

Business Item

Community Development Committee



Committee Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: February 12, 2025

Business Item: 2025-3 JT

Accept the public comment reports and adopt Imagine 2050, including land use policy, the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145, 473.147, & 473.859, subs. 2 and 4
Staff Prepared/Presented:	LisaBeth Barajas, Executive Director, Community Development Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager, Local Planning Assistance Emmett Mullin, Senior Manager, Regional Parks and Trails Sarah Berke, Senior Manager, Housing and Livable Communities
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Accept the public comment reports for Regional Vision, Values, and Goals; Land Use Policy; the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan; and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan as components of Imagine 2050.
2. Adopt the Regional Vision, Values, and Goals; Land Use Policy; the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan; and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan as components of Imagine 2050.
3. Adopt the local forecasts through 2050 as shown in Appendix A of the Vision, Values, Goals component of Imagine 2050.
4. Authorize staff to finalize the preliminary allocations in Appendix B, Future Affordable Housing Need by Local Jurisdiction, of the 2050 Housing Policy Plan for inclusion in the final document for Council adoption.

Background

These items are part of the Imagine 2050 plan and will be brought forward as part of the consolidated action with the same business item for the governing body of the Metropolitan Council. Each of the appropriate Council committees and commissions will review and take action on their specific components of Imagine 2050. The components in front of the Community Development Committee for review and action include the following: the regional vision, values, and goals; the Land Use Policy; the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan. A consensus of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commissioners present voted to forward the Imagine 2050 business item to the Community Development Committee, to accept the public comment report and adopt the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan as presented. Additionally, two commissioners not able to attend, District A Commissioner Monica Dillenburg and District B Commissioner Bob Moeller, emailed their support and concurrence with recommendations. The Committee report is appended to the end of this business item.

The Metropolitan Council is required by Minn. Stat. § 473.145 to create a long-range plan to

establish the vision, values, goals, and land use objectives, policies, and actions to guide the growth and development of the Twin Cities metro region. Imagine 2050 includes the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. § 473.147) and the Housing Policy Plan, which provides an expanded policy framework related to the housing elements identified in statute (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subs. 2 and 4) as well as direction of the Council’s housing-related programs. The draft regional planning document, Imagine 2050, sets cross-cutting goals and expectations that apply to and are supported by policy plans – the Transportation Policy Plan, the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, the Housing Policy Plan, and the Water Policy Plan.

Planning Process

The Council initiated the 2050 planning process starting with a review of findings and trends from 2040 local comprehensive plans which had largely been completed. This comprehensive plan composite, along with the Council’s work on scenarios planning, new inputs from the 2020 Census, the Regional Parks Visitor Study, regional and local forecasting, and annual analysis and reporting on population and development trends, such as housing and affordable housing production, land use inventory reporting, employment trends, Plat Monitoring Program, Agriculture Preserves Program reporting, and trends in comprehensive plan amendments among others, all serve as a foundation for the long-range planning process.

The Council has been engaging with underrepresented and historically marginalized voices from across the region, with policy makers, and with local government representatives having held more than 1,000 conversations with all of these groups. The Council has engaged and continued to engage with American Indian leaders through the American Indian Advisory Council. Resident engagement has ranged from formal policy cohorts ([Youth Leaders Collaborative](#) and [Community Leaders Collaboration](#)) to more informal (focus group conversations, workshops, and surveys). Council staff presented an [engagement summary](#) last fall to the full Council. Residents across the region will continue to be engaged through the public comment period and beyond through the [Council’s Art + Policy](#) project.

Committees, Technical Advisory Groups, and Work Groups

In addition to the robust resident engagement, the land use, housing, and parks sections each had formal advisory groups working with Council staff in the identification of issues, analysis, and development of content.

Formal Committees

- Metropolitan Council Community Development Committee
- Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC)
- Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC)
- Equity Advisory Committee

Council Member Work Groups

- 2050 Regional Development Guide Work Group
- Housing Work Group
- Climate Work Group

Local government representatives, organizations, and other stakeholder groups

- Regional Planning Advisory Group: convened in partnership with Metro Cities with municipal administrators, managers, planning directors, and city planners.
- Community Designations Focus Group
- Land Use Focus Group
- Community Leaders Technical Advisory Group
- Rural and Agricultural Policy Engagement Series: Sessions with local governments, large and small producers, and farmers of color organizations.
- Regional Climate and Natural Systems Work Group: convened in partnership with the Metro Conservation Network with representatives from watersheds, counties, soil and water



conservation districts, regional parks implementing agencies, the National Park Service, and conservation organizations.

- Local Government Climate and Natural Systems Technical Advisory Team: municipal staff from across the region.
- Housing Policy Technical Advisory Group: with representatives from municipalities, counties, public housing agencies, private and non-profit development companies, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and Minnesota Housing.
- Regional Park Implementing Agency-Council monthly partner meetings.
- Regional Parks Technical Work Groups:
 - Community Engagement Work Group
 - Mission, Vision, Values Work Group
 - Regional Trails and Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) Work Group
 - Sustainable Funding Work Group
 - Recreation Activities and Facilities Work Group
 - Park and Trail Plan Requirements Work Group
 - System Plan Considerations Work Group

Public Comment Process and Response to Comments

A public comment period for all components of Imagine 2050, including the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, occurred from August 15 to October 7, 2024, with a public hearing occurring on September 25, 2024. During that time, approximately 2,000 total comments were received from approximately 500 organizations and individuals.

Specifically, general feedback on Imagine 2050 came from five cities, one county, and 55 residents of the region. The Imagine 2050 Vision, Values, and Goals section received 32 comments from six cities, one county, two non-governmental organizations, one Metropolitan Council advisory committee, one federal agency, and seven residents of the region. The draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan received approximately 105 comments from five counties, six cities, and three local and federal parks agencies. The draft Housing Policy Plan received approximately 180 comments from 28 cities, four counties, three non-governmental organizations, one Metropolitan Council advisory committee, one state agency, one federal agency, and 25 residents of the region. The draft Land Use Policy Plan received approximately 500 comments from 45 cities, three counties, four non-governmental organizations, two townships, one state agency, one federal agency, and 42 residents of the region.

A summary of proposed changes for each of the sections are included as Attachments 1 through 4. Council staff will review the proposed changes with the Committee as part of the meeting presentation. The full proposed public comment report for each component of Imagine 2050 in front of CDC are posted with the Committee agenda.

