



2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting



February 1, 2024

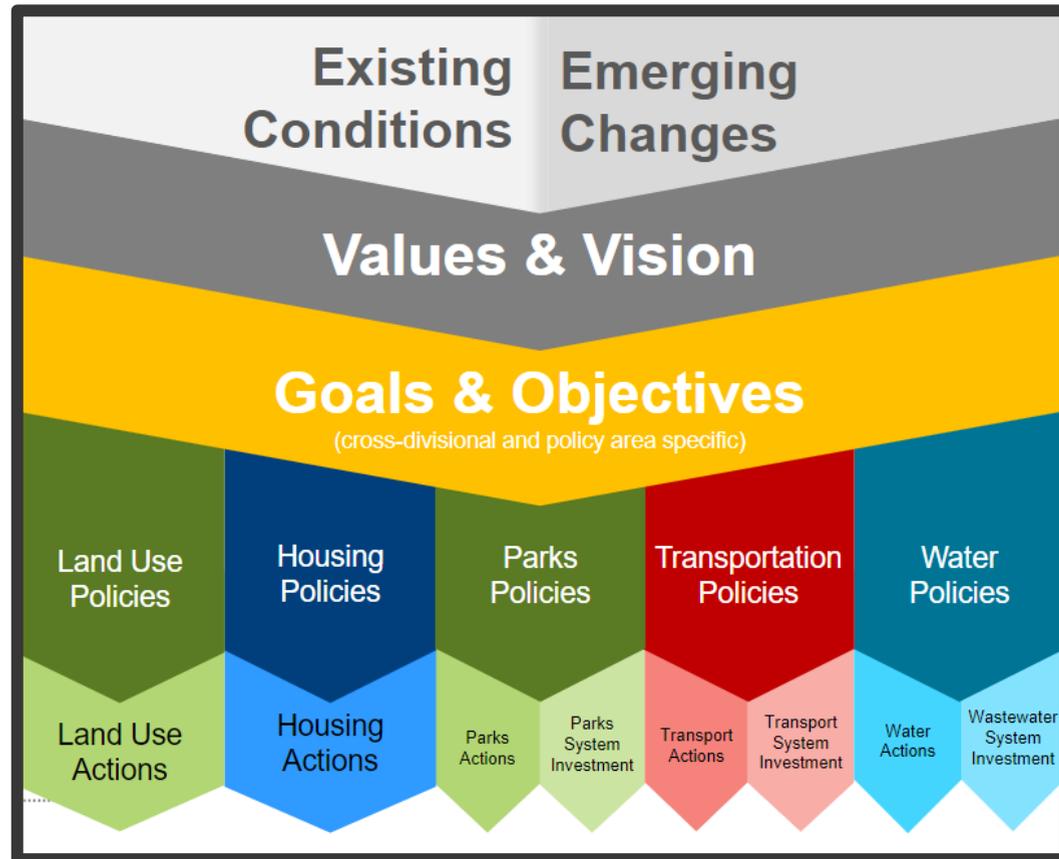
Agenda Overview

1. Continue discussion of draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives, Policies, and Actions
2. Orientation to Existing Regional Parks Policy Plan
 - Chapter 3: System Plan
 - Chapter 4: Siting and Acquisition Policy and Strategies



Regional Development Guide – Structure, Vision, and Goals

Structure



Vision *(Informally endorsed)*

“A prosperous, equitable, and resilient region with abundant opportunities for all to live, work, play, and thrive.”

Goals

Our Region is Equitable and Inclusive

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated; and every person feels welcome, included, and empowered.

Our Communities are Healthy and Safe

All our region’s residents live healthy and rewarding lives with a sense of security, dignity, and wellbeing.

Our Region is Dynamic and Resilient

Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and the economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability.

We Lead on Addressing Climate Change

We have mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure that our communities and systems are resilient to climate impacts.

We Protect and Restore Natural Systems

We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people our region

Draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives

WORKING REGIONAL GOALS

Our region is equitable and inclusive

Our communities are healthy and safe

Our region is dynamic and resilient

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 What We Have
Take care of existing regional parks and trails with regular and timely reinvestment.

