

Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: June 6, 2024

Topic

Draft 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1360)

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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. The four 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*.

Like each of the other Council systems and policy areas, Regional Parks and Trails policy will be integrated directly into the Regional Development Guide during this planning cycle. As such, Regional Parks and Trails policy will be one of several chapters in *Imagine 2050*.

At the June 6, 2024, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) meeting, Council staff will share:

- A summary of advice from recent Council committee and Regional Park Implementing Agency director's meetings.
- An overview of the draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook.
- A deeper dive into the Natural Systems and Climate Resiliency sections of the Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter.

Council staff seek the Commission's feedback and advice, especially related to the Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook and the Natural Systems and Climate Resiliency sections of the Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter.

Council staff shared updates on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter with the Community Development Committee on May 6, Committee of the Whole on May 15, and Regional Park Implementing Agency Directors on May 16. Following these meetings, Council staff continue to refine draft policies and actions and the proposed Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook. Council staff will continue to refine these important documents as conversations with

Council committees, Regional Park Implementing Agencies, and others continue through the summer.

Content included in each of the policy areas of *Imagine 2050* is intended to be primarily oriented to objectives, policies, and actions. Content that is contextual, procedural, or highly detailed is proposed to reside in the Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook.

Two draft policies focused on Natural Systems and Climate Resiliency will be explored in greater detail during the June meeting. These policies and their corresponding actions were developed in collaboration with an Agency-Council workgroup focused on these topics. The workgroup met three times in late 2023 and early 2024.

The June 2024 MPOSC meeting continues a series of focused discussions on the Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter that began in early 2023 and will continue through 2024. A public comment (90%) draft will be shared with MPOSC in August 2024 (Table 1).

At the March 2023 MPOSC 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 Park Implementing Agencies via a series of workgroups.

At the April 2023 MPOSC 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 continued this work.

In June 2023, Council staff sought MPOSC's advice on developing shared regional goals and policy area objectives. Policy area objectives connect regional goals to policies and actions.

In August 2023, Council staff sought MPOSC'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 draft regional parks and trails objectives. MPOSC provided feedback and advice on draft parks objectives.

At the January 4, 2024, meeting, Council staff shared a proposal for engaging MPOSC for the first five months of 2024 and sought advice on a revised set of draft parks objectives.

At the February 1, 2024, meeting, Council staff shared a revised set of draft parks objectives based on the input of MPOSC and Regional Park Implementing Agencies. Again, MPOSC provided advice on priorities to achieve draft parks objectives.

At the April 2024 MPOSC meeting, Council staff shared feedback from Regional Park Implementing Agencies, MPOSC, and the Committee of the Whole. These discussions helped Council staff further refine and shape the draft policies and actions.

At the May 2024 MPOSC meeting, Council staff shared an overview of the 60% draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter. The 60% draft is the result of numerous discussions with Council committees, Regional Park Implementing Agencies, and extensive outreach to prioritized communities.

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, as an integrated part of *Imagine 2050*, is expected in late 2024 or early 2025.



Table 1: Proposed Summer 2024 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Engagement

Timing	Proposed Topics, Focus
June 6, 2024	<i>Imagine 2050:</i> Content further developed Focus: Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook, Natural Systems (section 3), and Climate Resiliency (section 4).
July 11, 2024 (date changed from July 4)	<i>Imagine 2050:</i> Content further developed Focus: System Plan (section 2), Planning (section 5), and System Protection (section 6)
August 1, 2024	<i>Imagine 2050:</i> Public Comment (90%) Draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy chapter Focus: Workplan (section 9)