Suburban Edge Density Policy

The Community Development Committee, along with other advisory committees and Imagine 2050 engagement groups, has had many conversations about how best to advance regional goals through land use policy. The Committee has received public comments in opposition to the proposed density policy for the Suburban Edge communities. Imagine 2050 proposes increasing the minimum average density requirements for communities within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area as follows:

Table 1: Overall Density expectations by community designation and service area, Metropolitan Urban Service Area

Metropolitan Urban Service Areas Minimum Average Net Density	
Urban	25 units per acre
Urban Edge	14 units per acre
Suburban	7 units per acre
Suburban Edge	4 units per acre



A specific point of discussion is the Suburban Edge minimum density expectation currently proposed in the draft Imagine 2050 at 4 units per acre. The expectation in Thrive MSP 2040 was 3-5 units per acre for similarly designated communities. The Committee continued the discussion at its December 16 and its January 6 committee meetings. At its January 6 meeting, the Committee directed staff to present options for the Council’s consideration. Table 2 below identifies three options for consideration, including a proposed framework for responding to comments received in opposition to the 4 units per acre density that was included in the draft Imagine 2050.

Table 2: Suburban Edge Density Options

Option	Proposed Public Comment Response Framework
Option A: 4 units per acre	As shown in the Public Comment Report: We appreciate your concerns. The Council has noted that density is one of the many tools that are used to implement the five regional goals.
Option B: 3.5 units per acre	The Council understands that some Suburban Edge communities may face challenges in planning for the proposed density of 4 units per acre. The Council also recognizes that we must use all available tools to advance our regional goals. The Council is also committed to providing local support and technical assistance to aid local governments as they undertake their 2050 local planning processes. As such, the Council will revise the minimum density expectation to 3.5 units per acre.
Option C: 3.0 units per acre	The Council understands that some Suburban Edge communities may face challenges in planning for the proposed density of 4 units per acre as the previous minimum density of 3 units per acre had been in place for a couple of planning cycles. As such, the Council will revise the minimum density expectation for Suburban Edge communities to 3 units per acre.

Options B and C would require an additional proposed action as part of the Committee’s action. Should the Committee choose to amend the proposed action to reflect a change to Option B or Option C, Council staff have included proposed amendment language below:

- Option B: Direct staff to amend the Land Use Policy to reflect a Suburban Edge minimum density expectation of 3.5 units per acre and to update the public comment report consistent with the proposed response framework in Table 2 where applicable.
- Option C: Direct staff to amend the Land Use Policy to reflect a Suburban Edge minimum density expectation of 3.0 units per acre and to update the public comment report consistent with the proposed response framework in Table 2 where applicable.

Allocation of Affordable Housing Need

The Allocation of Future Affordable Housing Need presented in Appendix B of the Housing Policy Plan chapter is based on draft forecast local forecasts for communities that were developed ahead of the public comment period. These calculations will be updated according to the methodology in Appendix C when final numbers of anticipated growth in sewer-served households by locality are available, anticipated later in January 2025. The preliminary allocations will be finalized before final Council adoption.

Rationale

After several years of engagement, analysis, and planning, the identified components for Imagine 2050 have been revised in response to public comments. The components meet the statutory requirements and advance the Council’s priorities as identified in the Imagine 2050 documents.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Imagine 2050 and the different system and policy plans within it have been developed in the spirit of the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes of stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. With each 10-year planning cycle, the resulting regional policy builds on the prior regional



development guide. Imagine 2050 includes responses to the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes, as well as an updated vision and goals for the region in 2050. It also contains the shared regional goals that guide all of the policy work, including additional detail related to equity, addressing racial disparities, and climate change.

Funding

The planning process and engagement activities have been funded as a regular part of the Community Development annual budget.

Small Business Inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small businesses with the proposed action.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Vision, Values, Goals – Summary of Changes

Attachment 2: Land Use Policy – Summary of Changes

Attachment 3: Housing Policy Plan – Summary of Changes

Attachment 4: Regional Parks and Trails Plan – Summary of Changes



Attachment 1: Vision, Values, Goals – Summary of Changes

This Summary of Changes provides an overview of the significant changes being proposed as part of the Vision, Values, and Goals chapter of Imagine 2050, and is intended to help the reader navigate the proposed revisions. The Vision, Values, and Goals have the following key directions:

- An integrated and consolidated approach to developing the regional development guide and the systems and policy plans concurrently
- A new Regional Vision for Imagine 2050
- An updated description of the context of the region that both marks where the region is today and recognizes the significant events and changes since the development of Imagine 2050
- Shared Regional Values including Equity, Leadership, Accountability, and Stewardship
- Five Regional Goals to guide and direct the growth and development of the region through 2050
 - 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

Overall – Regional Vision, Values Goals

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	Updated terminology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Latino/a/x to Latine ○ Updated references to the COVID-19 pandemic for consistency in spelling (all capitals) and in nomenclature References: Updated footnotes for consistent citations and fixed broken links. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping corrections to typos, grammar, punctuation

Imagining and Planning for an Equitable and Resilient Future

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
The Role of Regional Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included the full statutory language directing the Council to develop a comprehensive development guide (Minn. Stat. 473.145)
Dakota Makoce k'a Mni Okiciyaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement: Added the full land, water, and people acknowledgement as recommended by the American Indian Advisory Council.

Landscape of the Region

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated introductory language to expand upon the successes in the region and the value of regional and coordinated planning
One decade's two eras: how our region changed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added content regarding the far-reaching the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic • Added a paragraph about social impacts resulting from the pandemic and aligning with key points in the Healthy and Safe



between 2014 and 2024	goal section
Social and environmental, our environment is changing	<p>Reformatted data presented in Table one as a Figure to visually display racial inequities in the Twin Cities Metro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised narrative regarding the murder of George Floyd and resulting civil unrest. <p>Consolidated figures in the section titled “We live in a warming, wetter region” drawing more narrative into the text and reducing redundancy with the Climate Goal section.</p>
The people of our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated figures on immigration to: Consolidate and simplify information across this section Visually display some information in map form Regional and Local Forecasts: updated text and figures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect the changes to Local Forecasts and Community Designations made during the public comment period Add clarity and accessibility to certain figures
Our region’s economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added national and comparative examples of economic strength Added more details about economic trends in the region to align with the Dynamic and Resilient Goal Updated text and figures on employment forecasts to reflect changes made during the public comment period on Community Designations and Local Forecasts
NEW Our region’s housing and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added a new section titled Our region’s housing and development, including text and figures describing the last decade’s trends

Regional Vision, Values, and Goals

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Regional Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added clarifying language highlighting the intersectionality of the Regional Goals. Added text clarifying how the Goals in this chapter relate to each of the chapters of Imagine 2050 Added text describing the role of Imagine 2050 in also guiding the Council’s commitments and priorities for its own programs, investments, and activities.

