

Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Committee meeting date: July 7, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: July 9, 2025

Business Item: 2025-161 SW

Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operations & Maintenance Allocation

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the Regional Parks and Trails System state fiscal year 2026 Operations and Maintenance Report, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. State Fiscal Year 2026 O&M Distribution

Agency	Reported Actual 2024 O&M Expenses	Estimated Distribution Amount
Anoka County	\$9,309,883.98	\$980,207
Bloomington Parks	\$863,310.91	\$94,087
Carver County	\$1,760,919.36	\$248,300
Dakota County	\$9,913,013.13	\$768,058
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB)	\$28,912,771.00	\$2,897,284
Ramsey County	\$8,673,636.24	\$1,063,855
Saint Paul Parks	\$24,753,617.35	\$1,504,758
Scott County	\$2,496,588.41	\$214,842
Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) - Hennepin & Scott	\$51,206,536.95	\$3,468,186
Washington County	\$5,811,365.63	\$500,423
TOTAL	\$143,701,642.96	\$11,740,000

Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission discussion/questions

Nicole Clapp presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on July 1, 2025.

Discussion:

Chair Yarusso asked a question about the increase to the Lottery-in-lieu portion of the appropriation and Nicole Clapp explained how the appropriated funds are distributed by statutorily defined formula to a variety of recipients but that the total amount of funds distributed still needs to be appropriated by the legislature.

Councilmember Wulff asked for a slide to be included on the CDC presentation for this item to illustrate the history of O&M appropriations vs. expenses over time.

Chair Yarusso asked about the increase in expenses and how that compares to inflation and Nicole explained the overall increase to O&M for this was around \$10M but that an analysis on system expansion vs. inflation has not been completed at this time.

Commissioner Taylor asked a question about the changes in visits, acres, and expenses and how

that has impacted distribution of O&M funds over time. Nicole shared some anecdotal information about some of the changes that stood out this year compared to last that had an impact on the distribution of O&M funds.

Chair Yarusso asked a question about trail acreage calculations vs. trail miles. Nicole explained that for most trails there is a standard width applied to trails that is used on the conversion of trail miles to acres, unless an agency has an approved trail boundary that includes buffers, like Dakota County and then that approved width would be used in the conversion calculation.

Motion by Bob Moeller, seconded by Amanda Duerr. Motion carried.

Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Committee Meeting Date: July 1, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: July 9, 2025

Business Item: 2025-161 SW

Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation & Maintenance Allocation

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.351 and 297A.94(e)(3); 2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Section 5
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Nicole Clapp, Grants Manager (651-602-1723); Rachel Neuville, Budget Analyst (651-602-1216)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Finance and Administration

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reports to the Metropolitan Council the Regional Parks and Trails System state fiscal year (SFY) 2026 Operations and Maintenance Funding requests.

Background

By law, the Council serves as the fiscal agent to distribute state funds to the ten Regional Park Implementing Agencies for operation and maintenance costs.

[Minn. Stat. § 473.351](#) requires that by July 15 of each year, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) reports to Council “the funding requests from the implementing agencies based on the actual expenditures made” in the previous year.

Staff conduct a review of the Agencies’ operation and maintenance (O&M) submittals to determine eligibility of claimed costs and the appropriate dollar distribution. The statute directs that the funding distribution be based on three factors:

- 40% is based on the *use* that each Agency’s regional parks and trails has in proportion to the total use of the Regional Parks and Trails System. Each agency’s total count of visitors comes from the 2023 Regional Parks and Trails System Annual Use Estimate produced by the Council.
- 40% is based on the O&M *expenditures* made by each Agency in proportion to the total O&M expenditures for the entire Regional Parks and Trails System. These numbers were determined following the eligibility review of 2023 calendar year Agency submittals.
- 20% is based on the *acreage* for each Agency’s regional parks and trails in proportion to the acreage of the entire Regional Parks and Trails System. The numbers are based on 2023 acreage as reported to the Council by each Agency.

The analysis this year will program \$11,740,000 appropriated by the State Legislature for state fiscal year 2026. The appropriation includes \$2,540,000 from the state General Fund and an estimated \$9,200,000 in lottery-in-lieu of sales tax revenue (LIL).