Meet Future Needs
Acquire land and develop new opportunities to meet the region’s growing demand for regional parks and trails.

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.

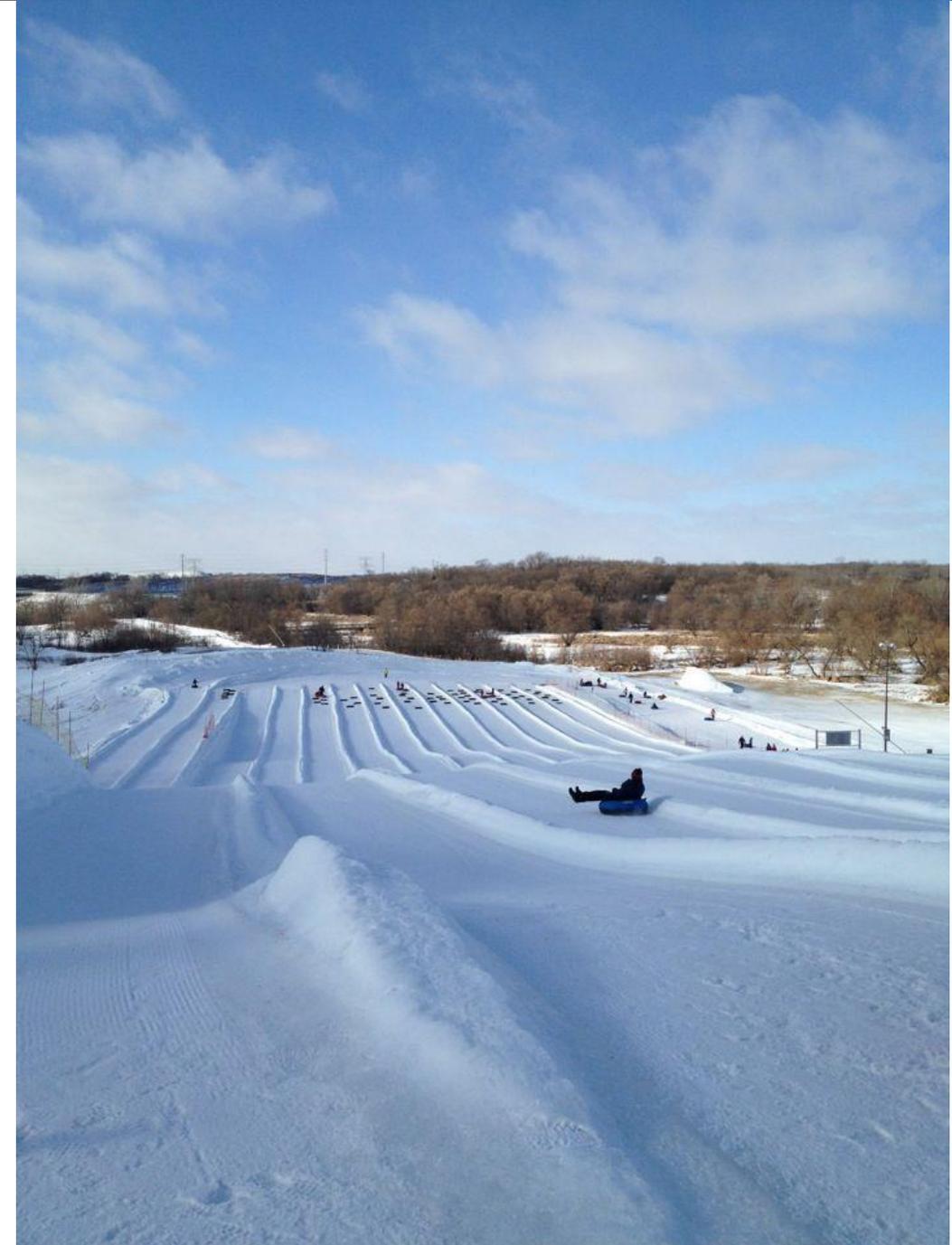
Recreation Activities and Facilities
Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors while conserving the integrity of the natural resource base within the Regional Parks System on which these opportunities depend.