Our region is equitable and inclusive

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added introductory language describing the evolution of the Council’s work around equity since adoption of Thrive MSP 2040 and where we are today. Added a commitment to regularly report and evaluate the implementation of equity as described in Imagine 2050
Patterns of historical injustices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added clarifying language describing how inequities continue today including examples and related citations



Environmental Justice Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added text related to the inclusion of natural communities as component of applying the Environmental Justice Framework
Community-Centered Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added a commitment regarding to methods and activities the Council uses to increase meaningful participation among people who do not participate in conventional engagement activities Added a case study to show how Community-Centered Engagement was put into practice as a part of Imagine 2050
Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the section with Commitments for the Council overall, as recommended by the American Indian Advisory Council Added a summary of recommended commitments can be found in the policy chapters

Our communities are healthy and safe

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	Revised some citations, and made minor corrections to text such as typos, grammar, and punctuation.

Our region is dynamic and resilient

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Introductory language	Added three Council commitments for advancing this regional goal Minor text revisions for clarity and consistency
Opportunities for an economically resilient future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganized content to improve clarity and ease of reading. Added new subheadings to better for clarity, including “Cultivating a more inclusive economy,” “Supporting energy independence,” and “Fostering a robust digital infrastructure,”

We lead on addressing climate change

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	Updated figures throughout to reflect updated modeling and to improve legibility and accessibility
Energy emissions	Reorganized content around emissions sources with new headings and text descriptions for Residential, Commercial, and Industrial sectors
Transportation emissions	Added discussion regarding the transportation emissions targets set by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the region.
Waste emissions	Added Council commitment to collaborating with applicable agencies in reducing emissions related to waste management

We protect and restore natural systems

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	Clarified language indicating the importance of all living beings, not solely focused on the benefits to humans
Connection to State Efforts and Met Council Roles	Added other State laws that protect natural resources in the metro area



Appendices

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
NEW Appendix A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Included Imagine 2050 Local Forecasts for population, households, and employment• Forecasts in this Appendix reflect changes that were made from the public comment version and in response to continued dialogue with local units of government and to comments received during the public comment period
Appendix B	Was formerly titled Appendix A. No other changes were made in this Appendix



Attachment 2: Land Use Policy – Summary of Changes

This Summary of Changes provides an overview of the significant changes being proposed as part of the 2050 Land Use Policy Plan, which is a chapter of Imagine 2050. This summary should be used to help navigate the 2050 Land Use Policy Plan, as presented with changes in red line. The updates include clarification of language and proofreading updates to text and visuals, addition of contextual information that provides background for policies, and content changes and additions to actions that respond to public comment suggestions and feedback.

Guiding Growth and Development in the Region

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Guiding Growth and Development in the Region	Housekeeping edits to correct typos, grammar, and punctuation.

Urban and Rural Service Areas

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Urban and Rural Service Areas	<p>Added context through additional and revised language in the descriptions of both Urban and Rural Service areas for clarity and distinction between the two.</p> <p>Added context for Rural Centers in the Rural Service Area.</p> <p>Listed community designations in each service area.</p>

Community Designations

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Community Designations	<p>Added example to demonstrate instances of communities with more than one designation.</p> <p>Updated Community Designation maps, both regional and individual, to reflect changes to individual communities based on public comment changes, corrections, and clarifications for communities with more than one designation.</p> <p>Updated the list of individual communities' designations to reflect changes based on public comment changes, corrections, and clarifications for communities with more than one designation.</p> <p>Overall: Added context to all descriptions of community designations to ensure there was sufficient distinction between each and to include transportation/transit distinctions.</p> <p>Added clarification to notes for each section where dual community designations may be present because of orderly annexation agreements.</p>

Land Use Objectives, Policies, and Actions

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
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<p>Overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping edits to correct typos, grammar, and punctuation. • Clarification throughout of roles and responsibilities for the Met Council and Local Governments via both labels and text. • Clarification throughout of terms related to required or encouraged policies and actions. • Simplification of language and actions for clarity and removal or combination of duplicative actions where needed. • Added clarifications related to potential content needed in local comprehensive plans, where necessary. • Ensured that each introduction or narrative connected to all policies within the Objective.
<p>Objective 1: Respect the relationship with land and water as a foundation for regional growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added clarity to the proposed approach to administrative guidelines review and update in Policy 2, Action 3 related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the flexibility integrated into those guidelines. ○ areas of needed analysis including stormwater management areas, permanent public easements, and others ○ collaboration with local governments ○ updates to the Plat Monitoring Program ○ considerations for redevelopment/infill projects ○ consideration of positive past planning outcomes ○ commitments to provision of technical assistance to help with local comprehensive planning • Clarified that Policy 2, Action 4 only requires communities within the MUSA to allow more than one housing type within residential land use categories. • Added clarity for Orderly Annexation Area (OAA) policies in Policy 2, Action 5 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review of land supply within the planning horizon for OAAs, termination of OAAs within the planning horizon, and planning implications ○ guidance provided for future urban expansion areas around Rural Centers and Suburban Edge communities adjacent to unincorporated areas. • Removed overly restrictive language in Policy 4 related to solar development to better support productive farmland and added language to strengthen support of allowing long term use of land for agriculture in developed communities. • Clarified intent of Policy 5, Action 6, related to local development review processes and provided example of what that might include. • Added language on terrestrial habitats in Policy 6, Action 5, to better connect to language in Objective 4. • Added language to Policy 6, Action 8, on cross-jurisdictional conversations to support partnerships needed between organizations and within local governments. • Clarified Policy 7 statutory expectations related to aggregate resources planning.
<p>Objective 2: Maximize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and



