2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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March 7, 2024  metrocouncil.org
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Parks Policy Plan Timeline – Summary

**Initiation**
- 2022 Quarter 4 – 2023 Quarter 2
  - Scoping
  - Existing conditions
  - Draft system vision, mission, and values
  - Draft community, stakeholder, and public engagement plan

**Planning**
- 2023 Quarter 2 – 2023 Quarter 4
  - Planner’s Forums, Council-Agency work groups
  - Initial policy and plan development

**Execution**
- 2023 Quarter 4 – 2024 Quarter 2
  - Continued policy and plan development
  - Draft (~60%) plan complete (May ‘24)
  - Plan refinement

**Close**
- 2024 Quarter 3 – 2025 Quarter 1
  - Final draft (~90%) plan complete (August ‘24)
  - Public comment period
  - Public hearing (Sept. ‘24)
  - Plan refinement
  - Council approval (Feb. ‘25)

Coordination with the Regional Development Guide Process, Other Council Systems and Policy Areas

Ongoing Engagement: Council Committees, Implementing Agencies, Community Groups, Stakeholders, Public
## Proposed Early 2024 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Proposed Topics, Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Focus**: Priorities (policies and actions) to achieve objectives.                                                                                                                                            |
| February 1, 2024 | *Imagine 2050*: Emerging regional parks policies and actions  
**Focus**: Demographic changes, climate adaptation and mitigation.                                                                                                                                            |
| March 7, 2024    | *Imagine 2050*: Updated regional parks policies and actions  
**2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan**: Chapters 1-6, including Overview, System Plan, Siting and Acquisition, Planning, and System Protection policies.  
**Focus**: Proposals to reorganize content, develop Regional Parks Planning Handbook                                                                                                      |
| April 4, 2024    | *Imagine 2050*: Updated regional parks policies and actions  
**2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan**: Chapters 7 and 8, including Recreation Activities and Facilities and Finance policies.  
**Proposed focus**: Operations and maintenance challenge, completing the system.                                                                                                                   |
| May 2, 2024      |  
**Focus**: Present overview of 60% draft plan and Regional Parks Planning Handbook.                                                                                                                        |
Regional Development Guide – Structure, Vision, and Goals

Structure

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our region is equitable and inclusive</th>
<th>Our communities are healthy and safe</th>
<th>Our region is dynamic and resilient</th>
<th>We lead on addressing climate change</th>
<th>We protect and restore natural systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**DRAFT PARKS OBJECTIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foster Equity and Belonging</th>
<th>Take Care of What We Have</th>
<th>Meet Future Needs</th>
<th>Adapt and Mitigate</th>
<th>Protect and Restore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect people with community, natural, and cultural landscapes to better support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.</td>
<td>Reinvest in existing regional parks and trails to maintain and enhance visitor experiences.</td>
<td>Meet the growing demand for regional parks and trails through strategic and timely land acquisition and development.</td>
<td>Increase the region’s resilience to climate change by adapting land management practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.</td>
<td>Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the well-being of all living things.</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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 1, 2024 meeting

- Address **water quality** and **availability**. How to best inform people of issues like PFAS?
- **Rethink regional trails** as more than just a place to bike. Provide more park-like amenities in corridors that have more space.
- How can the Council and agencies better position themselves for **federal funding**?
- **Joint promotion** of regional park and trail opportunities could **unlock economic benefits** for local communities.
- **Climate and natural systems** content seems to be **elevated**. That is important.
Implementing Agency Partner Advice

Jan. 18, 2024

- Strengthen tribal relationships, **co-management** of parks and trails.
- New **cultural landscape** classification idea
- New **natural system/open-space** classification idea
- Create multi-jurisdictional **Climate Action Plans**
- Expand **allowable activities and facilities** in regional parks and trails to meet emerging needs

Feb. 15, 2024

- Co-management is too specific an action at system level. Consider **indigenous reconciliation**.
- Like new classification ideas. Consider using existing classifications. **Define cultural landscapes**.
- Council should be a **convenor, not imposer**.
- Don’t diminish regional **status** by adding more local amenities.
Committee of the Whole Advice

February 21, 2024 meeting

• Agree with shifting *siting and acquisition* to an action.
• Appreciate emerging policy space for *cultural landscapes*.
• Protect and provide access to *natural areas* in *suburban and rural contexts* too. Restoration of industrial landscapes is too narrow a focus.
• How do we assess *access and availability* of regional parks throughout the metropolitan area?
• Appreciate the “*take care of what we have*” objective. This is critical.
• Appreciate reframing of policy to *equitable recreation activities and facilities*.
• Appreciate the existing policy plan’s orientation to *community engagement*. This is meaningful.
Where does the advice lead us?

*Propose reframing existing content*

**DRAFT PARKS OBJECTIVES**

- **Foster Equity and Belonging**
  - Connect people with community, natural, and cultural landscapes to better support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

- **Take Care of What We Have**
  - Reinvest in existing regional parks and trails to maintain and enhance visitor experiences.

- **Meet Future Needs**
  - Meet the growing demand for regional parks and trails through strategic and timely land acquisition and development.

- **Adapt and Mitigate**
  - Increase the region’s resilience to climate change by adapting land management practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Protect and Restore**
  - Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the well-being of all living things.

**EXISTING & EMERGING PARKS POLICIES**

- **System Plan (3)**
  - TBD

- **Natural Systems (4a)**
  - TBD

- **Adaptation (4b)**
  - TBD

- **Mitigation (4c)**
  - TBD

**EXISTING & EMERGING PARKS ACTIONS**

- **System Protection (6)**
  - Protect public investment in acquisition and development...

- **Planning (5)**
  - Promote long-range planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.

