

December 2024 - Comments on the Public Comment (90%) draft 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Group/Org	Commentor	Primary plan location	Comment/Question/Suggestion
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP), Planning Handbook, and Grants/Funding Handbook are steps towards streamlining oversight processes that can be staff and time intensive. We support continued improvement in this area.
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	N/A	<p>Focus on High-Level Regional Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington County encourages the focus of the RPPP to be on high level regional guidance. The RPPP should focus on what Met Council's role is and how the partnership will work together. Some of the proposed policies provide direction that best left to agencies who are operating the system. Additional narrative is proposed to be added to the RPPP. There needs to be balance struck between providing necessary context while remaining focused on the regional policy language. Additional narrative can be provided in other documents or reports produced by the Met Council and available to agencies as needed.
City of Lakeville	Tina Goodroad	N/A	The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan has no significant implications for Lakeville to address with the 2050 Lakeville Comprehensive Plan update process.
City of Bloomington	Tim Busse	N/A	Appreciation for Input Opportunities. Bloomington Parks and Recreation and Utilities staff have been meeting regularly with Metropolitan Council staff. We are very thankful for the meetings and the opportunity to contribute to the development of both the Regional Parks and Trails and Water Policy Plans. Given these past input opportunities, we have no additional comments on these draft plans.
City of Saint Paul		N/A	<p>Saint Paul Parks and Recreation wishes to thank the Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks staff for their months of engagement and focused conversation that led to this draft of the Regional Parks Policy Plan. This plan reflects the evolving nature of the regional parks system and its role of providing access to natural spaces with relevant amenities to all of the region's residents.</p> <p>Equity is at the heart of all work Saint Paul Parks and Recreation does. We know that a diverse and dynamic community interacts with regional parks and trails differently than park visitors may have in the past. We are committed to continuing to add culturally-relevant recreational amenities, and more broadly, active recreation that is increasingly desired by our community, to our regional parks and trails in a way that is also sensitive to the surrounding natural features. For this reason, we are very thankful that this draft of the policy plan takes a progressive and forward-looking approach to the balance of amenities in regional parks throughout the metropolitan area. Action 2 of Section 7 is a welcome refresh of the regional policies around how we consider these amenities.</p> <p>Maximizing the impact of these investments is achieved by matching programming to bring new visitors to our regional parks and trails and to introduce returning visitors to new experiences. BIPOC-specific programming has been a tremendous success in great part due to the Metropolitan Council's equity grant program and the ability to use Parks and Trails Legacy funding for this work. Our residents are getting first-hand experience with outdoor recreational activities like camping and fishing in our parks, many for the first time in their lives. This continues to cultivate a community that treasures the outdoors.</p> <p>Another aspect of our equity work has been the engagement and relationship-building we have done with indigenous communities. Saint Paul contains significant Dakota cultural sites and the stewardship of those locations demands the involvement and leadership of the communities that hold these places in such importance. The draft policy plan's creation of a new "cultural landscape" classification in the regional parks system acknowledges that there are these locations with a regional, and even statewide or national, importance and visitation, with a natural resource base, that rightfully should not have a recreational focus. We appreciate the engagement that has led to the creation of this designation and welcome the continued conversation as the details of implementing such a special feature continue to be developed.</p> <p>We finally want to applaud the dedication of an entire section of the draft plan to climate resiliency. The plan rightfully acknowledges the role that parks play in combating the effects of climate change including the cooling effects of the tree canopy and natural vegetation's slowing and managing of stormwater. As climate change continues to worsen, residents of the region will increasingly rely on our parks as places to cool themselves; gather with friends, family, and neighbors; and relieve the mental health stresses that come with a warmer, less predictable climate. We also know that parks will serve as resilience hubs where assistance and services can be provided to the community following extreme weather events. We look forward to sharing the work that Saint Paul has done on climate resiliency and learning from our colleagues at the other implementing agencies.</p>
N/A	(Name not listed) ternes99@gmail.com	N/A	(RE: Open comments from social pinpoint) Actions listed in Give Feedback section are in a different order than the Policy 7 section. This will likely mess up your responses.
	Anders Kaufman	N/A	(RE: Policy feedback confusing) No, I think it's very well laid out/explained.
