

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: October 1, 2018

For the Community Development Committee meeting of October 15, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 24, 2018

Subject: FY2020-2021 Parks and Trails Legacy Project Recommendations

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Stats 85.53, 473.313, 473.315, 473.351; MN Laws 2017 Ch 91 Art 3 Sec 4(b); 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Finance Strategies 3 and 5; 25-Year Legacy Plan

Staff Prepared/Presented: Deb Streets Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner (651-602-1554)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accepts the recommendation of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to convey the attached list of proposed projects to the Governor's office for inclusion in the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation for the state fiscal 2020/2021 biennium.

Background

History of the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

The Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (Legacy) was established in 2008 through an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent through 2034. Of the revenue raised by the sales tax increase, 14.25% is allocated in odd-numbered years to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance; the Legislature is scheduled to allocate funding in the 2019 session. This state fiscal years 2020/2021 biennium proposal mirrors the past three biennial allocations that dedicate 40% of Legacy funds to the metropolitan Regional Parks System, 40% to the state parks and trails, and 20% to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks System.

Role of the Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

The Metropolitan Council (Council) serves as the fiscal agent to distribute Legacy funds in support of the metropolitan Regional Parks System, in five major ways:

1. *The Council determines the amount each Regional Parks Implementing Agency (Agency) receives from the Legacy Fund.* Legacy funds for the metropolitan Regional Parks System are distributed to the Agencies according to a formula set in Minnesota Statutes, section 85.53. By law, 10% of each year's appropriation is set aside for land acquisition. The remaining 90% is distributed as follows:
 - 45% is based on each Agency's relative share of the most recent Operation and Maintenance distribution;
 - 31.5% is based on each Agency's relative share of the most recent population estimate in the metropolitan area; and
 - 13.5% is based on each Agency's relative share of non-local visits based on the Council's most recent user visitation survey.

Based on a preliminary revenue forecast issued by the State of Minnesota, the Legislature will appropriate to the metropolitan Regional Parks System \$20.280 million in state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 and \$20.447 million in SFY 2021. The

revenue forecast is typically updated during the legislative session, and a final amount will be determined at that time. Using the numbers that are currently available and after applying the statutory formula to the remaining 90% of funds, each Agency's shares are as follows:

Agency	SFY 2020	SFY 2021
Anoka County	\$1,661	\$1,675
Bloomington	337	340
Carver County	396	400
Dakota County	1,422	1,434
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	4,306	4,342
Ramsey County	1,498	1,511
Saint Paul	2,664	2,685
Scott County	669	674
Three Rivers Park District	4,354	4,390
Washington County	945	952
Total	\$18,252	\$18,403

2. *Council staff reviews the project proposals.* Agencies submit their project proposals to the Council for review, to ensure the projects:

- conform with Council-approved master plans, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 473.313
- support the vision of the 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan;
- contain appropriate measurable outcomes;
- have addressed the questions in the Equity Toolkit; and that
- the project description is sufficiently detailed to be part of an enforceable grant agreement.

The project titles are included with this Business Item as Attachment 1.

3. *The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) reviews the project proposals and makes a recommendation to the Council.* Each Agency presented its suite of projects to MPOSC at its September meeting and stood for questions, most of which focused on responses to the Equity Toolkit.

4. *The Council awards Legacy grants after the appropriation is signed into law.* Minnesota Statutes, section 473.315 authorizes the Council to make grants for recreation open space purposes after receiving advice from MPOSC.

In the most recent Legacy appropriation, the Minnesota Legislature added a funding requirement that “projects funded by the money appropriated under this section must be substantially consistent with the project descriptions and dollar amounts approved by each elected body.”

5. *The Council awards and administers the Legacy grants.* The Council will formally award the grants in its second quarter budget amendment in 2019. Staff monitors project progress and submits required annual reporting to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Legacy’s “strategic directions”

The Legislature directed the establishment of a 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan. The following four areas “serve as the heart” of the 25-year plan and establish the future direction for parks and trails of state and regional significance:

- Connect people and the outdoors – better develop Minnesota’s stewards of tomorrow through efforts to increase life-long participation in parks and trails.
- Acquire land, create opportunities – create new and expanded park and trail opportunities to satisfy current customers as well as to reach out to new ones.
- Take care of what we have – provide safe, high-quality park and trail experiences by regular re-investment in park and trail infrastructure, and natural resource management.
- Collaborate among partners – enhance coordination across the large and complex network of public, private and non-profit partners that support Minnesota’s parks and trails to ensure seamless, enjoyable park and trail experiences for Minnesotans.¹

