

Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee Meeting: Oct. 21, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: Oct. 23, 2024

Business Item: 2024-275 SW

Regional Parks System 2024 Fishing Piers Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.325 and 473.315; Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 116, Sec. 5
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Jessica Lee, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1621
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the 2024 Regional Parks System Fishing Piers Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability attached to this report.
2. Approve the funding and awarding of four grants selected through a lottery as outlined in the NOFA.

Background

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$500,000 for new fishing piers on lakes in the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System to increase fishing opportunities. This is a one-time appropriation, and funds must be used by June 30, 2026. The legislation requires the Council to solicit applications but does not require a competitive grant review process.

Council staff reached out to the DNR and also spoke to the implementing agencies to estimate the average cost of a fishing pier. It was determined that a quality fishing pier, along with minimum access features, would cost somewhere between \$100,000 and \$175,000. Council staff proposed to the implementing agencies to fund three to five eligible grants of equal value through a randomized lottery held at a future Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) meeting. The group's consensus recommendation was that \$125,000 would be a good project amount, thus funding four equal grants totaling \$500,000.

Projects must meet specific criteria in order to be included in the lottery. These criteria are described in the attached draft Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

Staff shared the draft NOFA at the September Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting and was encouraged to move forward and bring the NOFA for approval in October.

Rationale

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$500,000 for new fishing piers on lakes in the Metropolitan Regional Parks System. This NOFA outlines the program and process for spending those funds.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This grant program is consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040*'s Livability and Stewardship outcomes. New fishing piers will increase opportunities for people to get outdoors and connect to nature.

Funding

Funding is provided by the Minnesota State Legislature through an appropriation passed in the 2024 legislative session. This new program has these funds available in the Council's Authorized Capital Program. Agencies may provide additional funds for projects that exceed \$125,000.



REGIONAL PARKS SYSTEM FISHING PIERS GRANT PROGRAM

2024 Notice of Funding Availability

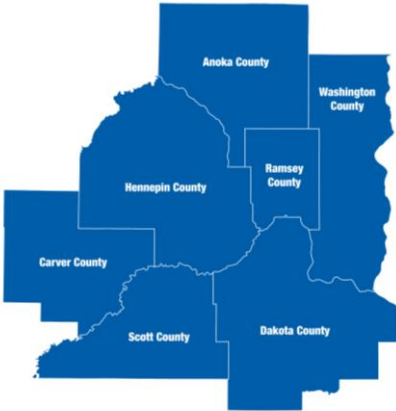


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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

This 2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) describes the Metropolitan Council's intentions for the one-time legislatively directed Regional Parks System Fishing Piers Grant Program. Specifically, this notice:

- Establishes the amount of funding available and the limits that apply to individual awards.
- Sets the schedule for application submittal, review, and award.
- Describes the criteria the Metropolitan Council will use in project selection.
- Defines who is eligible to apply.

Background and Purpose

The 2024 legislative session appropriated \$500,000 for grants to Regional Park Implementing Agencies for new fishing piers to increase fishing opportunities on lakes in the metropolitan parks system. The Metropolitan Council is tasked with soliciting proposals from the implementing agencies. These funds expire June 30, 2026.

Eligible Applicants

By state statute¹, applicants must be a regional park implementing agency, defined as the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott and Washington, the cities of Saint Paul and Bloomington, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Three Rivers Park District.² Regional park implementing agencies are welcome to collaborate on proposals. Individuals and/or other governmental, private, or nonprofit entities are not eligible to apply, but are encouraged to be included as project partners with regional park implementing agencies.

Available Funds and Award Limits for 2024

- \$500,000 in State funds is available for new fishing piers.
- Agencies are allowed to submit one application each for \$125,000. If the total project cost is more than \$125,000, agencies must provide the additional funding.
- A lottery will be held at a Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) meeting to select four awards from the pool of eligible applications.
- The Council reserves the right to award less than the available funding.
- Grants are reimbursement-based.

Eligible Uses of Funds and Criteria

Grant proposals must meet all of the below criteria to be considered for funding.

- Proposals must be for new fishing piers.
- Proposals must clearly demonstrate a need and describe how the fishing pier will increase fishing opportunities.
- Proposals must address one or more equity focus area (age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin or ability).
- The proposal must demonstrate how a new fishing pier will contribute to additional programming opportunities and awareness building for the regional parks and trails system.

¹ Minn. Stat. § 473.315: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=473.315>

² Minn. Stat. § 473.351: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=473.351>

- Projects must be ready to start so that they can be completed by June 30, 2026.
- Projects must be within the boundaries of the Regional Parks and Trails System, consistent with the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, consistent with a Council-approved long-range plan, and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Project must be approved by the Agency’s locally elected board either individually or as part of a local capital improvement plan before a grant agreement is executed.

Funding Schedule

October 2024	NOFA brought through the Council process for approval and to authorize awarding four eligible projects after the MPOSC lottery
November 2024	NOFA posted on Council website and application opens
January 2025	Applications due by 4:00 P.M. on January 10, 2025 (must be submitted via WebGrants)
January 2025	Staff review projects for eligibility
February 2025	Lottery held at the February 6, 2025 MPOSC meeting
February 2025	Grant agreements sent out

These dates are subject to change.

Proposal Review Process

Council staff will review all proposals to ensure completeness and eligibility. Council staff are available to answer agency questions throughout the application process. Applications must meet each of the criteria listed above in order to be eligible for the lottery. The MPOSC chair will select four applications at random at a public MPOSC meeting.

Grant Terms

Grants will expire June 30, 2026, with no extensions possible. All costs eligible for reimbursement must be incurred during the grant term and all costs must be submitted within 90 days after the end of the grant term. Unspent grant funds will revert to the State.



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