	Anders Kaufman	N/A	(RE: Open comments from social pinpoint) I'm glad I read this, because it makes me more confident in where my tax money is going. I would love to see more transparency like this. It was very concise and informative. Thanks!
	Anthony Albright	N/A	(RE: Policy feedback strengthen) They could be more specific
MPRB	Adam Arvidson	Planning Handbook	Continued uncertainty around the authority and jurisdiction of the Planning Handbook. We and other agencies have been expressing this concern since the inception of the idea of this handbook, and the questions remain unresolved.
Ramsey County	Kris Lencowski	Planning Handbook	Appreciate the effort to slim the plan and create a handbook for practicality
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 1: Overview	Regional Goal #5. "We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people of our region." The natural systems protection, integration, and restoration work that counties do ensures a high-quality of life for all living things in the region. This is supported later in the plan on page 19 in an objective that states "Protect and restore: Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the well-being of all living things." Dakota County recommends changing the regional goal to take a more holistic approach.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 1: Overview	Dakota County appreciates the acknowledgement of system growth impacting the need for additional operations and maintenance costs in the Growing Pains section on page 17. Operations and Maintenance (OM) funding as required by Statute has never been realized. Dakota County supports the full funding of OM need.

Section/Color Key

Section 1: Overview
Section 2: System Plan
Section 3: Natural Systems
Section 4: Climate Resilience
Section 5: Planning
Section 6: System Protection
Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming
Section 8: Finance
Section 9: Work plan

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Government Agency (not specified)	Leila Farah	Section 1: Overview	<p>Impressive and amazing detailed work! Kudos to you and the team :)</p> <p>This the only spot where I paused (and it could be just me) is in the objectives overview section in one of the "Take Care of What we Have" paragraphs:</p> <p>Suggestion for a very minor tweak:</p> <p>In 2022, the most recent year for operational expenditure data, the ten regional park implementing agencies' operational expenditures exceeded \$130 million. While the Sstate contributes to this critical function, historically their its investment has been about 9% of the total annual operating costs. This means the vast majority of costs are borne by the regional park implementing agencies. If funding does not keep up with growing user demand, and infrastructure maintenance, the system will experience degradation and decline. deterioration.</p> <p>Keep up the good work and looking forward to you seeing you all in October!</p>
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 1: Overview	Total Trail Miles. The total number of regional trail miles varies in the plan. Page 2 indicates 457 miles of regional trail are open to the public while page 17 indicates there are 560 miles of regional trail.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 1: Overview	Section 1 (Overview of 2050 Plan) Page 11 - Table 1-1 - would it be beneficial to include next to this table a table or additional language for local investment in the system to continue the conversation on the 40% funding shortfall?
City of Saint Paul		Section 1: Overview	<p>General comments:</p> <p>Objectives could be better differentiated and clearer. For example, some overlap between "take care of what we have" and "protect and restore" as well as "foster equity and belonging" and "protect and restore".</p>
	Bill Tiedemann	Section 1: Overview	your objectives are strong and comprehensive. Be sure to include the aging population in your work- we all deserve equal access to the natural resources in our region-I am delighted to share this link to the final report, A Field Scan of Older Adults and Nature in Minnesota: A Field Scan of Older Adults and Nature in MN_2024 for a copy of the Scan, contact Joelle Hoeft (she/her), Consultant -- joellehoeft@gmail.com -- c: 763.544.1992 -- www.linkedin.com/in/joellehoeft
		Section 1: Overview	I imagine a Twin Cities that is fun, bikeable, safe, and vibrant. I want amazing parks, nation-leading public transportation, exciting night life options, and the best bicycle infrastructure in the country.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 2: System Plan	Dakota County supports counting bridging facilities in annual park user counts.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 2: System Plan	Dakota County suggests that the Metropolitan Council partner and consult with tribal communities in order for a landscape to be designated as a Cultural Landscape.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 2: System Plan	Dakota County has identified some geographic gaps in regional park service areas as part of the County's draft 2050 Parks System Vision Plan, particularly in the northern areas and in the western areas of the county where more residents are underserved by regional parks. Additional time is needed to complete this analysis and the County may propose new units in these areas after study completion. Dakota County's current plan from 2008 identified Thompson County Park as a potential joint opportunity for a regional park. Dakota County recommends that the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan show the area around Thompson County Park and the northern and western portions of Dakota County as park search areas.