Funding for collaboration among partners is set aside before dividing the funds among the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks System, the Department of Natural Resources, and the metropolitan Regional Parks System. The 25-Year Legacy Plan recommends a balanced approach among the remaining three areas. For state fiscal years 2020-2021, the 53 projects propose to invest Legacy funds as follows:

- Acquire land, create opportunities: 60.81% of spending through 22 projects
- Take care of what we have: 25.82% of spending through 18 projects
- Connect people and the outdoors: 13.37% of spending through 13 projects

The Agencies have categorized their projects as follows:

Agency	Acquire land, create opportunities	Take care of what we have	Connect people and the outdoors	Total
Anoka County	0	4	0	4
Bloomington	0	2	1	3
Carver County	2	1	2	5
Dakota County	0	0	4	4
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	5	2	0	7
Ramsey County	4	3	3	10
Saint Paul	7	1	2	10
Scott County	1	1	1	3
Three Rivers Park District	2	1	0	3
Washington County	1	3	0	4
Total	22	18	13	53

¹ [25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, page v](#)

Equity Toolkit responses

Of the 53 projects, 32 indicated that the project had been specifically designed to impact equity in the Regional Parks System. These projects total 69% of the allocated dollars.

- Age: 18 projects
- Race: 23 projects
- Ability: 25 projects
- Income: 19 projects
- Ethnicity: 18 projects
- National origin: 13 projects

Rationale

The projects comply with:

- Minnesota Statutes, section 85.53, which sets the formula used to determine each Agency's allocation of Legacy funds;
- Minnesota Statutes, section 473.313, which sets authority for the Council to approve master plans for the Regional Parks System;
- Minnesota Statutes, section 473.315, which authorizes the Council to award grants with the advice of MPOSC;
- Minnesota Statutes, section 473.51, which limits the distribution of Legacy and other grant funds to the 10 Agencies;
- Minnesota Laws 2017 Ch 91 Art 3 Sec 4(b), which requires that the projects be substantially consistent with the project descriptions and dollar amounts approved by each elected body.
- *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Finance Strategy 3*, which requires that Legacy funds are spent in a manner that conforms to the statewide Parks and Trails 25-Year Legacy Plan.
- *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Finance Strategy 5* requires that where appropriate, equity will be a consideration in Regional Parks System funding and investment.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The 53 project proposals advance the Thrive Outcome of Livability through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region. Additionally, 32 projects explicitly address the Thrive Outcome of Equity, through reducing barriers to participation across race, age, ability, income, ethnicity, and national origin.

Funding

There is no funding impact at this time. The final appropriation for state fiscal year 2020 will be added to the Council's Authorized Capital Program (ACP) in the 2019 second quarter budget amendment; the 2021 appropriation will be added to the ACP in the 2020 second quarter budget amendment. The Council does not match the Legacy appropriation. Grant agreements are not issued and no funds are paid out until after the funds are authorized in the ACP.

Known Support / Opposition

Wilderness in the City, a non-profit organization advocating for natural resource preservation, has a long-standing concern about using Parks and Trails Legacy Funding for infrastructure development.

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State Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Parks and Trails Legacy Projects

Agency	Title	SFY 2020	SFY 2021	Pillar	SFY 2020	SFY 2021
Anoka County	Bunker Hills Regional Park - Bunker Beach Infrastructure Improvements	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,515	Take care of what we have		
Anoka County	Conservation Corps of Minnesota	\$ 155	\$ 160	Take care of what we have		
Anoka County	Peltier Lake Fishing Pier Parking Lot Construction	\$ 156	\$ -	Take care of what we have		
Anoka County	Wargo Nature Center Improvements Displays	\$ 350	\$ -	Take care of what we have	\$ 1,661	\$ 1,675
Bloomington	Bloomington Park Ambassador Program	\$ 34	\$ 34	Connect people and the outdoors		
Bloomington	East Bush Lake Trails	\$ -	\$ 306	Take care of what we have		
Bloomington	Normandale Lake Restrooms and Maintenance Garage Replacement	\$ 303	\$ -	Take care of what we have	\$ 337	\$ 340
Carver County	Lake Waconia Regional Park Development	\$ -	\$ 287	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Carver County	Outreach	\$ 28	\$ 28	Connect people and the outdoors		
Carver County	Parks Operations and Natural Resource Manager	\$ 45	\$ 46	Take care of what we have		
Carver County	Recreation and Volunteer Specialist	\$ 38	\$ 39	Connect people and the outdoors		
Carver County	TH5 Regional Trail, MN Arboretum Connection	\$ 285	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities	\$ 396	\$ 400
Dakota County	Big Rivers Regional Trail Trailhead Improvements	\$ 1,241	\$ -	Connect people and the outdoors		
Dakota County	Park System Marketing	\$ 100	\$ 100	Connect people and the outdoors		
Dakota County	Parks Outreach and Engagement Coordinator	\$ 81	\$ 84	Connect people and the outdoors		
Dakota County	Spring Lake Park Reserve - Master Plan Capital Improvements	\$ -	\$ 1,249	Connect people and the outdoors	\$ 1,422	\$ 1,434
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Above the Falls - Hall's Island and the Park on the Scherer Site	\$ 228	\$ 1,571	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Above the Falls Regional Park Implementation	\$ 1,261	\$ 842	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Central Mississippi Water Works	\$ 306	\$ 219	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Minnehaha Park Pavilion Improvements, Phase 2	\$ 629	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Minnehaha Parkway Implementation Phase 2	\$ 461	\$ -	Take care of what we have		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Mississippi Gorge Implementation Phase 2	\$ 421	\$ 1,710	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Theodore Wirth Implementation	\$ 1,000	\$ -	Take care of what we have	\$ 4,306	\$ 4,342

