

# Information Item

Community Development Committee



**Meeting Date:** October 21, 2024

## Topic

Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361) Tracey Kinney, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029) Kevin Phan, Planner (651-602-1345)
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Parks

## Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

## Background

The Metropolitan Council has reached an important milestone in its work on the 2050 regional development guide, Imagine 2050. On October 7, 2024, the public comment period closed for the draft Imagine 2050 plan. Like the current regional development guide, Thrive MSP 2040, Imagine 2050 will help foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region. Imagine 2050 will contain each of the Council's system and policy plans, including regional parks and trails, transportation, water resources, land use, and housing.

As part of the planned integration of the regional parks and trails policy plan into Imagine 2050, Met Council staff reviewed existing and proposed content to ensure it is fundamentally oriented to the regional development guide's focus on objectives, policies, and actions. Content that is predominately contextual, procedural, or includes more detailed requirements is proposed to reside in the new draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook. This new Handbook is akin to the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook that describes comprehensive planning requirements and processes, as well as contains planning-related resources. Council staff shared updates on the draft planning handbook with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) at their June and October 2024 meetings.

Revisions to the draft planning handbook have been made based on comments from MPOSC, the Community Development Committee (CDC), and regional parks implementing agencies. The main changes to the draft planning handbook are refinements of existing content with the proposed addition of boundary adjustment criteria for regional trails (Section 5: Planning).

At the October 21, 2024 CDC meeting, Council staff will share:

- A summary of advice on the draft planning handbook from recent Council committee and regional park implementing agency directors' meetings.
- An overview of the draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook.

While the focus of this information item is the draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook,

work continues on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. Following the public comment period for Imagine 2050, Council staff will prepare a public comment report and refine draft policy plan content as appropriate. Council staff will return to CDC with a high-level summary of public comments received on November 18, 2024 (information item); a draft final planning handbook on December 16, 2024 (business item); and a draft final policy plan on January 20, 2025 (business item). Imagine 2050 is tentatively scheduled for Council adoption on February 12, 2025 (Table 1).

*Table 1: Schedule for finalizing planning handbook, parks and trails policy, and Imagine 2050*

<b>Date/Timing</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
October 3, 2024	90% draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (MPOSC information item)
October 7, 2024	Public comment period closes
Varies	Final public comment reports prepared
October 21, 2024	90% draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (CDC information item)
November 7, 2024	High-level summary of public comments received on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (MPOSC information item)
November 18, 2024	High-level summary of public comments received on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (CDC information item)
December 5, 2024	Draft final Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (MPOSC business item)
December 16, 2024	Draft final Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (CDC business item)
January 8, 2025	Draft final Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (MC business item)
January 9, 2025	Draft final Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (MPOSC business item)
January 20, 2025	Draft final Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (CDC business item)
February 12, 2025	Metropolitan Council adoption of Imagine 2050

The draft policy plan is the result of numerous discussions with regional park implementing agencies, the Metropolitan Council’s Committee of the Whole, CDC and MPOSC, as well as extensive outreach to prioritized communities. Engagement with MPOSC on the 2050 regional development guide began in August 2022, with focused discussions on updating the *Regional Parks Policy Plan* beginning in October 2022. A summary of the extensive engagement with MPOSC appears in Table 2.

*Table 2: Summary of Regional Development Guide engagement with Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>
October 6, 2022	Regional vision, values, and goals; kick-off the Regional Parks Policy Plan update process; gather input on key topics and issues to inform policy plan workgroups
March 2, 2023	Council-endorsed regional values and vision statements; Regional Parks Policy Plan project timeline; proposal for regional park implementing agency-Council policy plan workgroups.



April 6, 2023	Small group activities focused on developing vision, mission, and values for the regional parks and trails system.
June 1, 2023	Developing shared regional goals and policy area objectives
August 3, 2023	Regional goals; regional parks and trails system vision, mission, and values; the development of a community, stakeholder and public engagement plan; launch of two more policy plan workgroups
November 2, 2023	Outcomes of policy plan workgroups; draft regional parks and trails objectives; preview remaining policy plan workgroups
January 4, 2024	Proposal for engaging MPOSC in early 2024, schedule for finalizing the Regional Development Guide, revised set of draft parks objectives
February 1, 2024	Revised set of draft parks objectives, subset of the draft objectives surrounding the Climate and Natural Systems topic, local forecasts
March 7, 2024	Revised draft regional parks and trails objectives; emerging ideas on policies and actions; background information on the existing Regional Parks Policy Plan and how components of it may change going forward
April 4, 2024	Revised regional parks and trails objectives; emerging ideas on regional parks and trails policies and actions; emerging thinking on a Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook
May 2, 2024	Overview of the draft 60% Regional Parks and Trails Plan; deeper dives into section 7 (Recreation, Facilities, and Programming) and section 8 (Finance)
June 6, 2024	Overview of the draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook; deeper dives into section 3(Natural Systems) and section 4 (Climate Resilience)
July 11, 2024	Deeper dives into section 2 (System plan), section 5 (Planning), and section 6 (System protection), and associated content in the draft planning handbook
August 1, 2024	Overview of the public comment (90%) draft of the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, with a particular focus on new and different elements of the draft 2050 plan
October 3, 2024	Overview of the 90% draft planning handbook with a particular focus on boundary adjustment criteria for regional trails

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). Completion of the policy plan update, as an integrated part of Imagine 2050, is expected in early 2025.