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 2: System Plan	<p>pg. 24 - Three Rivers requests that the Open Space/Natural System subclassification of Special Features be added to the Policy Plan. The Plan notes three new sub-classifications of Special Features are being consider as part of the Imagine 2050 process: Cultural Landscape, Historical Landscape, and Open Space/Natural. The narrative then indicates that the Historical Landscape and the Open Space/Natural Systems sub-classifications need further discussion and will be added to the workplan but that they are not proposed for inclusion in the system plan.</p> <p>The intent of the Open Space/Natural Systems subclassification as discussed among the 10 implementing agencies was to create a method for preserving/creating important ecological corridors that could co-exist with future adjacent development. The details needed to describe this subclassification can be found in Section 3: Natural Resources policy and actions.</p> <p>Imagine 2050 has a strong focus on natural resource protection, as well as on mitigating climate change. The Open Space/Natural Systems subclassification is an important tool to help achieve those goals. Addition of this subclassification is needed now so that agencies can start developing partnerships to make these ecological corridors a reality. In addition, further detail can be worked out through experience as we all move forward towards shared goals, and the subclassification definition in the 2028 System Plan can be updated to reflect what those experiences have taught us.</p>
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 2: System Plan	<p>pg. 48-50 - Three Rivers requests that the West Minnehaha Creek Regional Trail Search Corridor be added to the System Plan.</p> <p>Dating back to 2014 Three Rivers Park District has been requesting that Council add a search corridor for the West Minnehaha Creek Trail Corridor. The search corridor is approximately 5.5 miles long and extends from its planned connection to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail at Minnetonka City Hall east to the planned CP Rail Regional Trail near Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, with the route following Minnehaha Creek. To date, the search corridor request has not been denied due to lack of merit, and instead due to capacity to add a new search area in the System Plan. For this update, Three Rivers was informed that no additions to the System Plan were allowed, and that the addition of the West Minnehaha Creek Trail search corridor would have to wait until 2028 (as noted on Page 54). Delay hampers potential partnerships with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the Cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park, and with the private and non-profit sectors. Three Rivers respectfully requests that the West Minnehaha Creek Trail Search Corridor be added to the System Plan list and map on Pages 50/51 and removed from the 2028 list of future considerations (Page 54).</p>

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TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 2: System Plan	pg. 61 - Three Rivers requests that the Council upgrades data sampling in the Council's 5-year visitor studies so that data is representative at the individual park and trail unit. The research expertise of the Metropolitan Council provides great value to the regional parks system. Providing research for data-driven decision-making is one of the foundational principles on which the Council was established. The Council currently conducts park & trail visitor studies every five years and the study is designed to provide representative data at the agency level for each of the ten regional park implementing agencies. Ideally the data would be collected so that the data is representative at the individual park and trail unit level. Doing so would provide great service to the implementing agencies, allowing for much more specific data-based decision making at the unit-level.
MPRB	Adam Arvidson	Section 2: System Plan	MPRB must be listed as an agency with responsibility for the Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trail. Years ago, we discovered and documented for Met Council that Three Rivers had turned the Minneapolis portion of this facility over to MPRB after construction. We are currently performing visitor counts there.
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	Section 2: System Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging Park and Trail System Variability • Policies should acknowledge the changing condition and circumstances that arise when owning and operating a park and trail systems. Regional Implementation agencies require the freedom and ability to react, as needed. • Policies should acknowledge the different contexts that exists across the regional - urban, suburban, and rural parks and trails all require different management and strategies. Agencies should be given a wide discretion on implementation.
City of Richfield	Melissa Poehlman	Section 2: System Plan	The City of Richfield and Three Rivers Park District have a strong collaborative partnership in serving the outdoor recreational needs of our residents and visitors to our community. Richfield is identified in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan as part of the First Ring Cities Bridging Facility Search Area and we look forward to continuing to collaborate with Three Rivers Park District in planning for a bridging facility. We see opportunities to partner with Three Rivers Park District to include a programmatic element in one of our facilities and request that the 4th bullet under site attributes for bridging facilities on page 31 be revised: Include a programmatic element embedded in a partner facility, such as a local park, school or non profit organization, allowing the implementing agency to access and build on the organization's existing relationships with communities.