<p>opportunities for growth in places well-served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure</p>	<p>simplified where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Policy 1, identified primary travel modes instead of the general language of “travel choices.” • Moved previous Policy 3 related to mitigation measures for displacement to Objective 6 which more clearly focuses on displacement and engagement with impacted communities. • Removed Policy 4, Action 3 related to market studies as they are more often completed by developers.
<p>Objective 3: Establish vibrant, inclusive, connected, and safe communities for people to live, work, and recreate in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Clarified terms like human scale, complete streets, living streets, and crime prevention through environmental design. • Removed Policy 1, Action 2, language focusing on the development review process as it was not necessary to frame the actions following it. • Moved Policy 5, Action 6 to Policy 1, Action 8 to better fit content. • Removed duplicative public gathering spaces action from Policy 2 as its better covered in Policy 3. • Clarified authority and responsibility in Policy 4 related to historic preservation adding statutory references. • Moved Universal Design description from Policy 2 to Policy 5 for consolidation of topics. • Moved Policy 5, Action 3, references to collaborating with schools to Action 4.
<p>Objective 4: Prioritize land use and development activities that protect, restore, and enhance natural systems at all scales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Added Policy 4, Actions 3 and 4 regarding provisions for the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area (MRCCA) to carry over from Thrive. • Removed Policy 4, Action 3 as corridors and pollinators are covered in Policy 2 and Policy 5, respectively.
<p>Objective 5: Ensure that people in all types of communities find housing opportunities that align with their needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Clarified that Policy 1, Action 1 only requires communities within the MUSA to allow more than one housing type within residential land use categories. • Added context to Policy 1, Action 5, through examples of supportive actions for locally-led development initiatives.
<p>Objective 6: Remedy past and present discriminatory land use practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Strengthened connection to environmental justice in Policy 3, Action 4, related to inequitable exposure to environmental harms. • Moved previous Objective 3, Policy 3 related to mitigation measures for displacement to Objective 6, Policy 4, which

	more clearly focuses on displacement and engagement with impacted communities.
Objective 7: Implement land use and development practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, embed climate adaptation, and create resilient communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Clarified regional climate strategies in Policy 1, Action 1 and the connection to the regional Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. • Revised Policy 3, Action 1, to reflect the Met Council's ability to set meaningful renewable energy targets for local governments. Instead, local governments will set their own strategies. • Removed Policy 5, Action 7 as it was operational in natures more closely related to implementation tasks.
Objective 8: Support the economic wellbeing of our region and its communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall clarified language and policy intent, roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication and ambiguity, and simplified where possible. • Added introductory language to address questions about Met Council's economic development authority and comments about regional collaboration and partnership in economic development.

Roles and Responsibilities

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
NEW Roles and Responsibilities	<p>Added section on Roles and Responsibilities to clarify how roles and responsibilities are identified in the policy chapter and how requirements are differentiated from considerations.</p> <p>Added context and examples to help clarify the differences between language referring to anticipated minimum planning requirements versus language related to planning considerations.</p>

Implementation

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
NEW Implementation	<p>Added section on Implementation to help clarify next steps like system statements as well as how the planning process will be supported by the Met Council through technical assistance and funding resources.</p>



Attachment 3: Housing Policy Plan – Summary of Changes

This Summary of Changes provides an overview of the significant changes being proposed as part of the 2050 Housing Policy Plan, which is a chapter of Imagine 2050. This summary should be used to help navigate the 2050 Housing Policy Plan, as presented with changes in red line. The updates include clarification of language and proofreading updates to text and visuals, addition of contextual information that provides background for policies, and content changes and additions to actions that respond to public comment suggestions and feedback.

Section One: Proximity and Choice

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Proximity and Choice (Narrative)	<p>Updated data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated projected growth in residents and households, based on most recent (December 2024) forecast Simplified and revised visualizations for clarity and accessibility. Updated data in charts when available, e.g. new permit data for 2023 <p>Clarified Terminology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added definitions and explanatory text for “affordable housing,” Future Need allocation, and Area Median Income Acknowledged that disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity is presented to the extent it is available <p>Added Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added quotes from community engagement with residents Added description of the connection between past and current discrimination and disparities in homeownership and wealth, including citations for relevant studies Added description of the high costs and limited subsidies that are systemic constraints on development of deeply-affordable (30% AMI) units in the region
Objective 1: Fair Housing and Geographic Choice	<p>Fair Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added commitment to explore fair housing guidance specific to Tribal citizens Moved fair housing action related to LCA programs to Objective 1, from Equity section (Objective 6)
Objective 2: Options to Own and Rent	<p>Engagement and Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added action to proactively engage American Indian and Black voucher holders in exploration of wealth-building and homeownership programs Added action to partner with American Indian organizations to develop technical assistance for homeownership pathways <p>Affordable Homeownership: Updated language about how Met Council will support planning for affordable homeownership opportunities</p> <p>Diversity of Rental Housing Types: Added language to highlight the need for rental housing of various specific sizes and types</p>



Section Two: Dignity and Decency

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Dignity and Decency (Narrative)	<p>Simplified, revised, and updated data in visualizations, including design changes to improve accessibility</p> <p>Unsubsidized/NOAH Context: Added discussion and data to highlight the role that unsubsidized affordable homes play in the region’s housing market</p> <p>Accessibility Context: Added and revised language in discussion of need for physically accessible homes and cost considerations of retrofits</p> <p>Homelessness Context: Added definitions in discussion about individuals experiencing homelessness. Added discussion of disparities in terms of health and mortality, race, and age, including citations for relevant studies</p> <p>Supportive Housing Context: Added discussion of supportive housing, including definition, estimated unmet need for supportive housing units, and relevant citations</p>
Objective 3: Stability	<p>Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added action to partner with American Indian community organizations in outreach for new voucher programs • Added action to include schools as partners to address homelessness • Added action to identify opportunities for American Indian organizations to apply for funding <p>Homelessness, Shelter, and Stability in Local Plans: Revised action providing guidance for local governments to include data about homelessness, shelter needs, and plans for addressing housing stability</p>
Objective 4: Quality	<p>NOAH in Local Plans: Revised action to clarify that tools listed for maintaining and preserving NOAH housing are examples of tools that local governments could identify in their plan, but that there is not a requirement to use all tools listed</p>

Section Three: Connection and Wellbeing

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Connection and Wellbeing (Narrative)	<p>Added Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added quotes from community engagement with residents • Added and updated citations <p>Redlining and Displacement:</p> <p>Added visualization of redlining impact on home values</p> <p>Clarified description of redlining and connections to disparities and displacement, including updated and expanded citations to relevant studies</p>



	Quality: Added and clarified language describing housing quality and aging housing infrastructure issues
Objective 5: Cultural Connection and Well-Being	Social and Economic Capital: Revised action related to enhancing social and economic capital of residents in affordable housing, refocusing it on technical assistance and tools the Met Council can provide to support cities in planning
Objective 6: Equity	Fair Housing: Moved fair housing action related to LCA programs to Section 1, Objective 1
Objective 7: Environmental Justice	Water Efficiency: Revised energy-efficiency actions to include water efficiency