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.

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Advice

November 2023, January 2024 meetings

- Creating **flexible regional standards for community engagement**, including expectations to engage people outside service area/jurisdiction.
- Promote **consistent wayfinding and signage** across system.
- Create new policy around **communication and marketing** of our high-quality system? Promote public awareness of the system.
- Create **sustainable approach to fund system**. Can we achieve what's currently included in the system plan? By when?



Implementing Agency Partner Advice

Jan. 18, 2024 – Discussion of Draft Parks Objectives, 1 of 3

Emerging Equity Ideas

- Integrate equity analysis into public engagement
- Continue building relationships with underrepresented communities.
- Promote co-management of parks and trails.
Encourage establishment of cultural liaisons, e.g., tribal liaisons.
- Connect people to parks through improved access to public transportation.
- Decriminalize park ordinances

Emerging Regional Parks and Trails System Plan Ideas

- New cultural landscape classification idea
- New natural system/open-space classification idea



Implementing Agency Partner Advice

Jan. 18, 2024 – Discussion of Draft Parks Objectives, 2

- **Emerging Mitigation Ideas**
 - Create regional trails as GHG emissions reduction strategy. Recognize as arterial backbone of an active transportation network.
 - Promote tree planting along trails for shade, comfort, and carbon sequestration.
- **Emerging Adaptation Ideas**
 - Create Climate Action Plans that are multi-jurisdictional and create Federal funding opportunities
 - Re-think regional trail corridors to expand beyond current use. Stitch together wildlife corridors. Connect important natural areas.
 - Build conservation partnerships beyond park and trail boundaries.



Implementing Agency Partner Advice



Jan. 18, 2024 – Discussion of Draft Parks Objectives, 3 of 3

Natural Systems Ideas

- Emphasize lands with restoration potential, including former industrial landscapes.
- Locate lands in low-service, low-wealth, high BIPOC areas for regional designation.
- Convert abandoned railroad corridors to regional trails.

Equitable Recreation Activities and Facilities Ideas

- Expand allowable activities and facilities in regional parks and trails to meet emerging needs.
- Balance flexibility with desire to retain what is unique about our system's natural resource foundation.

Agency-Council Climate and Natural Systems Workgroup Advice

December 2023, January 2024 meetings

- First meeting focused on desired outcomes and possible actions:
 - Desired outcomes: Increased community buy-in, regional parks mitigate climate impact, native habitat is expanded and enhanced, tree canopies are healthy and robust.
 - Actions (in park): Convert turfgrass, expand bison herd, expand recycling and organics collection, conduct regionwide wildlife and habitat study, inventory greenhouse gas emissions, collect data via citizen science
- Second meeting was intended to be more specific, keying in on three areas of focus: adaptation, mitigation, and natural systems.
 - Promote Regional Parks and Trails System as the “Swiss Army knife” of climate resilience.
 - Build awareness of climate change issue and parks as critical part of the solution. Communications and storytelling are key tools.
 - Acquire land to protect land and water and provide ecosystem services.
 - Consider a new natural system/open-space classification.
 - Collect and disseminate regionwide natural systems data and share tools to facilitate agency and community implementation.
 - Growing Shade



Draft Regional Parks and Trails Objectives

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Where does the input lead us?

Consider new and revised policies, actions



DRAFT PARKS OBJECTIVES

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Equity</p> <p>Better connect people with community, natural, and cultural resources in order to support physical, emotional, and mental well-being.</p> | <p>Take Care of What We Have</p> <p>Take care of existing regional parks and trails with regular and timely reinvestment.</p> | <p>Meet Future Needs</p> <p>Acquire land and develop new opportunities to meet the region's growing demand for regional parks and trails.</p> | <p>Adapt and Mitigate</p> <p>Adapt land management practices and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to help ensure the region is resilient to climate impacts.</p> | <p>Protect and Restore</p> <p>Protect and restore natural systems to ensure a high quality of life for everyone, including non-human species.</p> |
|---|--|--|--|--|