Scott County	Barb Weckman Brekke	Section 2: System Plan	<p>It is noted that the plan proposes changes to the regional park system classifications. Existing classifications include - Regional Parks, Park Reserves, Special Recreation Features (examples include The Landing and Silverwood), Bridging Facilities (none exist) and Regional Trails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Changing 'Special Recreation Features' to 'Special Features;' and o Adding a sub-classification of 'Cultural Landscapes' to the new 'Special Features' sub-classification. <p>In review of the proposed 'Cultural Landscapes' classification the Board has the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The description and policy guidance are underdeveloped, and this causes concern around not understanding the intent and more importantly the unintended application of the policy. There is concern that unintended consequences will arise. - Additionally, there is concern around the inclusion of the word "organizations" in the description on page 31 "(Cultural Landscapes recognize lands with significant cultural value to American Indian Tribes, organizations, and communities. Cultural landscapes of significance:)" and request that it be removed. - The Board requests further development of this policy prior to becoming part of a Policy Plan.
Scott County	Barb Weckman Brekke	Section 2: System Plan	<p>The plan mentions two additional sub-classifications being considered for the future - Historical Landscapes and Open Space/Natural Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Board is concerned about scope creep beyond the public need for regional recreation here. o Portions of existing classifications, such as Parks and Park Reserves, can have areas of historical, cultural and natural significance. Long-range planning uncovers these items and through that the community prioritizes protection, interpretation etc. Adding the sub-classification is unnecessary and adds confusion.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 2: System Plan	Cultural Landscape Subclassification (page 31). A minimum size is not indicated. Additionally, if examples of cultural landscapes other than burial mounds exist they should also be included in the classification.
National Park Service	Matthew Tucker Blythe	Section 2: System Plan	<p>Highlighting the Mississippi National Water Trail</p> <p>The Mississippi National Water Trail is a unique National resource that should be featured within the Parks and Trails and Water Policy Plans. This nationally recognized water trail offers recreational, educational, and economic opportunities that can strengthen residents' connections to the river. Highlighting the Water Trail within the framework of expanding access to water-based recreation will promote deeper engagement with the river and encourage stewardship of this invaluable natural resource.</p>
City of Hugo	Rachel Juba	Section 2: System Plan	Thank you for identifying the existing portion of the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail as a regional trail open to the public. Figure 2-2 correctly identifies the southern portion of the trail as a trail that is not yet open to the public as it is planned but not constructed. However, Table 2-6 and Figure 2-4 should include this missing segment of the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail.
City of Hugo	Rachel Juba	Section 2: System Plan	Washington County is preparing a long-range plan for the Glacial Hills Regional Trail which will be finished in the near future. We anticipate that the final RPPP will include the trail as planned and not available to the public.
	Malachi Moser	Section 2: System Plan	(RE: Policies align) Increase in trails
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 2: System Plan	The Council will develop a cultural landscape designation and related policies grounded in Tribal sovereignty and recognition of Dakota homelands and sacred sites.
Dakota County	Niki Geisler	Section 2: System Plan	A public and staff engagement process in 2024 identified many potential names for renaming the Mendota to Lebanon Hills Greenway. Dakota County Communications staff followed best practices for naming parks, such as looking at dominant physical characteristics, historic features or events, and appropriate individuals or groups after whom to name the trail. Three options were presented to the County Board on September 24, 2024, and each one had broad appeal, was descriptive of the trail, was memorable, and worked well with the other park system names and the Park's brand identity. Based on best practices and research, the County Board selected Lebanon Hills Greenway as the new name and voted unanimously to approve the official change.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 3: Natural Systems	Dakota County requests additional clarification in the plan on how to designate a bridging facility.
N/A	Soren Stevenson	Section 3: Natural Systems	(RE: Policy feedback strengthen) More of our parks need to be rewilded.