Section Four: Implementation

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Future and current affordable housing need	<p>Current Housing Needs: Revised and clarified how current housing needs should be addressed in local plans (additional guidance will be provided in the Local Planning Handbook), in addition to addressing allocation of Future Need, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households earning between 60-115% AMI Homeownership opportunities for households earning less than 80% AMI Homes that are age-restricted or supportive services for older people Housing preservation <p>Manufactured Housing: Added manufactured homes to the types of existing units listed</p> <p>Plan requirements: Clarified housing planning requirements for cities and townships without forecasted sewer-serviced growth</p>
Housing Implementation Plan	<p>Requirements: Clarified language about required tools and reporting requirements</p> <p>Local spending: Removed requirement to include the percentage of local discretionary funding spent on housing</p>

Appendices

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Appendix A: Glossary	<p>Definitions: Added or clarified definitions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation • Social Determinants of Health • Specialized Services • Supportive Housing • Support services
Appendix B: Future Affordable Housing Need	Updated data: Updated allocations to local jurisdictions based on updated regional forecast (<i>pending</i>)
Appendix D:	Technical Advisory Group: Added description of Technical



HPP Technical Advisory Group Engagement Summary	Advisory Group (TAG) review of/comment on the draft plan, and TAG recommendations
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Attachment 4: Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan – Summary of Changes

This Summary of Changes provides an overview of the significant changes being proposed as part of the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, which is considered a chapter of the Regional Development Guide, Imagine 2050. This summary should be used to help navigate the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. This update includes:

- State of the Regional Parks and Trails System
- Regional Parks and Trails Objectives that align with Imagine 2050
- New or updated policies and actions for the following sections:
 - System Plan
 - Natural Systems
 - Climate Resilience
 - Planning
 - System Protection
 - Recreation, Facilities, and Programming
 - Finance
- A new regional parks and trails sub-classification, to be nested under Special Features: Cultural Landscapes
- An updated workplan that outlines seventeen Met Council commitments for the Regional Parks and Trails System.
- The development of a Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (Planning Handbook) that includes policy content requirements, agency-Met Council processes, and planning resources.

Overall – 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated terminology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Master” plan to “long-range” plan ○ Regional Parks System to Regional Parks <u>and Trails</u> System ○ Natural Resources to Natural Systems ○ “Siting” and Acquisition to “Locating” and Acquisition • Policy Plan References: Added cross references to other policy chapters of the Regional Development Guide. • Performance Measures: Added placeholders at the policy level to be developed later in 2025.
Introductory Material	Imagine 2050 Integration: Incorporated Imagine 2050 Regional Vision, Core Values, and Goals

Section One: Overview of the Regional Parks and Trails System and Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Introduction	Regional Parks and Trails System Update: Updated overview and all system facts and total number of miles and acres open to the public.
Role of the Policy Plan	Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Reference: Added “Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook” section to introduce this complementary resource document.



System Funding	System Investment Totals: Updated Table 1-1: Regional Parks and Trails System state and regional funding investments, 1974-2024 - \$1.25 billion
The State of the System	State of the Regional Parks and Trails System: Identifies four key existing conditions as a foundation for future priorities and direction.
Vision, Mission, Values, Objectives	Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives: Added Regional Parks and Trails System vision, mission, values, and objectives.
Other	Research and Engagement Summary: Moved to Planning Handbook

Section Two: System Plan Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
System Plan Policy	New System Plan Policy and Actions: Added to describe existing system plan management to better support the Regional Parks and Trails System.
Overview of System Plan language	Moved Outdoor Recreation System: Language transferred to Planning Handbook.
Action 1: Review and update system plan, classifications	<p>Regional Park and Trail Unit Consolidation: Regional park and trail unit definitions and descriptions were combined into short one-page descriptions, drawing from content in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan’s chapters 2, 3, 4, and 7.</p> <p>Special Features: “Special Recreation Feature” changed to “Special Feature”.</p> <p>Cultural Landscapes Added: Cultural landscapes, a new sub-classification under Special Features was added.</p> <p>Regional Park and Trail Unit Updates: Unit lists and maps were updated to reflect new changes at all four implementation statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing Regional Parks and Trails System facilities ○ Planned Regional Parks and Trails System facilities that are not yet open to the public ○ Regional Parks and Trails System Boundary Adjustments ○ Regional Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors <p>System Plan Summary Update: 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Plan Summary, including unit totals and acreage and mileage. Updated System Level Changes</p> <p>Updated Costs to Complete the System: Updated estimated costs to complete the system - \$3 billion, as required by State Statute.</p> <p>Capital Improvement Plan: Updated Capital improvement plan, as required by State Statute.</p> <p>Implementing Agency-Level Maps: Maps for each implementing agency are proposed to be added to the Planning Handbook as they become available with the issuance of system statements to all metropolitan area communities later in 2025.</p>



Section Three: Natural Systems Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Natural Systems Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Natural Systems Policy and Actions: Added policy and actions to identify and protect natural systems lands in perpetuity for the region. • Reframed “Siting and Acquisition”: Existing “Siting and Acquisition” policy and strategies reframed to sit within Natural Systems policy.
Action 1: Locate and acquire land	<p>Locating and Acquisition Action: Created a Council commitment to partnering with regional park implementing agencies to locate and acquire lands with natural features, access to water, or restoration potential for conservation, recreation, and protection.</p> <p>Three Natural System Factors: Added language around system addition factors of equity, geographic distribution, and natural systems.</p> <p>System Addition Process: Language for process and criteria was moved to Planning Handbook.</p>
Action 2: Research natural systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Systems Research: Added a Council commitment to providing regional park implementing agencies with research and data to better inform restoration and protection of natural systems.
Action 3: Coordinate support for natural systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Systems Coordination: Council commitment to coordinate support for protection, restoration, and maintenance of natural systems work across the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Section Four: Climate Resilience Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Climate Resilience Policy	<p>New Climate Resiliency Policy and Actions: Added policy and actions that promote resilience to climate change and outline Council commitments.</p>
Action 1: Advance climate action	<p>Climate Coordination Efforts: Added Council commitment to support regional park implementing agencies’ efforts to advance climate work through partnership and collaboration.</p>
Action 2: Research climate impacts	<p>Climate Research: Council commitment to partner with regional park implementing agencies to research the regional parks and trails systems impacts on climate change.</p>
Action 3: Drive Awareness	<p>Climate Awareness: Added a Council commitment to partner with regional park implementing agencies to develop strategies and share stories that increase public awareness of the regional parks and trails system’s role in climate mitigation and adaptation.</p>
Action 4: Climate and Environmental Justice	<p>Environmental Justice: Council commitment to incorporate equity into the climate change conversation by gathering perspectives from historically underserved communities and shaping it into future actions.</p>



Section Five: Planning Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Planning Policy	Minimal Policy Language Changes: Policy and Action 2 (Enhanced multimodal access) language largely remain the same.
Action 1: Long-Range Plan Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Public Awareness” Plan Requirement Integration: “Public Awareness” long-range plan requirement was integrated into “Engagement, Participation, and Equity Analysis” requirement. • Long-Range Plan Requirements Moved: Details of long-range plan requirements and plan amendment processes moved to Planning Handbook. • Planning Handbook References: Added introductory language and cross references to planning handbook. • Plan Amendment Descriptions: Provided brief descriptions of Focused long-range plan requirements and Administrative process for minor long-range plan amendments.
Joint Powers Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Joint Powers Agreements: Moved existing Joint Powers Agreements section to Planning Handbook.
Cost Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed Cost Sharing: Existing Cost Sharing strategy removed; redundant with Finance Policy and Grant Administration Guide.

