Transportation Management Organization is a public-private partnership that provides marketing and advocacy to promote multi-modal options for daily commutes.
  - Existing TMOs include Commuter Connection—downtown Minneapolis; Smart Trips—Saint Paul; Commuter Services—I-494 Corridor and Commute Solutions—Anoka County

### *Collaboration*

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions and other partners to identify and plan for local trail connections to regional parks and trails as well as last mile connections from transit
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to collaborate with bike share programs to site bike stations near regional parks and trails

### *Planning*

- Require regional park or trail master plans to identify existing and planned local trail connections to the site
- Require a regional park or trail master plan to include a wayfinding signage plan
- Encourage regional trail alignments to provide connections to transit stops or park and rides, where appropriate
- Encourage the following design elements to be included in a regional park or trail master plan:
  - Bike racks and/or lockers located near activity areas so visitors can safely store their bikes as they recreate
  - Multiple entrance points that will make a park easier to access as a bicyclist or pedestrian, where appropriate
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to include transportation and transit planners in the development of a regional park or trail master plan

## Regional Parks and Natural Resources Work Plan Projects

### *Awareness*

- Develop an integrated web application that identifies how to access regional parks and trails using alternative transportation. See the National Park Service [Mississippi River Trip Planner](#) as an example.

### *Collaboration*

- Collaborate with Metro Transit or local transit providers to explore the feasibility of the following actions:
  - Promote regional parks on buses and trains as well as at transit stops
  - Explore options for siting new park and rides near or adjacent to regional parks, or new regional trails near park and rides or fixed route transit lines
  - Promote a transit day pass or family pass to regional parks
  - Provide free rides to large special events in regional parks
  - Add transit stops that are convenient to regional parks and trails
- Collaborate with local agencies to update and enhance the draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding Best Practices guide