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City of Richfield	Melissa Poehlman	Section 3: Natural systems	Page 6. Parks and Trails: The first sentence of this section states “the amount of growth rather than its location plays a more important role in determining park and trail acquisition, protection, and use outcomes.” The last sentence states “the specific challenges and opportunities associated with acquisition, protection, and use of parks and trails depend on where growth happens...” These sentences appear to be contradictory. This section also states: “higher growth could imply higher visitation, which might lead to increases in funding appropriations.” Higher visitation may lead to the need for increases in funding appropriations but does not necessarily lead to actual increases in appropriations. Visitation is a factor in the distribution of appropriations but is not necessarily tied to the actual appropriation amount. Parks and Trails Legacy Funds are tied to sales tax revenues; State bonding is tied to the political will of the Legislature with Council bonds issued as a match; Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriations are subject to the will of the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources and the Legislature; and unfortunately, the Legislature has never met its statutory obligation for operations and maintenance appropriations (of which visitation is a factor). Consider stating that “higher growth could imply higher visitation, which might lead to the need for increases in funding appropriations for capital projects and operations and maintenance.”
Public		Section 3: Natural systems	More trees - everywhere More public transit
	Anders Kaufman	Section 3: Natural systems	(RE: Policy feedback strenghten) Obviously, it’s extremely difficult to acquire land for new park reserves, but I’d love to see a large amount of expansion to the regional trail system.
Scott County	Barb Weckman Brekke	Section 3: Natural Systems & Section 4: Climate Resiliency	The plan includes the Metropolitan Council's intention to provide a substantial amount of new research projects related to climate and natural systems and includes language indicating the climate and natural systems research priorities identified by the regional park implementing agencies. Identification of these priorities occurred without consideration of research needs in other areas of the regional park system. The Board requests that prior to starting these research projects they be reviewed and prioritized in a context that includes other regional parks system research needs. The Board further comments that leadership of the implementing agencies is the appropriate group to work with the council to determine research project priorities.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 4: Climate Resilience	Section 4 (Climate Resilience Policy and Actions) Section 4 could be defined more around Climate Action Support - There really is not much around this topic besides indicating continuing coordination for improving climate resilience. Met Council should be a leader in this area and provide steps for achieving goals along with working with implementing agencies. There really needs to be a climate action goal around MCES sanitary sewer installation within regional parks/trails. (could be in Section 9 as well).
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 5: Planning	pg. 69 Three Rivers Requests that any and all future revisions to the Regional Trails and Parks Planning Handbook be required to obtain approval by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, and by the Metropolitan Council. Section 5 references the Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook. The Handbook provides significant detail and interpretation of the policies outlined within this chapter. It is an extension of the policy plan and is essentially the book of rules on planning requirements for each of the park agencies. The proposed Planning Handbook needs to have the protocol for how it is modified noted in the Policy Plan at the start of this section. Modification of the Handbook should require approval by the Metropolitan Parks and Opens Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council. Doing so guarantees input and review by the implementing agencies, as well as coordination across the Council.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 5: Planning	pg. 70-72 - Three Rivers requests removal of all references to any need for amending the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan when a park or trail long-range plan is amended or updated. The Policy Plan has a System Plan, which as the name intends, focuses on the system of parks and trails across the region. Each of the parks and trails within the system then has a Long-Range Plan that is developed to determine the park boundaries and appropriate facilities needed to best meet the needs of the public and the natural environment. The Long-range Plan focuses on the specific park or trail unit. It includes substantive public input and cross-jurisdictional input. Historically, if a Long-range Plan changed the boundaries of a park, those changes were then noted in the next update of the System Plan portion of the Policy Plan. The draft Policy Plan (and Planning Handbook) indicates that “Major boundary adjustments are handled through the system additions process, which requires amending the regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan.” However, “Major boundary adjustments” is not defined in the Policy Plan. The draft Planning Handbook does define “Major,” along with varying other degrees of change that would trigger a Policy Plan Update. Amending the Policy Plan, or waiting for the Plan to be updated, takes considerable time and can result in lost acquisition opportunities. The Policy Plan’s System Plan is intended to provide guidance at the system level – not at the individual park/trail unit level. The proper place for determining the boundary of a park is through the long-range plan amendment process. That amendment process involves stakeholders, community members, Council staff, Metropolitan Parks and Opens Space review, and ultimately Council approval. While a boundary modification of a regional park or reserve may seem “major” (e.g., over 100 acres), systemically there is minimal change.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 5: Planning	Section 5 (Planning Policy and Actions) Cost Sharing (either section 5 or section 8) ■ The plan doesn’t incorporate co-sharing measures to expand cross-over recreational uses with adjacent non-regional parks. This would be extremely helpful in creating new partnership with local agencies.