Section Six: System Protection Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
System Protection Policy	Minimal Policy Changes: Policy and supporting language largely remain the same.
Action 1: Long-range plan requirements	Comprehensive Planning Clarifications: Added clarification and examples on what constitutes as a “substantial departure” from a long-range plan.
Action 2: Conversions	Streamlined Land Conversion Language: Clarified conversion language to be more streamlined. Language mostly remains the same.
Existing Reimburse. for Contamination	Moved Reimbursement for Contamination Strategy: Existing strategy moved to the Grant Administration Guide.
Existing Environmental Site Assessments	Moved Existing Environmental Site Assessments Strategy: Existing strategy to the Grant Administration Guide.
Action 3: Telecomm. Towers	Telecommunication Towers Process: Moved process and criteria in the Telecommunication towers action to the Planning Handbook.
Action 4: Placement of Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Wastewater: Updated language on regional wastewater infrastructure. • Easement Criteria Consistency: Updated easement criteria to be consistent with Council practice.



Section Seven: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Action 1: Increase equity in programs, activities, and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Equity Action: Council commitment to developing opportunities, programs, and spaces that strive to uplift community connections to the outdoors while counteracting barriers and harm placed on underrepresented communities. • Prioritized Equity: Existing “Equitable Use” action was reorganized to be the first action
Action 2: People and Natural Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Natural Systems: Added a Council commitment to support the conservation and restoration of natural systems alongside leisure, play, and creative opportunities in ways that connect people to each other and the outdoors. • New Recreational Activities and Facilities Process: Replaced static recreational activities list and processes associated with primary and secondary activities with a criteria-based evaluation process. Detailed process provided in Planning Handbook.
Action 3: Cross-Sector Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Sector Opportunities: Council commitment to providing a wide spectrum of connections and partnerships in the outdoors through recreation, arts, programming, transit, public health, education, stewardship, and community.
Action 4: Raising Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Awareness: New action that expands how we connect people to regional parks and trails with a focus on underrepresented communities through awareness building.
Action 5: Trail system coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Coordination with Regional Bicycle Transportation Network: Commitment to better coordinate the Regional Trail System with the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.
Action 6: Ineligible Activities and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified Ineligible Activities: Consolidated activities and facilities that are ineligible for regional funding due to being closely aligned with local recreational systems.

Section Eight: Finance Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Finance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified Policy Statement and Action Reorganization: Content reorganized to separate four statutory requirements followed by five actions. Clarified Met Council’s commitment to collaboratively support the Regional Parks and Trails System. • Streamlined Finance Language: Removed language that was redundant with Grant Administration Guide.
Existing RPPP Strategy 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed Reimbursement Limitations Strategy: Removed for no longer being legal.
Action 2: Equity considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Equity Grant Program: Updated equity considerations and expanded Council commitment to Equity Grant Program. • Moved Equity Toolkit: Equity toolkit language moved to Planning Handbook.



Action 3: Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Cap: Increased program cap for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to \$2 million for Parks and Trails Legacy Fund and \$3 million for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.
Action 4: Regional Funding Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Commitment to Funding: Added a Council commitment to actively analyze its regional funding budget strategy and pursue increasing regional funding commitment for the system wherever possible.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Content to System Plan: Transferred Capital Improvement Plan and Costs to Complete the System to Section Two: System Plan.



Summary of Changes

Add the following items to the 2025-2028 workplan:

Accountability and Research

- 1. Develop a process to create a small set of performance measures at the Policy level to measure progress toward our key Regional Park and Trail System priorities.
- 2. Implement the 2025 Regional Parks and Trails System Visitor Study.
- 3. Explore expanding cost-effective research approaches, including forecasting tools, that provide implementing agencies with the management information at the park and trail unit level.

Protection and Restoration

- 4. Explore establishment of a Special Feature – Historical landscape sub-classification
- 5. Explore the establishment of a Special features – Open space/natural systems sub-classification in consultation with the Council’s Natural Systems workgroup. This effort includes renewal of the Regionally Significant Ecological Area dataset.
- 6. Reconvene Climate and Natural Systems Workgroup to discuss implementation steps for Climate Resilience Policy and Actions.

Culture

- 7. Develop a cultural resources inventory requirement for long-range planning in partnership with key stakeholders.
- 8. Continue to develop and refine the Cultural Landscape Classification, in coordination with American Indian Tribes, other cultural communities, and regional park implementing agencies.
- 9. Develop an inventory of and guidelines for harvestable fruits, mushrooms, and other plants in partnership with American Indian groups, regional park implementing agencies, and other partners.
- 10. As part of a broader Council effort, develop a training program and learning opportunities for Council and regional park implementing agency staff to explore indigenous land management practices and other related topics.

Trails

- 11. Continue to convene a trail coordination workgroup, supporting the development of a more coordinated, integrated, and connected regional trails system and Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.
- 12. Create regional guidelines for e-bike use on regional trails.
- 13. Explore system-wide wayfinding and signage minimum requirements.

Finance

- 14. Explore scoping and development of a systemwide Asset Preservation Plan, or similar.
- 15. Continue to pursue Pay-Go for greater flexibility to fund a wider range of activities, facilities, and programs. Pay-Go would provide an additional tool for funding the regional system.
- 16. Explore changing/reducing the local match requirement for the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Program, as state rules allow.
- 17. Continue discussion of strategic funding for the Regional Parks and Trails System, with a goal to better meet the needs of this growing system.



Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee: January 21, 2025

Metropolitan Council: February 12, 2025

Business Item: 2025-3 JT

Accept the Public Comment Report and Adopt the Imagine 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Chapter.

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) Tracey Kinney, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029) Emmett Mullin, Manager (651-602-1360) Kevin Phan, Planner (651-602-1333)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Parks

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Accept the public comment report on the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan.
2. Adopt the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Chapter.

Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Discussion

Colin Kelly, Tracey Kinney, Emmett Mullin, and Kevin Phan presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on January 9, 2024.

Commissioner Yakes expressed appreciation for staff's work and the presentation.

Commissioner Harris shared several comments and questions. Referencing the "clean" version of the policy plan, she suggested referencing water trails within the Regional Trails section on page 29 and potentially adding additional uses like kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding. Referencing the Estimated Cost to Complete the System section on page 59, Harris also asked whether the Regional Parks and Trails System will ever truly be complete. Chair Yarusso noted that there may be different perspectives on what "complete" means. Mullin said that the cost to complete the system is a requirement called out in legislation. In addition, Harris referenced Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Action 1 on page 86 and raised concerns about the language "offer recreational opportunities for *all* users", citing concerns about e-bike use on regional trails (italicized emphasis added). Kelly responded that Section Nine of the policy plan – the 2025-2028 workplan – includes an item specifically intended to respond to this concern, namely "12. Create regional guidelines for e-bike use on regional trails." Harris also referenced Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Action 5 on page 89 and asked whether it was appropriate for planned trails to travel through residential areas. Mullin responded that it was appropriate and often desired for regional trails to travel through residential areas. Lastly, Harris referenced item 7 in the work plan, "Develop a cultural resources inventory requirement for long-range planning in partnership with key stakeholders", noting that some people may find the term "stakeholders" to be offensive. Council Member Vento suggested consulting with Council Community Relations Consultant Allision

Waukau on the topic.

Chair Yarusso acknowledged the amount of work that has gone into the development of the policy plan but noted that there is still a lot of work to be done, referencing the 2025-2028 workplan. Yarusso added there are likely additional items that will be taken up over the next four years as well.

Recognizing there was not a quorum present, Commissioner Yakes said he was happy to make a recommendation to forward this business item to the Community Development Committee for consideration. Chair Yarusso asked Commissioners present if there were any concerns with this approach. There were no concerns raised.

A consensus of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commissioners present voted to forward the Imagine 2050 business item to the Community Development Committee, to accept the public comment report, and adopt the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan as presented. Additionally, two MPOSC commissioners not able to attend, District A Commissioner Monica Dillenburg and District B Commissioner Bob Moeller, emailed their support and concurrence with recommendations.



Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission: January 9, 2025

Community Development Committee Meeting: January 21, 2025

Metropolitan Council: February 12, 2025

Business Item: 2025-3 JT

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Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Parks and Trails

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Accept the public comment report on the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan.
2. Adopt the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Chapter.

Background

The Council has substantially completed the development of the 2050 Regional Development Guide, Imagine 2050. The regional development guide, along with the Council's system and policy plans, help guide the orderly growth and development of the Twin Cities metropolitan region. The policy plans include Regional Parks and Trails, Transportation, Land Use, Water Resources, and Housing.

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Plan is the result of numerous discussions with regional park implementing agencies, the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole, Community Development Committee, and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, as well as extensive outreach to prioritized communities. A summary of regional development guide engagement with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission appears below (Table 1).

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan integrates key existing conditions and new Regional Parks and Trails System vision, mission, values, and objectives. Like other components of Imagine 2050, the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan elevates equity, natural systems, and climate resilience. The policy plan includes new policies and actions for the system plan, natural systems, and climate resilience. It also includes updated actions for planning; system protection; recreation, facilities, and programming; and finance. In addition, a workplan for implementing priority policy plan actions over the next four years is included.

A public comment period for all components of Imagine 2050, including the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, occurred from August 15 to October 7, 2024, with a public hearing occurring on September 25, 2024. During that time, more than 1,200 total comments were received from approximately 500 organizations and individuals. Specifically, the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan received approximately 105 comments from five counties, six cities, and three local and federal parks agencies. At the November 7 and December 5, 2024 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meetings, and November 18 Community Development Committee meeting, Council staff shared summaries of public comments and proposed policy plan revisions resulting from comments.

At the January 9, 2025, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) meeting, Council staff will share a public comment report and a summary of proposed changes (Attachment 1) to the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan and seek the Commission’s approval of proposed actions relating to these items.

Major themes of the public comment report generally align with the sections of the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan and include:

- System classification and designation
- Research and data
- Natural systems and climate resilience
- Planning and implementation
- Equity and access
- Funding and operations

Commenters expressed appreciation for opportunities to participate in the planning process and expressed support for the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. Other commenters offered constructive feedback on the policy plan. Met Council staff revised the policy plan as a result of comments received and the document is stronger as a result.

Rationale

Minnesota law requires the Met 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, as an integrated part of *Imagine 2050*, is expected in early 2025.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan advances the Thrive MSP 2040 outcome of Livability through increasing access to nature-based outdoor recreation, which enhances the quality of life throughout the region. It also advances the Thrive outcome of Equity through strengthening equitable use of the regional parks and trails system by reducing barriers to participation across race, ethnicity, income, and ability.

Known Support / Opposition

The public comment period provided an opportunity for input on the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. The public comment report documents both comments indicating support and opposition to portions of the draft plan, along with revisions in response to the comments. The Public Comment Report provides a list of individual comments received during the public comment period.

Table 1: Summary of Regional Development Guide engagement with Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Date	Focus
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;





Date	Focus
	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	Update on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook, with a particular focus on section 5 (Planning) and regional trail boundary adjustment criteria
November 7, 2024	Summary of public comments on the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, proposed plan modifications, and next steps
December 5, 2024	Summary of public comments on the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, proposed plan modifications, and next steps continued

Attachment 1. Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan – Summary of Changes

This Summary of Changes provides an overview of the significant changes being proposed as part of the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, which is considered a chapter of the Regional Development Guide, Imagine 2050. This summary should be used to help navigate the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. This update includes:

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- New or updated policies and actions for the following sections:
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- A new regional parks and trails sub-classification, to be nested under Special Features: Cultural Landscapes
- An updated workplan that outlines seventeen Met Council commitments for the Regional Parks and Trails System.
- The development of a Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (Planning Handbook) that includes policy content requirements, agency-Met Council processes, and planning resources.

Overall – 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated terminology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Master” plan to “long-range” plan ○ Regional Parks System to Regional Parks <u>and Trails</u> System ○ Natural Resources to Natural Systems ○ “Siting” and Acquisition to “Locating” and Acquisition • Policy Plan References: Added cross references to other policy chapters of the Regional Development Guide. • Performance Measures: Added placeholders at the policy level to be developed later in 2025.
Introductory Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine 2050 Integration: Incorporated Imagine 2050 Regional Vision, Core Values, and Goals

Section One: Overview of the Regional Parks and Trails System and Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Location in Plan	Summary of Changes
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Role of the Policy Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Reference: Added “Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook” section to introduce this complementary resource document.



