

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: June 3, 2014

**Subject:** 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan discussion on Amending Definition and Description of Regional Parks System's Classification of Special Recreation Feature

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.147

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

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

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council revise language related to special recreation features in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan update. The description of a special recreation feature in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan on page 3-61 should be revised in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as follows: "area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as ~~golf course~~, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, ~~arena, gun club~~, downhill ski area, ~~and~~ sites of historic or archeological significance **and bridging facilities. Bridging facilities are viewed as facilities that are intended to assist with the introduction into a specialized or single-purpose recreational activity in an effort to enhance participation in outdoor recreation**".

### 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.

The Regional Parks System is subdivided into four major components: park reserves, regional parks, regional trails and special recreation features. The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan defines special recreation features as "regional parks system opportunities not generally found in the parks, the park reserves or the trail corridors" (p. 3-58). Special recreation features proposed for inclusion into the regional parks system must:

- Be unique and complement or enhance the services already offered by the regional system.
- Be capable of functioning within the existing management structure of the regional parks system.
- Not duplicate or compete with recreation facilities adequately provided by the public or private sector.
- Not drain funds from other facilities in the system either because they have an existing or committed financial base or because prior

management for a public subsidy has been reached that is in the public's interest.

- Demonstrate the existence or potential for drawing a sizable number of people from throughout the metropolitan area.
- Be approved through the master plan process (p. 2-18).

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan also provides greater information on special recreation features in the classification system for local and regional facilities located on page 3-61. The classification table specifies that a special recreation feature is an “area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as golf course, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, gun club, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archeological significance” (p. 3-61). Among park reserves, regional parks and special recreation features, special recreation features are the only classification that does not have a minimum acreage requirement.

MPOSC members in the past have brought forward the request to revisit the special recreation feature definition and description. Most notable, not all activities listed in the description are considered suitable to a nature-based system. Additionally, previous 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan discussions at MPOSC, related to equitable usage of regional parks and trails, included a new policy concept recommendation that sought to add “bridging facility” to the description of special recreation features. Based on the developments described, language revisions in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan are called for.

### **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