

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: August 8, 2017

**Subject:** Annual Use Estimate of the Regional Parks System for 2016

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

**Policy/Legal Reference:** N/A

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Rainry Salk, Research Analyst, (651) 602-1669

**Division/Department:** Community Development, Regional Policy and Research

### Proposed Action

Information item only. No action required.

### Background

Since 1995, the Metropolitan Council has annually prepared a Regional Parks System use estimate. The use estimate is used in funding formulas to determine each regional park implementing agency's share of Operations and Maintenance, Capital Improvement Program, and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund dollars.

The use estimates are based upon a four-year average of visit data. Council staff works with regional park implementing agencies to conduct visitor counts in regional parks and trails from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The count data are then used, along with the preceding three years of data, to develop an estimate for Regional Parks System use for the entire calendar year.

Highlights from the [2016 Annual Park Use Estimate report](#) will be provided.

### Thrive Lens

Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through the Regional Parks System is part of the Council's strategy to advance the Thrive Livability outcome while funding ongoing acquisition of priority natural resource areas into the Regional Parks System helps the Council be a steward of finite natural resources, a key role advancing the Thrive Stewardship outcome. The annual use estimate informs fund distributions to parks and trails throughout the metropolitan region, allowing the Council to be a responsible steward of finite financial resources supporting the Regional Parks System.