

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: May 1, 2018

Subject: 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Emmett Mullin, Regional Parks and Natural Resources Manager (651-602-1360) / Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst (651-602-1548)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed.

Background

Minnesota Statute 473.147 requires the Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide. The Council's long range system policy plan, known as the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (RPPP), must include policies, strategies, and a system plan that guide the Regional Parks System, and must also include estimated costs for acquisition and development and a five year capital improvement program. The Council adopted the RPPP on February 11, 2015. Minnesota Statute 473.147 also requires the Council to complete a comprehensive review of the plan every four years. The current update addresses this statutory requirement to complete a comprehensive review.

Staff will describe recent activities related to the RPPP update process and will engage the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) in a discussion about finance policies. Attachment A summarizes the current Regional Park Policy Plan language regarding the finance policy and associated eight strategies. Attachment B provides highlights from a recent finance policy discussion with park implementing agency staff.

Staff will update Commissioners about the public engagement efforts for the update. Additionally, staff will share the updated schedule for the proposed July 2018 release date of the draft plan, and the revised public hearing date, which is scheduled for September 2018.

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.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The finance policy discussion intersects the Stewardship and Equity outcomes of *Thrive MSP 2040* because it seeks to provide adequate and equitable funding for the regional parks system in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.

Funding

N/A

Finance Policy Discussion

Process

1. Review current Finance Policy section: one policy and eight strategies.
2. What resonates? What still works well?
3. What areas need updating, clarifying, or strengthening?

POLICY: Provide adequate and equitable funding for the regional parks system units and facilities in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.

Strategy 1: Funds will be granted only to regional park implementing agencies. [p.96]

Strategy 2: Capital Improvement Program funds are used for acquisition, development, and redevelopment of Regional Parks System units. [p.96]

Strategy 3: Ensure Parks and Trails Legacy Funds are spent in a manner that conforms to the statewide Parks and Trails Legacy Plan. [p.98]

Strategy 4: Investments to be funded by the Capital Improvement Plan and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund must be included on the legislatively authorized project list. [p.99]

Strategy 5: Where appropriate, equity will be a consideration in Regional Parks System funding and investment. [p.99]

Strategy 6: The Council may reimburse regional park implementing agencies for the costs of acquiring some lands before they have been made part of the Regional Parks System or for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program. [p.102]

Strategy 7: Regional trail corridors that may be used for transit in the future are eligible for Regional Parks System funding if it is clear the corridor will be used as a trail for at least 10 years. [p.104]

Strategy 8: The Council will actively seek funding from the state and other sources. [p.106]

Insights from April 9, 2018 Council – Implementing Agency Meeting

POLICY: *Provide adequate and equitable funding for the regional parks system units and facilities in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.*

Strategy 1: Funds will be granted only to regional park implementing agencies. [p.96]

Discussion Highlights:

- No change.

Strategy 2: Capital Improvement Program funds are used for acquisition, development, and redevelopment of Regional Parks System units. [p.96]

Discussion Highlights:

- Add “conservation of natural resources” to eligible activities in strategy.
- Increase clarity of eligibility criteria.
- Shorten descriptive text.

Strategy 3: Ensure Parks and Trails Legacy Funds are spent in a manner that conforms to the statewide Parks and Trails Legacy Plan. [p.98]

Discussion Highlights:

- Update strategy language, ensuring that investment of Legacy funds “advances” the 25-year statewide Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.
- Remove requirement to establish a “minimum percentage of Parks and Trails Legacy Fund dollars” to “connect people and the outdoors.”

Strategy 4: Investments to be funded by the Capital Improvement Plan and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund must be included on the legislatively authorized project list. [p.99]

Discussion Highlights:

- Remove this strategy. This information will be located in the Parks Grant and Funding Program Guide (under development).

Strategy 5: Where appropriate, Equity will be a consideration in Regional Parks System funding and investment. [p.99]

Discussion Highlights:

- Strengthen strategy language, removing “Where appropriate” from the beginning of the sentence.
- Update text to:
 - Reflect that the equity toolkit has been established and will continue to be used in the Parks and Trails Legacy and State and Regional Bonding Application Process
 - Remove language that states the equity toolkit will be used “...in the prioritization of the project list for funding for the Capital Improvement Program and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.”
 - Include a statement that the Council and Regional Park Implementing Agencies will work together to ensure that the intent of the Equity Toolkit information will be applied to public engagement process during park and trail master planning.

- Declare intent to evaluate Legacy and Bonding projects that are not part of an updated Master Plan using an equity lens, in coordination with the park implementing agencies.
- Reinforce the Council's commitment to establish the Equity Grant Program, using Council bonds. Possibly make this a separate strategy?

Strategy 6: The Council may reimburse regional park implementing agencies for the costs of acquiring some lands before they have been made part of the Regional Parks System or for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program. [p.102]

Discussion Highlights:

- No change.

Strategy 7: Regional trail corridors that may be used for transit in the future are eligible for Regional Parks System funding if it is clear the corridor will be used as a trail for at least 10 years. [p.104]

Discussion Highlights:

- Retain strategy. Possibly shorten language.

Strategy 8: The Council will actively seek funding from the state and other sources. [p.106]

Discussion Highlights:

- Update descriptive language.
- Add statement about how Legacy Funds shall supplement not substitute other sources of funding. Include the Council's definition for evaluating projects:
 - This is a new project or program.
 - This is an expansion, enhancement, or acceleration of past work accomplished with a previous funding source.
 - This project or program has previously been funded with Parks and Trails Legacy Funds.
- Include statement about the importance of the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources' funding for the Regional Parks System.