Scenario Planning and Regional Parks and Trails Analysis
Metropolitan Parks and Open Space

December 7, 2023
Emmett Mullin, Colin Kelly, and Tracey Kinney
Overview

Draft Regional Parks Objectives
Key Parks and Trails Topics
Connections to Regional Goals
Regional Growth Scenarios
Connections to Land Use
Draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives

**WORKING REGIONAL GOALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Climate and Natural Systems</th>
<th>Meeting Future Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our region is equitable and inclusive</td>
<td>Our communities are healthy and safe</td>
<td>Our region is dynamic and resilient</td>
<td>We lead on addressing climate change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DRAFT PARKS OBJECTIVES**

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<th>Infrastructure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Better connect people with community, natural, and cultural resources in order to support physical, emotional, and mental well-being.</td>
<td>People can rely on renewed, repaired, and replaced park and trail infrastructure.</td>
<td>Preserve and restore natural systems at regional parks and trails to help build a more resilient region.</td>
<td>Acquire land and develop new opportunities to meet the region’s growing demand for regional parks and trails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXISTING PARKS POLICIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siting and Acquisition</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>System Protection</th>
<th>Recreation Activities and Facilities</th>
<th>Finance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Identify lands with high-quality natural resources that are desirable for Regional Parks System activities and put these lands in a protected status, so they will be available for recreational uses and conservation purposes in perpetuity.</td>
<td>Promote master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.</td>
<td>Protect public investment in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role as long as a need for it can be demonstrated.</td>
<td>Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors while conserving the integrity of the natural resource base within the Regional Parks System on which these opportunities depend.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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Engagements

- Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) March 2, 2023
- Regional Park Implementing Agencies (Agencies) March 23, 2023
- Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) September 21, 2023
- Regional Park Implementing Agencies (Agencies) September 21, 2023
- Committee of the Whole (CoW) November 15, 2023
**Key Parks and Trails Topics**

**Acquisition**
- Search areas and corridors take different forms in more mature park and trail systems versus developing ones.
- Most acquisitions today either fill in existing parks or acquire trail corridors.

**Protection**
- Protecting regional park and trail land is essential for protecting our natural systems.
- Excessive park and trail use can undermine natural resource quality.

**Use**
- Park and trail use impacts existing facilities and impacts operations and maintenance funding needs.
- The Regional Parks and Trails System needs to serve an increasingly diverse population.
# Connections to Regional Goals

## Parks and Trails Topics

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Working Regional Goals</th>
<th>Equitable Inclusive Region</th>
<th>Healthy Safe Communities</th>
<th>Dynamic Resilient Region</th>
<th>Mitigated Adapted Resilient Climate</th>
<th>Protected Restored Natural Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acquisition</strong></td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong></td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Growth Scenarios

How much? Where?

- Business-as-Usual: recent growth and development patterns continue
- High growth/compact development
- High growth/dispersed development
- Low growth/compact development
- Low growth/dispersed development

![Diagram showing growth scenarios with axes for business as usual, higher growth, lower growth, and compact versus dispersed locations.]

Higher growth, More compact | Higher growth, More dispersed
Lower growth, More compact | Lower growth, More dispersed
Acquisition

High or Low Growth
• High Growth: Cost of acquisition goes up due to high growth pressures. (*Agencies*)
• High Growth: Acquisition and development of industrial areas and new trails in rail corridors. (*Agencies*)

Mature or Developing Parks
• Mature: Growth will take the form of trail acquisition and reclaiming industrial sites due to limitations on acquiring new parks. (*Agencies, LUAC*)
• Developing: There is an opportunity for acquiring natural system corridors. (*Agencies, LUAC*)
Protection

High or Low Growth

• High growth in urban and rural areas constitute a challenge for conservation. (*Agencies*)
• Lower growth in rural areas makes it easier to protect natural systems. (*Agencies*)

Mature or Developing Parks

• Mature: Growth might challenge the carrying capacity and natural characteristics of parks and trails. (*Agencies*)
• Developing: There are opportunities to protect natural systems and cultural sites, including co-management with tribes. (*MPOSC, Agencies*)
Use

High or Low Growth

- High Growth: Overuse of parks and trails could be an issue. (MPOSC, Agencies)
- Lower Growth: Lower visitation in developing park systems may impact funding appropriations. (Agencies)

Mature or Developing Parks

- Mature: Partner with local governments and implementing agencies to meet the needs of a growing region. (Agencies)
- Mature: Regional trails can be used as linear parks. (MPOSC, Agencies)
- Developing: Regional trails should connect to local businesses. (LUAC)
Connections to Land Use

**Acquisition**

Acquire land in industrial sites and railroad corridors in more compact areas. *(Agencies)*

Invest in less developed areas since land is available and acquisition costs will continue to rise. *(LUAC)*

**Protection**

Protect and restore land in more compact areas to ensure all residents benefit from access to the outdoors. *(MPOSC, Agencies)*

Pursue opportunities to protect natural systems and cultural sites, including co-management with tribes. *(MPOSC, Agencies)*

**Use**

Partner with local governments and implementing agencies to meet the needs of a growing region. *(Agencies)*

Regional trails should connect to local businesses. *(LUAC)*
Thank you

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Downtown, Mississippi River, and Samuel Morgan Regional Trail
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