National Park Service	Matthew Tucker Blythe	Section 5: Planning	Natural Systems Protections While the Draft 2050 Policy Plan aligns well with NRRRA's goals, we recommend including more explicit language ensuring that development within the Mississippi River Corridor adheres to the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) policies and the NRRRA Comprehensive Management Plan. The Natural Systems section in the Parks and Trails Plan highlights the importance of acquiring and protecting lands with high quality natural features and restoration potential, particularly lands with access to water. We suggest further emphasizing how future acquisitions in the river corridor can serve both conservation and recreational purposes, aligning with NRRRA's objectives of safeguarding the river's ecological health while enhancing public access. The NRRRA Comprehensive Management Plan calls for undeveloped areas above the 1694 bridge to be acquired to support a more continuous public open space along the river. Additionally, highlighting the importance of habitat and open space connectivity will greatly benefit the ecological health and biodiversity of the Twin Cities region into the future, especially as we enter potentially unstable and unpredictable climate regimes. The Parks and Trails Plan's goal of acquiring significant waterfront lands and other high value natural systems properties should be elevated in sections of the Land Use Policy as well to ensure that developments within the Mississippi River corridor prioritize these acquisitions, especially given the increasing value and ecological significance of these areas. The Plan's focus on geographic distribution and equity should also account for underserved areas along the river corridor to ensure fair access to natural spaces.

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National Park Service	Matthew Tucker Blythe	Section 5: Planning	Emphasizing Alternative Transportation and Water Resource Protections In addition to public transportation enhancements, we encourage the 2050.Plan to expand its focus on alternative transportation networks, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways. This would align with NRRRA's mission to increase sustainable, low-impact public access to the river, minimizing environmental impacts while promoting recreational use of the corridor. The Water Policy Plan's focus on protecting water quality and reducing stormwater impacts further supports this objective, particularly in sensitive riverfront areas where development pressure could threaten water resources.
Public		Section 5: Planning	It would be nice to have a posting about hoe to take transit to parks - I'd like to go to Como park concerts but #83 doesn't go to Pavillion
	Malachi Moser	Section 5: Planning	(RE: Perspectives to prioritize) People without the ability to drive to the parks or bring their bikes to the parks with a car.
	Malachi Moser	Section 5: Planning	(RE: What drives your view) I have a car and I'm unable to drive to a park with my bike to enjoy the park by bike. I can bike but it's not the easiest nor most convenient route to get there.
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 5: Planning	The Council will work with partners to do a historical and cultural inventory of the regional parks and trails system, including surveying the location, name, and history of the parks as well as cross-referencing locations with inventories of possible burial mounds.
City of Saint Paul		Section 6: System Protection	System Protection – Action 1 (page 75) states that local comprehensive plans may need to be changed if planned land uses would have a negative impact on current or planned regional park lands or facilities. Local jurisdictions may benefit from additional information on the land uses that would be considered negative and the proximity to the park resource that would be considered directly impactful.