Table 1 below shows the Agencies' estimated distribution amounts for O&M funding for SFY 2026, as based on their reported actual eligible expenditures. The calculations underlying this year's distribution are attached in Table 2.

Table 1. State Fiscal Year 2026 O&M Distribution

Agency	Reported Actual 2024 O&M Expenses	Estimated Distribution Amount
Anoka County	\$9,309,883.98	\$980,207
Bloomington Parks	\$863,310.91	\$94,087
Carver County	\$1,760,919.36	\$248,300
Dakota County	\$9,913,013.13	\$768,058
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB)	\$28,912,771.00	\$2,897,284
Ramsey County	\$8,673,636.24	\$1,063,855
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Scott County	\$2,496,588.41	\$214,842
Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) - Hennepin & Scott	\$51,206,536.95	\$3,468,186
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TOTAL	\$143,701,642.96	\$11,740,000

Rationale

The State Legislature funds a portion of the expenses necessary to run the Regional Parks and Trails System because the System draws a significant percentage of its visits from people that live outside of the political jurisdiction of the park or trail, including outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the State of Minnesota. The O&M appropriation comes from the State in its entirety; the Council neither matches the funds, nor withholds any for administrative costs. The statute requires the Council to review the claims presented by each Agency for eligibility and MPOSC to report the claimed costs to the Council, so the amounts are paid appropriately.

Thrive Lens Analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the Thrive outcome of stewardship is supported by helping the ten Regional Park Implementing Agencies care for existing infrastructure within the Twin Cities' world-class Regional Parks and Trails System.

The Thrive outcome of livability is supported by investing in the System and providing access to outdoor recreation, enhanced quality of life, and opportunities for increased health and wellness.

Funding

Operations and Maintenance funding has been appropriated by the State of Minnesota for SFY 2026. Final passthrough amounts will be based upon actual revenues received.

*Table 2. O&M Calculations by Agency, SFY 2026

Agency	Weighted Regional Park Acreage	Acres %	Regional Park Visits	Visits %	Regional Park Expenditures	Expenditure %	Funding %	FY26 General Fund Lump Sum	FY26 Lottery-in- Lieu Estimate	Projected total FY2026 distribution
Anoka	6056.89	15.77%	4,265,000	6.51%	\$9,309,884	6.48%	8.35%	\$212,072	\$768,135	\$980,207
Bloomington	165.55	0.43%	778,000	1.19%	\$863,311	0.60%	0.80%	\$20,356	\$73,731	\$94,087
Carver	993.74	2.59%	1,814,000	2.77%	\$1,760,919	1.23%	2.11%	\$53,721	\$194,579	\$248,300
Dakota	3,878.69	10.10%	2,888,000	4.41%	\$9,913,013	6.90%	6.54%	\$166,173	\$601,885	\$768,058
MPRB	2,935.08	7.64%	24,741,000	37.76%	\$28,912,771	20.12%	24.68%	\$626,840	\$2,270,444	\$2,897,284
Ramsey	5,034.13	13.11%	6,595,000	10.06%	\$8,673,636	6.04%	9.06%	\$230,170	\$833,685	\$1,063,855
Saint Paul	2,482.42	6.46%	7,592,000	11.59%	\$24,753,617	17.23%	12.82%	\$325,561	\$1,179,197	\$1,504,758
Scott	1,519.58	3.96%	563,000	0.86%	\$2,496,588	1.74%	1.83%	\$46,482	\$168,360	\$214,842
TRPD/Scott County	1,998.93	5.21%	581,000	0.89%	\$3,444,215	2.40%	2.35%	\$59,802	\$216,606	\$276,408
TRPD/Hennepin Co	10,329.61	26.90%	13,945,800	21.28%	\$47,762,322	33.24%	27.19%	\$690,554	\$2,501,224	\$3,191,778
Washington	3,007.52	7.83%	1,767,000	2.70%	\$5,811,366	4.04%	4.26%	\$108,269	\$392,154	\$500,423
Totals	38,402.14	100.00%	65,529,800	100.00%	\$143,701,643	100.00%	100.00%	\$2,540,000	\$9,200,000	\$11,740,000

*There are small discrepancies in some totals due to rounding