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Section Two: System Plan Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
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Section Three: Natural Systems Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Natural Systems Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Natural Systems Policy and Actions: Added policy and actions to identify and protect natural systems lands in perpetuity for the region. • Reframed “Siting and Acquisition”: Existing “Siting and Acquisition” policy and strategies reframed to sit within Natural Systems policy.
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Action 4: Climate and Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Justice: Council commitment to incorporate equity into the climate change conversation by gathering perspectives from historically underserved communities and shaping it into future actions.

Section Five: Planning Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Planning Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal Policy Language Changes: Policy and Action 2 (Enhanced multimodal access) language largely remain the same.
Action 1: Long-Range Plan Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Public Awareness” Plan Requirement Integration: “Public Awareness” long-range plan requirement was integrated into “Engagement, Participation, and Equity Analysis” requirement.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-Range Plan Requirements Moved: Details of long-range plan requirements and plan amendment processes moved to Planning Handbook. • Planning Handbook References: Added introductory language and cross references to planning handbook. • Plan Amendment Descriptions: Provided brief descriptions of Focused long-range plan requirements and Administrative process for minor long-range plan amendments.
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Section Header	Summary of Changes
System Protection Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal Policy Changes: Policy and supporting language largely remain the same.
Action 1: Long-range plan requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Planning Clarifications: Added clarification and examples on what constitutes as a “substantial departure” from a long-range plan.
Action 2: Conversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined Land Conversion Language: Clarified conversion language to be more streamlined. Language mostly remains the same.
Existing Reimburse. for Contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Reimbursement for Contamination Strategy: Existing strategy moved to the Grant Administration Guide.
Existing Environmental Site Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Existing Environmental Site Assessments Strategy: Existing strategy to the Grant Administration Guide.
Action 3: Telecomm. Towers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunication Towers Process: Moved process and criteria in the Telecommunication towers action to the Planning Handbook.
Action 4: Placement of Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Wastewater: Updated language on regional wastewater infrastructure. • Easement Criteria Consistency: Updated easement criteria to be consistent with Council practice.

Section Seven: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Action 1: Increase equity in programs, activities, and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Equity Action: Council commitment to developing opportunities, programs, and spaces that strive to uplift community connections to the outdoors while counteracting barriers and harm placed on underrepresented communities. • Prioritized Equity: Existing “Equitable Use” action was reorganized to be the first action
Action 2: People and Natural Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Natural Systems: Added a Council commitment to support the conservation and restoration of natural systems alongside leisure, play, and creative opportunities in ways that connect people to each other and the outdoors. • New Recreational Activities and Facilities Process: Replaced static recreational activities list and processes associated with primary and



	secondary activities with a criteria-based evaluation process. Detailed process provided in Planning Handbook.
Action 3: Cross-Sector Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Sector Opportunities: Council commitment to providing a wide spectrum of connections and partnerships in the outdoors through recreation, arts, programming, transit, public health, education, stewardship, and community.
Action 4: Raising Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Awareness: New action that expands how we connect people to regional parks and trails with a focus on underrepresented communities through awareness building.
Action 5: Trail system coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Coordination with Regional Bicycle Transportation Network: Commitment to better coordinate the Regional Trail System with the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.
Action 6: Ineligible Activities and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified Ineligible Activities: Consolidated activities and facilities that are ineligible for regional funding due to being closely aligned with local recreational systems.

Section Eight: Finance Policy and Actions

Section Header	Summary of Changes
Finance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified Policy Statement and Action Reorganization: Content reorganized to separate four statutory requirements followed by five actions. Clarified Met Council's commitment to collaboratively support the Regional Parks and Trails System. • Streamlined Finance Language: Removed language that was redundant with Grant Administration Guide.
Existing RPPP Strategy 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed Reimbursement Limitations Strategy: Removed for no longer being legal.
Action 2: Equity considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Equity Grant Program: Updated equity considerations and expanded Council commitment to Equity Grant Program. • Moved Equity Toolkit: Equity toolkit language moved to Planning Handbook.
Action 3: Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Cap: Increased program cap for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to \$2 million for Parks and Trails Legacy Fund and \$3 million for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.
Action 4: Regional Funding Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Commitment to Funding: Added a Council commitment to actively analyze its regional funding budget strategy and pursue increasing regional funding commitment for the system wherever possible.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Content to System Plan: Transferred Capital Improvement Plan and Costs to Complete the System to Section Two: System Plan.



Summary of Changes

Add the following items to the 2025-2028 workplan:

Accountability and Research

1. Develop a process to create a small set of performance measures at the Policy level to measure progress toward our key Regional Park and Trail System priorities.
2. Implement the 2025 Regional Parks and Trails System Visitor Study.
3. Explore expanding cost-effective research approaches, including forecasting tools, that provide implementing agencies with the management information at the park and trail unit level.

Protection and Restoration

4. Explore establishment of a Special Feature – Historical landscape sub-classification
5. Explore the establishment of a Special features – Open space/natural systems sub-classification in consultation with the Council’s Natural Systems workgroup. This effort includes renewal of the Regionally Significant Ecological Area dataset.
6. Reconvene Climate and Natural Systems Workgroup to discuss implementation steps for Climate Resilience Policy and Actions.

Culture

7. Develop a cultural resources inventory requirement for long-range planning in partnership with key stakeholders.
8. Continue to develop and refine the Cultural Landscape Classification, in coordination with American Indian Tribes, other cultural communities, and regional park implementing agencies.
9. Develop an inventory of and guidelines for harvestable fruits, mushrooms, and other plants in partnership with American Indian groups, regional park implementing agencies, and other partners.
10. As part of a broader Council effort, develop a training program and learning opportunities for Council and regional park implementing agency staff to explore indigenous land management practices and other related topics.

Trails

11. Continue to convene a trail coordination workgroup, supporting the development of a more coordinated, integrated, and connected regional trails system and Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.
12. Create regional guidelines for e-bike use on regional trails.
13. Explore system-wide wayfinding and signage minimum requirements.

Finance

14. Explore scoping and development of a systemwide Asset Preservation Plan, or similar.
15. Continue to pursue Pay-Go for greater flexibility to fund a wider range of activities, facilities, and programs. Pay-Go would provide an additional tool for funding the regional system.
16. Explore changing/reducing the local match requirement for the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Program, as state rules allow.
17. Continue discussion of strategic funding for the Regional Parks and Trails System, with a goal to better meet the needs of this growing system.

