Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: February 1, 2024

Topic

2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks Policy Plan Update

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)
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	Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner (651-602-1029)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Parks

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

The Council continues its work on developing the 2050 Regional Development Guide, *Imagine 2050*. The current Regional Development Guide, *Thrive MSP 2040*, along with the Council's system and policy plans, help guide the orderly growth and development of the Twin Cities metropolitan region. System and policy plans include the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*, and the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*.

At the January 4 meeting, Council staff shared a proposal for engaging the Commission for the first five months of 2024 (Table 1). Council staff asked for the Commission's advice on priorities to achieve four draft regional parks and trails objectives.

At today's meeting, Council staff will share an updated set of five draft parks and trails objectives (Figure 1) and a summary of what they heard from Commissioners on January 4, as well as a summary of input received at the January 18 Regional Park Implementing Agency partner meeting.

Also, Council staff will focus on a subset of the draft objectives surrounding the Climate and Natural Systems topic, to explore their relationship to the existing *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The Climate and Natural Systems topic has been the subject of a Council-Implementing Agency workgroup that met in December 2023 and January 2024. Council staff will share what they are learning from agency staff and seek the Commission's advice on the possible development of new policies and actions as they relate to these areas.

Council staff will continue iterating draft parks objectives and revising parks policies and actions as a result of this and future discussions with Regional Park Implementing Agencies. Council staff will also continue to provide the Commission with background information on the existing *Regional Parks Policy Plan* and how portions of it may change in the next iteration.

The Feb. 1, 2024 Commission meeting continues a set of focused discussions on the Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks Policy Plan that began last spring. At the March 2023

Commission meeting, staff shared Council-endorsed values and vision statements for the Regional Development Guide. Staff also shared a summary of the Regional Parks Policy Plan update work to-date, including a project timeline and a plan for working directly with Regional Parks Implementing Agencies via a series of workgroups.

At the April 2023 Commission meeting, Council staff led small group activities focused on developing vision, mission, and value statements for the Regional Parks and Trails System. An Implementing Agency-Council workgroup has continued this work. A refined set of statements was presented to the full Implementing Agency partnership at the end of June.

In June 2023, Council staff sought the Commission's advice on developing shared regional goals and policy area objectives. Work across Council systems and policy areas continues in this area now. Policy area objectives will connect regional goals to policies and actions. This will also be a focus of today's information item.

In August 2023, Council staff sought the Commission's feedback and advice on community engagement activities and regional parks and trails system vision, mission, and values. Staff also shared updates on regional goals and the launch of two additional parks policy plan workgroups.

In November 2023, Council staff shared outcomes of the most recent Agency-Council workgroups and the draft regional parks and trails objectives. The Commission provided feedback and advice on draft parks objectives.

Timing	Proposed Topics, Focus
	RDG: Latest timeline, organizational approach.
January 4, 2024	RPPP : Chapters 1 and 2, including existing conditions, regional goals, parks objectives.
	Focus: Priorities (policies and actions) to achieve objectives.
February 1, 2024	RPPP : Chapters 3 and 4, including System Plan and Siting and Acquisition Policy.
	Possible focus: Climate adaptation and mitigation.
March 7, 2024	RPPP : Chapters 5 and 6, including Planning and System Protection policies.
	Possible focus: Operations and maintenance challenge.
April 4, 2024	RPPP : Chapters 7 and 8, including Recreation Activities and Facilities and Finance policies.
	Possible focus: Demographic changes, completing the system.
May 2, 2024	Focus: Present overview of 60% draft plan.

Table 1: Proposed Early 2024 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Engagement				
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Draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives

WORKING REGIONAL GOALS	Our region is equitable and inclusive	Our communities a healthy and safe	e al region le ajname	We lead on addressing climate change	We protect and restore natural systems
DRAFT PARKS OBJECTIVES	Equity Better connect people with community, natural, and cultural resources in order to support physical, emotional, and mental well-being.	Take Care of Wha We Have Take care of existin regional parks and trails with regular at timely reinvestmen	Acquire land and develop new opportunities to meet the region's growing demand for regional	Adapt and Mitigate Adapt land management practices and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to help ensure the region is resilient to climate impacts.	Protect and Restore Protect and restore natural systems to ensure a high quality of life for everyone, including non-human species.
EXISTING PARKS POLICIES	Siting and Acquisition 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.	Planning Promote master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.	System Protection 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.	Recreation Activities and Facilities 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.	Finance 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.

Staff will continue to engage with the Commission throughout the project to provide updates on the planning process and seek the Commission's guidance, input, and feedback.

Minnesota law requires the Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the Regional Parks Policy Plan at least every four years (Minnesota Statutes, section 473.147). The policy plan was last updated in December 2020. Completion of the policy plan update is expected in late 2024 or early 2025.