National Park Service	Matthew Tucker Blythe	Section 6: System Protection	Visual Resources The NRRRA Comprehensive Management Plan as well as State MRCCA rules place significant emphasis on preserving the visual integrity and scenic vistas of the Mississippi River corridor, ensuring that development respects the natural beauty and cultural landscapes that define the river in the Metro area. We recommend that the 2050 Policy Plan similarly prioritize visual protections to maintain the region's aesthetic and scenic qualities which are integral to the public's connection to the river and its resources.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	pg. 81, line 8: Please change "The Met Council develops" to "the Met Council supports" to accurately reflect the Council's role in this action.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Action 2: This section provides a list of banned facilities, and then a lengthy list of examples of interesting ideas intended to help promote Action 2 and the associated policy narrative. It then ends with a reference to the legislative intent on appropriate facilities/activities in the regional park system. Consider splitting this into two actions: 1) the original Action 2 with its list of illustrative ideas, and 2) a separate stand-alone action that focuses solely on what is specifically banned in legislation, and guidance on how to deal with "grey area" facilities/activities. Make this "banned" action and process the last action in this section.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	pg. 85, line 14: Please change "The Met Council provides" to "the Met Council supports" to accurately reflect the Council's role in this Action.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Action 5: Three Rivers requests that the Council recognize the Regional Trails System as an arterial component of the Active Transportation Network, in both the Parks and Trail Policy Plan and Transportation Chapters of Imagine 2050. Regional trails serve an important role in the Active Transportation (AT) Network as evidenced by the recent federal Surface Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) solicitation conducted by the Metropolitan Council. The majority of the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities Category projects considered were for regional trail system projects, and they all scored very well, often with composite scores above roads and transit projects. This is by design – modern regional trail planning strives to maximize trail use through connections to home, work, play, and services. Regional trails are recognized by the interested public as being safe – they are road-separated and offer grade-separated crossings of busy roads. In addition, the regional trail system serves as the "training wheels" of the biking public – the vast majority of whom are not comfortable biking on busy streets. The success of the Active Transportation Network rests on building the base of users, and that is done through recognizing and promoting development and use of the regional trail system. The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) and the regional Active Transportation Network are two separate concepts. The Imagine 2050 plan should focus on the Active Transportation Network and all of its components. Much has changed since the RBTN was conceptualized 8 or so years ago. It is time to bring all of the transportation implementors together to figure out where we want to go with the Active Transportation Network, and to develop a logical implementation plan for development and operations. As envisioned in the Parks and Trails Policy Plan, the regional trail system will provide over 1,300 miles in the AT network. Regional Park Agencies need to be at that table.
MPRB	Adam Arvidson	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Continued lack of recognition of the differences between park systems, which leads to facility prohibitions that are unsupported by facts. MPRB believes that public process and equitable engagement should determine what is desired, beneficial, and allowable in regional parks and trails. We believe activities should not be singled out for inclusion nor elimination based on a general litmus test of regional park appropriateness included in a 1974 statute. The current prohibited list feels even more arbitrary and exclusionary than before.
N/A	Soren Stevenson	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Policy feedback strengthen) Bike she pedestrian paths should be convenient routes rather than meandering.
N/A	Soren Stevenson	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Policy feedback strengthen) Parks should allow and facilitate small scale vendors.

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N/A	(Name not listed) ternes99@gmail.com	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Questions for future) Plan really seems lacking on integration into communities. The long-range future presented here read as if the parks exist in isolation to everything else. There's some transportation in the plans but little in how to connect people to the parks - I've mentioned this in other comments: Integrating/developing nearby restaurant and retail to provide incentive to visit the area of a regional park should be a consideration - obviously not going to be like a National Park gateway town (Springdale UT, Jackson WY, Medora ND) but more like dinner at a nearby restaurant with a walk to an event (ex., Lake Harriet Bandshell) or a place (ex., Como botanical gardens) and then a stroll in the nearby nature provides a more complete experience. Establish food truck areas inside the parks. Think about how to connect people to sights within these large parks and things outside the park (reasonable e-bike rentals, trolleys, bicycle rickshaws, electric golf cart rides where the driver is fundraising for a charity, etc.).
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	• Encourage redrafting Section 7. Comments, examples, ideas, and quotes within this section are superfluous and would be better served in a separate document/appendices. Implementation agencies need this section to provide a specific framework for what is included as a recreational use within the regional system and what is not. Without a detailed framework, agencies and the Met Council will be set up for difficult decisions - likely decided politically and not objectively.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Action 1 (page 81). In reference to the statement, "A static list of eligible activities no longer sufficiently encompasses the needs of our future Regional Parks and Trails System," often we are compared to the state park system in terms of providing outdoor based activities. While understanding the need to evolve recreation opportunities for greater inclusion of other cultures, our uses should be consistent with that of the state park system if we are going to make the comparison relevant in the eyes of Legislators.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Action 3 (page 85). In reference to the statement, regional parks "play an important role in our physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and mental health," is there more direct term other than emotion or can specific emotions be called out? What emotions are we working to satisfy?
