

2025-6 Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook

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Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Overview

What is it?

- Complementary document to the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Chapter.
- Contains procedural and contextual language outlining Regional Parks and Trails System processes.

Handbook Amendment Process:

- Handbook policy content will be amended every 4 years (same schedule as Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan).
 - Amendment process in partnership with Implementing Agencies and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission.
 - Substantial updates that directly impact or necessitate implementing agency action will need Council approval.
 - Resources (e.g., webinars, plan examples, infographics) will be updated on as-needed basis or when new content becomes available.



Sections 1 and 2: Introduction and System Plan



What's New?

Overall

- Moved procedural and contextual language from Policy Chapter to Planning Handbook.
- Incorporated graphics and flowcharts to visualize processes.

Introduction

- Added contextual language describing Handbook purpose and amendment process.
- Moved research and engagement summary from Policy Chapter to Planning Handbook.

System Plan

- Added contextual language regarding Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System.
- Consolidated Regional Park and Trail System unit classifications into Policy Chapter one-page descriptions.
- Will add Agency-Level Maps once they become available (later 2025).

Section 3 and 4: Natural Systems and Climate Resiliency



What's New?

Natural Systems

- Clarified the system additions process.
- Added graphics and language summarizing how a park search area or trail search corridor becomes operational.
- Realigned study area criteria to match Locating and Acquisition primary factors.
- Continued commitment to monitor local and non-local visitation with park agency partners.

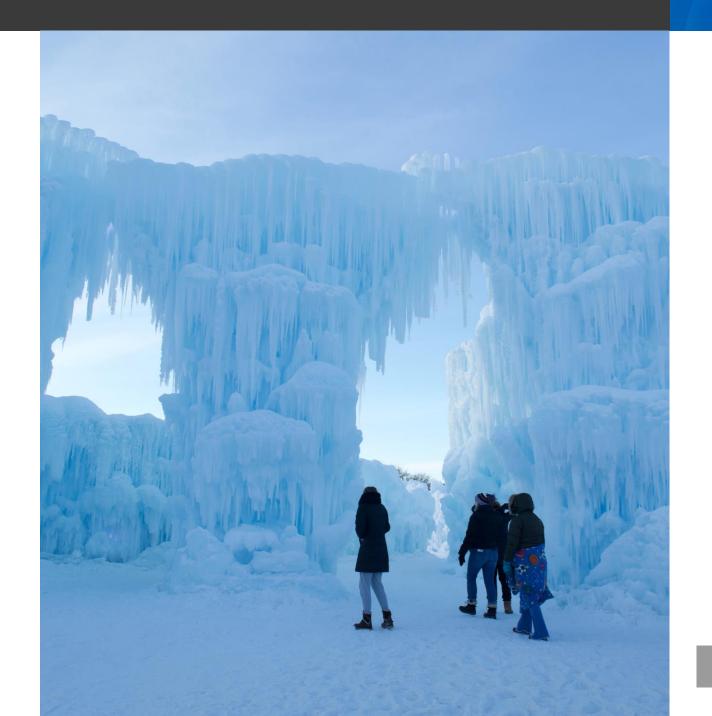
Climate Resiliency

Added placeholder text for future resources and processes.

Section 5: Planning

What's New?

- Streamlined long-range plan requirements:
 - Created checklist for agency use
 - Reorganized plan requirements into three main categories:
 - Engagement
 - Development Concept
 - Natural Systems
- Elevated design considerations for long-range plans
- Created criteria and process for different types of longrange plan amendments:
 - Full amendment
 - Focused amendment
 - Administrative process for minor amendments.
- Modified criteria and process for boundary adjustments
- Moved language on joint powers agreements from policy plan to planning handbook



Section 6: System Protection



What's New?

- Added procedural and contextual language regarding Local Comprehensive Plans, Land Conversion Processes, and Telecommunication Towers Placement.
- Added process graphics and requirements for land conversion process.

Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming

What's New?

- Added procedural language and graphics describing the process to evaluate and add new Recreational Activities and Facilities
- Added desired outcome examples for Actions 1-4 in Section 7
- Added commitment to continue Trail System Coordination Workgroup. Some work plan highlights include:
 - Coordination with the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN)
 - Improved wayfinding and awareness of regional trails
 - Coordinate growth of the system.

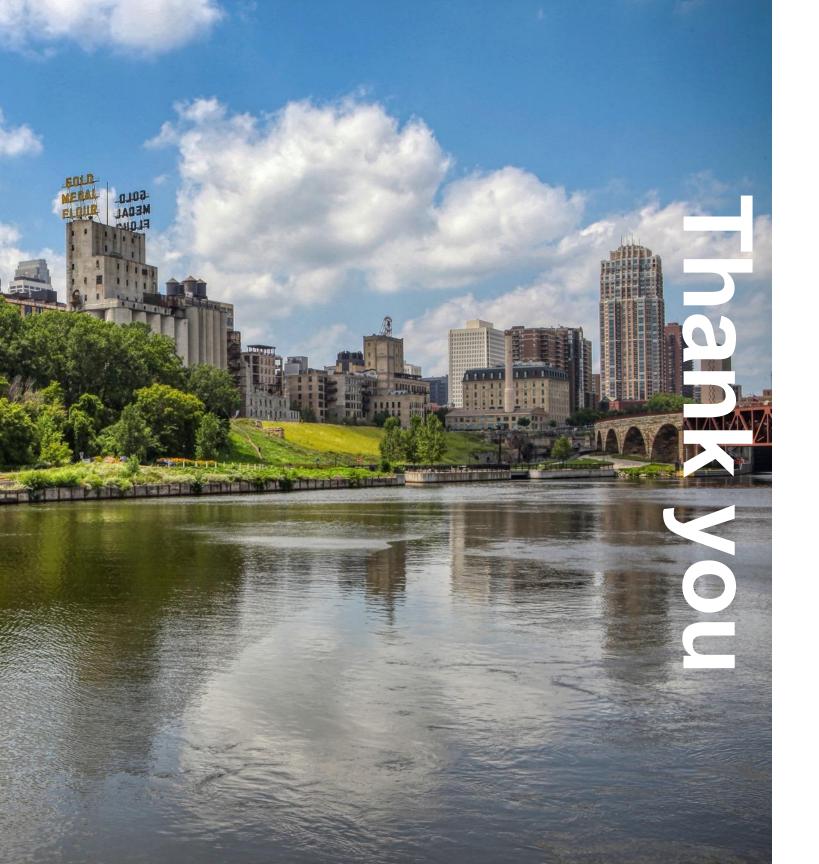


Proposed Action



That the Metropolitan Council:

- Establish the Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook as the administrative guide for regional parks and trails long-range planning requirements.
- Adopt the attached Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook.
- 3. Authorize Council staff to make administrative changes to the Handbook over time, including additions and updates to related tools and resources.
- I. Direct Council staff to bring any updates that directly impact or necessitate implementing agency action related to Sections 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the Planning Handbook to the Council for approval, aligning with any updates to the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan.



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