



IMAGINE²⁰₅₀

Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
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metro council.org



Upcoming Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Engagement

Timing	Proposed Topics, Focus
October 3, 2024	Draft (90%) Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (information item)
November 7, 2024	High-level summary of public comments received on the draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (information item)
December 5, 2024	Final Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook (information item)
January 9, 2025	Final Draft Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (business item)

Schedule for Finalizing *Imagine 2050*

Timing	Milestone
October 7, 2024	Public comment period closes (CDC)
Varies	Final public comment reports prepared
January 9, 2025	Draft (Final) Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan (MPOSC)
February 12, 2025	Council adoption of <i>Imagine 2050</i> (MC)



Key Stakeholder Advice



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission - July 11, 2024 meeting

- A cultural resource inventory sounds good, but it is important to wait and develop robust guidelines that do not result in costly processes.
 - How will the Council work with agencies to achieve a common understanding about this proposed requirement?
- Does the long-range plan amendment process consider cost or the age of the previous plan?

Regional Park Implementing Agencies

- Reduce redundancies, clarify language, and maintain consistency with the policy chapter.
- Continue assessing content to differentiate policy from procedure.
- Would appreciate more time to review and comment on the draft planning handbook.

Draft Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Overview

What is it?

- Complementary document to the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Chapter
- Contains procedural and contextual language outlining Regional Parks and Trails System processes.

Handbook Amendment Process:

- Handbook policy content will be amended every 4 years (same schedule as Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan)
 - Amendment process will be in partnership with Implementing Agencies and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
 - Resources (e.g., webinars, plan examples, infographics, etc.) will be updated on as-needed basis or when new content is available.



Sections 1 and 2: Introduction and System Plan



What's New?

Overall

- Moved procedural and contextual language from Policy Chapter to Handbook.
- Incorporation of graphics and flowcharts to visualize processes.

Introduction

- Added contextual language describing Handbook purpose and amendment process.
- Moved research and engagement summary from Policy Chapter.

System Plan

- Added contextual language regarding Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System.
- Consolidated Regional Park and Trail System unit classifications into Policy Chapter One-Pagers.
- Proposal to add Agency-Level Maps

Section 3: Natural Systems



What's New?

- Clarified the System Additions process.
- Added graphics and language explaining how a “Search Area/Corridor” becomes operational.
- Realigned study area criteria to match Locating and Acquisition super factors.
- Continued commitment to monitor local and non-local visitation with park agency partners.

Section 5: Planning

What's New for 2050?

- Reorganized and streamlined plan requirements into three main categories:
 - Engagement
 - Development Concept
 - Natural Systems
- Added design considerations for long-range plans
- Created criteria and process for different types of long-range plan amendments:
 - Full amendment
 - Focused amendment
 - Administrative process for minor amendments.
- Modified criteria and process for boundary adjustments
- Moved language on joint powers agreements from Policy Chapter to Handbook



Plan Amendment Boundary Adjustment Thresholds and Process



Figure 5-1: Boundary Adjustment Threshold Summary

Plan Amendments: Boundary Adjustment Criteria and Process – Eligibility Threshold Summary		
Unit Type	Regional parks Park reserves Special features Regional trail corridor land	Regional trails alignments
Administrative Approval of Long-Range Plan Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor correction to a mapping or design error affecting less than 1% of unit's total management boundary acreage. Proposes a park or trail boundary adjustment, public-to-public land exchange, or an acquisition long-range plan amendment that changes the management boundary by less than 5 acres; and the land addition/removal is valued up to \$750,000 total. 	Trail realignment alters up to 1-mile of trail and is within 1-mile of the original alignment but does not alter the start and end points of the trail.
Focused Long Range Plan Amendment, Acquisition Long-Range Plan or Land Conversion	<p>A limited in scope plan amendment that meets one of the following two criteria, whichever is greater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects less than 100 acres of the total management boundary acreage Affects less than 20% of the total management boundary acreage. 	<p>A limited in scope plan amendment that meets one of the following two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail realignment is up to 1.5 miles from the original alignment. Proposed trail extension is up to one mile, and it enables connection to existing or future trailhead, park, local trail, or other destination.
Regular Long-Range Plan Amendment	A full scope plan amendment that significantly changes the earlier proposal for acquisition and/or development and exceeds the thresholds for a focused long-range plan amendment (above).	A full scope plan amendment that significantly alters the earlier trail alignment and exceeds the thresholds for a focused long-range plan amendment (above).
Policy Plan Amendment	<p>Meets one of the following two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeds plan amendment criteria Proposes new regional park study area or search area 	<p>Meets one of the following two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeds plan amendment criteria Proposes new trail

*Please note, Met Council staff will consider the requirements of any Met Council or State funding restrictions.

**Amendments meeting the criteria above may still be required to have full Met Council review if determined necessary by Met Council staff.

Boundary adjustments: are additions or removals of land from an existing Met Council-approved long-range plan's management boundary.

- The boundary adjustment table (Figure 5-1) connects boundary thresholds to the range of amendment processes.

Boundary Adjustment Criteria: Regional Parks, Park Reserves, Special Features, and Regional Trails

Unit Type	Regional parks, Park reserves, Special features, Regional trails
Administrative Approval of Long-Range Plan Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor correction to a mapping or design error affecting less than 1% of unit’s total management boundary acreage. • Proposes a park or trail boundary adjustment, public-to-public land exchange, or an acquisition long-range plan amendment that changes the management boundary by less than 5 acres; and the land addition/removal is valued up to \$750,000 total.
Focused Long Range Plan Amendment, Acquisition Long-Range Plan or Land Conversion	<p>A limited in scope plan amendment that meets one of the following two criteria, whichever is greater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects less than 100 acres of the total management boundary acreage • Affects less than 20% of the total management boundary acreage.
Regular Long-Range Plan Amendment	<p>A full scope plan amendment that significantly changes the earlier proposal for acquisition and/or development and exceeds the thresholds for a focused long-range plan amendment (above).</p>
Policy Plan Amendment	<p>Meets one of the following two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeds plan amendment criteria • Proposes new regional park study area or search area

Boundary Adjustment Criteria: Regional Trail Alignments

Unit Type	Regional trails alignments
Administrative Approval of Long-Range Plan Amendment	Trail realignment alters up to 1-mile of trail and is within 1-mile of the original alignment but does not alter the start and end points of the trail.
Focused Long Range Plan Amendment, Acquisition Long-Range Plan or Land Conversion	A limited in scope plan amendment that meets one of the following two criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail realignment is up to 1.5 miles from the original alignment. • Proposed trail extension is up to one mile, and it enables connection to existing or future trailhead, park, local trail, or other destination.
Regular Long-Range Plan Amendment	A full scope plan amendment that significantly alters the earlier trail alignment and exceeds the thresholds for a focused long-range plan amendment (above).
Policy Plan Amendment	Meets one of the following two criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeds plan amendment criteria • Proposes new trail

Section 6: System Protection



What's New?

- Added procedural and contextual language regarding Local Comprehensive Plans, Land Conversion Processes, and Telecommunication Towers Placement.
- Added process graphics and requirements for land conversion process.
- Moved the land conversion and utility easement criteria to the Policy Plan.

Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming

What's New?

- Added procedural language and flowchart describing the new Recreational Activities and Facilities evaluation process.
- Provided list of ineligible recreational activities.
- Added commitment to continue Trail System Coordination Workgroup





Thank you

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