- **Equitable Recreation Activities and Facilities (7)**
  - Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities...

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, Advice

Council staff continue to gather 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?
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 One: Planning for the Twin Cities Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Thrive MSP 2040</td>
<td>Proposed update and move to Regional Development Guide “front matter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thrive Outcomes</td>
<td>• Thrive MSP 2040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thrive Principles</td>
<td>• Thrive Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional Direction from Thrive MSP 2040 for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</td>
<td>• Thrive Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Growth and Demographics</td>
<td>• Regional Growth and Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Designations</td>
<td>• Community Designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Comprehensive Plans</td>
<td>• Local Comprehensive Plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High-Level Changes:
• Most content from Chapter One will be integrated into the Regional Development Guide
• Proposal to add remaining content to Chapter Two (Section One)
# Chapter Two: Overview of the Regional Parks System and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

## Proposed Title: Section One: Overview of the Regional Parks and Trails System and the 2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>New/Emerging Topics</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction</td>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consolidation with other chapters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Regional Parks System</td>
<td>• Consolidation of remaining Chapter 1 content</td>
<td>• The Regional Parks System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Parks System Management Structure</td>
<td><strong>Research and Data</strong></td>
<td>• Definition of park units (Regional Parks, Regional Trails, etc.) consolidated into the System Plan section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Parks System Funding</td>
<td>• Existing Conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of the Regional Parks Policy Plan</td>
<td>• Research and Engagement Summary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Objectives**
- Regional Parks and Trails System Objectives
- Connection to Regional Development Guide's goals and park vision, mission, and values
# Chapter Three: System Plan

## Proposed Title: Section Two: System Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>New/Emerging Topics</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction</td>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td>Proposed move to Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Components of the Regional Parks System</td>
<td>• Consolidation of Regional Park and Trail components (Chapter 2)</td>
<td>• Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Description of other parks partners (National, state, local)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Park Reserves</td>
<td><strong>System Plan</strong></td>
<td>Proposed move to Regional Development Guide “front matter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Trails</td>
<td>• Cultural Landscape and Environmental Open Space Classification</td>
<td>• Introduction to Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special Recreation Features</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Regional Parks System Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Existing and Planned Regional Parks System Facilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Boundary Adjustments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Search Areas/Corridors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 2040 Regional Parks System Plan Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Policy Framework</td>
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Chapter Four: Siting and Acquisition Policy and Strategies

Proposed Title: Section Three: Natural Systems and Climate Policy and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>New/Emerging Topics</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Action 1: Priorities  
• Action 2: Geographic balance  
• Action 3: Council-approved long-range plans  
• Action 4: New regional trails  
• Action 5: Special recreation features | Natural Systems and Climate  
• Emphasis on protecting and restoring natural systems  
• Mitigation Action  
• Adaptation Action | Proposed move to action level  
• Policy: Siting Locating and acquisition  
Proposed move to another chapter  
• Action 3: Council-approved long-range plans (Long-range planning)  
• Action 4: New regional trails (System Plan)  
• Action 5: Special recreation features (System Plan) |

High-Level Changes:  
• Structure for Chapter Four is still to be determined (Potential for separate climate and natural system policies)
# Chapter Five: Planning Policy and Strategies

**Proposed Title: Section Four: Planning Policy and Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>New/Emerging Topics</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Action 1: Long-range plan requirements</td>
<td>Minor and Administrative Long Range Plan Amendments</td>
<td>Proposed move to Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Action 2: Enhanced multimodal access</td>
<td>• Processes added to Regional Parks and Trails Planner Handbook</td>
<td>• Action 1: Long-range plan requirements (Plan requirements only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Action 3: Joint powers agreements</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Action 3: Joint powers agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Action 4: Cost sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed move to Regional Parks and Trails Grants Administration Guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High-Level Changes:**
- Action 1 policies will remain in the Regional Parks Policy Plan, but requirements and procedures are proposed to move to the Regional Parks and Trails Planner Handbook
## Chapter Six: System Protection Policy and Strategies

### Proposed Title: Section Five: System Protection Policy and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Content</th>
<th>Proposed to be Moved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Action 1: Local Comprehensive Plans  
• Action 2: Conversions  
• Action 3: Reimbursement for contamination  
• Action 4: Environmental Site Assessments  
• Action 5: Telecommunication Towers  
• Action 6: Placement of utilities | Propose move to Regional Parks and Trails Grants Administration Guide  
• Action 3: Reimbursement for contamination  
• Action 4: Environmental Site Assessments  

Propose move to Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook  
• Action 5: Telecommunication Towers (Process)  
• Action 6: Placement of Utilities (Easement Process Only) |
Proposed Content Shifts: Parks and Trails Planning Handbook, Grant Administration Guide

New Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook

Chapter 3, System Plan Introduction: National, Federal, State, Local, Private, and Nonprofit Partners content

Chapter 4, Strategy 5, Special Recreation Features: Bridging facility criteria

Chapter 5, Strategy 1, Planning: Long-range Plan Content Requirements and Amendment Processes

Chapter 6, Strategy 2, Land Conversions: Process;
   Strategy 5, Telecommunication Towers: Process; and
   Strategy 6, Placement of Utilities: Easement Process

Existing Regional Parks Grant Administration Guide

Chapter 5, Planning, Strategy 4: Cost sharing

Chapter 6, System Protection Strategy 3: Reimbursement for contamination and System Protection
   Strategy 4: Environmental Site Assessments for contamination
Questions, Discussion, Advice

Council staff propose moving some content that is not fundamentally oriented to objectives, policies, or actions, or is considered contextual or procedural, to a new Parks Planning Handbook.

• What are the strengths of this approach?
• What your concerns?
• Do you have any other advice for staff?
Thank you

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