

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: April 22, 2014

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

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

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

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jan Youngquist AICP, Planning Analyst (651 602-1029)  
Raintry Salk PhD, Senior Parks Researcher (651 602-1669)

**Division/Department:** Community Development/Regional Parks and Natural Resources

### Proposed Action

Discussion item only. No action required.

### Background

Minnesota Statute 473.147 requires the Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for the regional recreation open space as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide. As per Statute, the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan will:

- Identify generally the areas which should be acquired for the regional parks system
- Estimate the costs of the recommended acquisition and development

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan will include policies and strategies for siting and acquisition, finance, recreation activities and facilities, planning, and protection of the regional parks system.

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

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

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

Staff will present the stakeholder-driven ideas that came forward from the work session shown in Attachment A and will lead a discussion on policy alternatives to address the multi-modal direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Staff will request a confirmation of policy recommendations at the May 6 MPOSC meeting.

### Rationale

Minnesota Statute 473.147 states that the Metropolitan Council shall consult with and make maximum use of the expertise of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission in preparing the policy plan.

### Funding

N/A

### Known Support / Opposition

N/A

## Attachment A:

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

The policy ideas which seek to promote multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit system fall into three broad categories: 1) awareness 2) collaboration and 3) planning.

#### *Awareness*

- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to provide transit schedules and information at parks that are served by transit
- Include information on how to access a regional park or trail by transit on the regional park implementing agency website, where applicable
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Develop an integrated web application that identifies how to access regional parks and trails using alternative transportation. See the National Park Service [Mississippi River Trip Planner](#) as an example.
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to promote regional trails with the four existing Transportation Management Organizations
  - A Transportation Management Organization is a public-private partnership that provides marketing and advocacy to promote multi-modal options for daily commutes.
  - Existing TMOs include Commuter Connection—downtown Minneapolis; Smart Trips—Saint Paul; Commuter Services—I-494 Corridor and Commute Solutions—Anoka County

#### *Collaboration*

- Collaborate with Metro Transit or local transit providers to explore the feasibility of the following actions:
  - Promote regional parks at bus stops
  - Explore options for siting new park and rides near or adjacent to regional parks, or new regional parks or trails near park and rides or fixed route transit lines
  - Promote a transit day pass or family pass to regional parks
  - Provide free rides to large special events in regional parks
  - Add transit stops that are convenient to regional parks and trails
- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to identify and plan for local trail connections to regional parks and trails as well as last mile connections from transit
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to collaborate with [Nice Ride Minnesota](#) to site bike stations near regional parks and trails
- Collaborate with local agencies to update and enhance the draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding Best Practices guide

#### *Planning*

- Require regional park or trail master plans to identify local trail connections to the site
- Require a regional park or trail master plan to include a wayfinding signage plan
- Encourage regional trail alignments to provide connections to transit stops or park and rides, where appropriate
- Encourage the following design elements to be included in a regional park or trail master plan:

- Bike racks and lockers located near activity areas so visitors can safely store their bikes as they recreate
  - Multiple entrance points that will make a park easier to access as a bicyclist or pedestrian
- Encourage regional park implementing agencies to include transportation and transit planners in the development of a regional park or trail master plan