EXISTING & EMERGING PARKS POLICIES

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>System Plan (3) TBD</p> | <p>Natural Systems (4a) TBD</p> | <p>Adaptation (4b) TBD</p> | <p>Mitigation (4c) TBD</p> | <p>Planning (5) Promote long-range planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.</p> | <p>System Protection (6) Protect public investment in acquisition and development...</p> | <p>Equitable Recreation Activities and Facilities (7) Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities... while conserving the integrity of the natural resource base...</p> |
| <p>Consider new classifications: cultural landscape and environmental open space</p> | <p>Locating and acquisition, locate lands in low service areas – high BIPOC, low wealth</p> | <p>Create Climate Action Plans that are multi-jurisdictional and enable access to federal funding</p> | <p>Promote regional trail network as greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategy.</p> | <p>Promote co-management with tribes, improved access to public transportation</p> | <p>Local comp. plans, conversions, reimbursement for contamination, envt'l site assessments, telecom. towers, placement of utilities</p> | <p>Expand allowable amenities, allow flexibility, rethink regional trail corridors for expanded use beyond walking, biking, etc.</p> |

EXISTING & EMERGING PARKS ACTIONS

Action: Sustainably fund regional parks and trails through multiple grant programs (*connects to all policy areas*) (8, 9)

Action: Build awareness of system amenities, importance of habitat protection, engagement opps, etc. (*connects to all policy areas*) (9)

Questions, Discussion

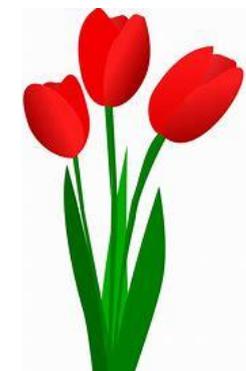
Council staff have gathered a lot of input on draft objectives, and existing and emerging policies and actions.

- *What resonates?*
- *What is missing?*
- *What is your advice for Council staff as regional parks and trails policy is drafted?*



Proposed Early 2024 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Engagement

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



Existing 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Existing 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- Chapter One: Planning for the Twin Cities Region
- Chapter Two: Overview of the Regional Parks System and the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Chapter Three: **System Plan**
- Chapter Four: **Siting and Acquisition** Policy and Strategies
- Chapter Five: **Planning** Policy and Strategies
- Chapter Six: **System Protection** Policy and Strategies
- Chapter Seven: **Recreation Activities and Facilities** Policy and Strategies
- Chapter Eight: **Finance** Policy and Strategies
- Chapter Nine: 2020-2023 Workplan for the Regional Parks Policy Plan