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Agency	Title	SFY 2020	SFY 2021	Pillar	SFY 2020	SFY 2021
Ramsey County	Americans with Disabilities Act Improvements Phase 2	\$ 100	\$ 100	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Ramsey County	Battle Creek Upper Afton Playground Redevelopment, Phase 2	\$ 413	\$ -	Take care of what we have		
Ramsey County	Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area Phase 1	\$ -	\$ 501	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Ramsey County	Bruce Vento Master Plan and Design	\$ 300	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Ramsey County	Conservation Corps of Minnesota	\$ 110	\$ 110	Connect people and the outdoors		
Ramsey County	Master Plan Updates	\$ 75	\$ 75	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Ramsey County	Outreach Program Specialist	\$ 125	\$ 125	Connect people and the outdoors		
Ramsey County	System-Wide Off-Leash Area Improvements	\$ -	\$ 225	Take care of what we have		
Ramsey County	Vadnais-Snail Lakes Flood Redesign and Reconstruction	\$ 300	\$ 300	Take care of what we have		
Ramsey County	Volunteer Coordinator	\$ 75	\$ 75	Connect people and the outdoors	\$ 1,498	\$ 1,511
Saint Paul	Bruce Vento - Sam Morgan Rregional Trails Design, Engineer & Construct Pedestrian Connection Bridge	\$ 450	\$ 1,100	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Como Park Zoo and Conservatory - Shuttle	\$ 105	\$ 105	Connect people and the outdoors		
Saint Paul	Como Regional Park -Reconstruct Parking Lots along Lexington Parkway	\$ 89	\$ 660	Take care of what we have		
Saint Paul	Great River Passage Division	\$ 170	\$ 170	Connect people and the outdoors		
Saint Paul	Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm RP Master Plan Implementation	\$ 100	\$ 400	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Indian Mounds Interpretive Plan Implementation	\$ 500	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Point Douglas Regional Trail Master Planning	\$ 100	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Robert Piram Design & Engineering of Bridge at Barge Channel	\$ 700	\$ 100	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Robert Piram Trail Construction	\$ 300	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Saint Paul	Volunteer and Education Coordinators	\$ 150	\$ 150	Acquire land, create opportunities	\$ 2,664	\$ 2,685
Scott County	Cleary Lake Regional Park Maintenance Shop Development Phase 2	\$ 450	\$ -	Take care of what we have		
Scott County	Regional Trail Master Planning	\$ 219	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Scott County	Spring Lake Regional Park Lakefront Design and Development - Phase 1	\$ -	\$ 674	Connect people and the outdoors	\$ 669	\$ 674
Three Rivers Park District	Dakota Rail Regional Trail Microsurfacing	\$ -	\$ 475	Take care of what we have		
Three Rivers Park District	Lake Independence Regional Trail Reconstruction	\$ -	\$ 1,000	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Three Rivers Park District	Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Design and Construction	\$ 4,354	\$ 2,915	Acquire land, create opportunities	\$ 4,354	\$ 4,390

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 State Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Parks and Trails Legacy Projects

Agency	Title	SFY 2020	SFY 2021	Pillar	SFY 2020	SFY 2021
Washington County	Cottage Grove Ravine Multiuse Building	\$ 845	\$ -	Acquire land, create opportunities		
Washington County	Lake Elmo Park Reserve Maintenance Facility Improvements	\$ 100	\$ -	Take care of what we have		
Washington County	Lake Elmo Park Reserve Pavilion Play Areas	\$ -	\$ 450	Take care of what we have		
Washington County	St. Croix Bluffs Play Areas	\$ -	\$ 502	Take care of what we have	\$ 945	\$ 952
Total					\$ 18,252	\$ 18,402