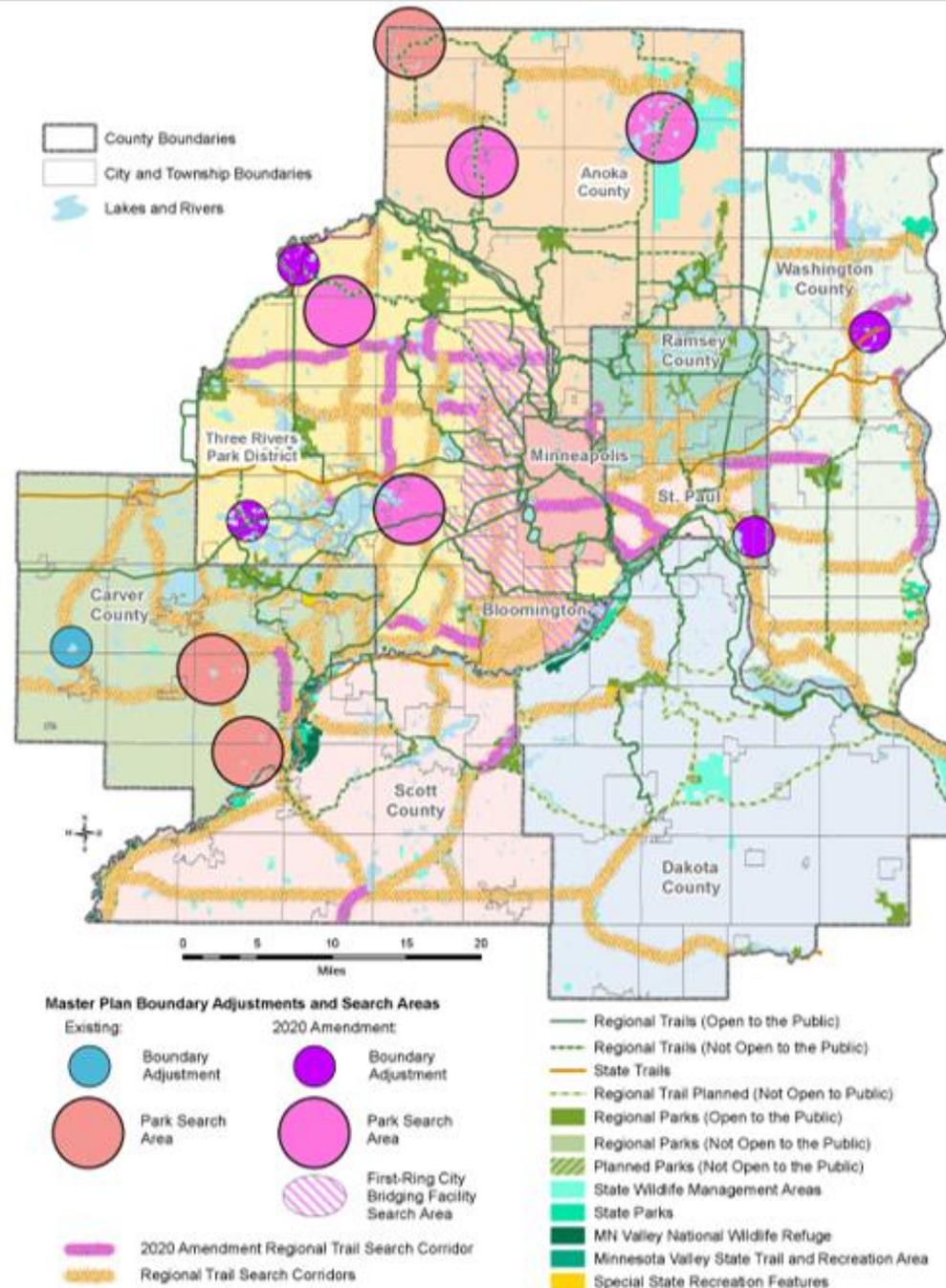
“Front matter,” including an overview of system, management structure, existing conditions specific to the system, objectives

Existing, planned, and search

Current policy and strategy framework, includes five policies and associated strategies

“Placeholder” topic areas that the Council intends to take up prior to the next update

Chapter Three: System Plan



- National Parks and Federal Lands
- State Parks, Lands, and Trails
- Local Parks
- Components of the Regional Parks System
 - Regional Parks
 - Park Reserves
 - Regional Trails
 - Special Recreation Features
- Regional Parks System Plan
 - **Existing** Regional Parks System facilities
 - **Planned** Regional Parks System facilities
 - Regional Park **Search** Areas, Regional Trail Search Corridors

Chapter Four: Siting and Acquisition Policy and Strategies

- **Siting and Acquisition Policy** – “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.”
- **Strategy 1: Priorities** – “Lands with natural resource features, access to water, and/or restoration potential will be a priority for the Regional Parks System.”
- **Strategy 2: Geographic balance** – “Geographic balance or proportionate distribution tied to population distribution patterns shall be a consideration when exploring system additions.”
- **Strategy 3: Council-approved long-range plans** – “Priorities for land acquisition are set by regional park implementing agencies in Council-approved long-range plans.”
- **Strategy 4: New regional trails** – “New regional trails must serve a regional audience and provide connections between regional parks, park reserves, and regional trails without duplicating an existing trail.”
- **Strategy 5: Special recreation features** – “Special recreation features must enhance services and facilities already offered, not compete with, or duplicate them.”





Thank you

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