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Section 7 (Recreation, Facilities, and Programming Policy and Actions) Regional Parks – ■ The plan identifies the need for equitable amenities but has limited information for introducing new uses or amenities within parks that are non-traditional.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Regional Trails ■ Additional language could be included on how to expand and improve regional trails such as increase different types of amenities through corridor, making linear parks, attracting more users, etc. (The plan does not explain steps or initiatives to improve). Railways – Additional language could be included to identify the need for additional support to reduce barriers and restrictions with Railways. Regional Bike Transportation Network (RBTN)– The plan could be expanded to include how regional trails really support the backbone of the RBTN system.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Urban Agriculture – There is no language in the plan that talks about the need for urban agriculture. Please add policy language at least in alignment with Ramsey County's own language: ■ Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Ordinance, Regulation 4. Protecting Natural Resources, subsection a. "Removing, altering, or damaging any plant or animal is not allowed. Fruits, nuts, and mushrooms on park property may be foraged and harvested for personal use." - Ramsey County "Parks & Recreation System Plan" - Energy & Resilience: "Cooperative community agriculture projects, such as community gardens and urban farms, provide access to fresh, healthy food for residents of multi-family housing or who otherwise may not have access to such resources. As the steward of thousands of acres of parkland and open space in a largely developed county, Parks & Recreation is in a unique position to facilitate these types of projects." - Ramsey County "Parks & Recreation System Plan" - Parks & Recreation Analysis: Healthy Food Options. Many Ramsey County residents do not have access to healthy food options. Parks & Recreation facilities can help overcome this problem by providing healthy food options in vending machines or concession stands, supporting farmer's markets (such as at Aldrich Arena), and providing opportunities for urban agriculture (such as community gardens or urban farms). - Programs. Both fee-based programs and non-fee programs were analyzed in this section. Ramsey County offers non-fee programs in regional parks through the Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment such as canoeing, fishing, and gardening.
City of Brooklyn Park	Cara Donovan	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	The draft Imagine 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan clearly focuses on breaking down barriers for underrepresented communities. While the draft plan encourages universal design, in support of people with disabilities the City of Brooklyn Park would like to highlight the importance of connecting people with disabilities with the natural environment through accessible design and programming.
City of Hugo	Rachel Juba	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	Additional discussion and consideration should be given to Section Seven: Recreation, Facilities and Programming Policy Actions. The "desired outcome examples" and quotes in section seven are not in keeping with high level policy language in the rest of the RPPP. Guidance on recommended facilities and programs would be useful to the implementing agencies.
N/A	(Name not listed) ternes99@gmail.com	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Open comments from social pinpoint) Maybe shows up later but not much here on improving access to parks and nature nor is there much on integrating more tightly into walkable neighborhoods (Lake Harriet Park is a great example - the bandshell, the rose garden, boats, walking, biking, access to other parks, AND easy walking to retail and restaurants; downtown White Bear Lake is a good example - vibrant retail and restaurant with somewhat easy walking/biking access to White Bear Lake; Como Lake is an ok example - has boating, underutilized pavilion, zoo, conservatory, pool, ball fields, walking, biking but not really accessible with public transportation nor is there a vibrant nearby neighborhood with retail and restaurant).
N/A	(Name not listed) ternes99@gmail.com	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Open comments from social pinpoint) Providing access to the parks should be a priority. Integrating/developing nearby restaurant and retail to provide incentive to visit the area of a regional park should be a consideration - obviously not going to be like a National Park gateway town (Springdale UT, Jackson WY, Medora ND) but more like dinner at a nearby restaurant with a walk to an event (ex., Lake Harriet Bandshell) or a place (ex., Como botanical gardens) and then a stroll in the nearby nature provides a more complete experience. Establish food truck areas inside the parks. Think about how to connect people to sights within these large parks and things outside the park (reasonable e-bike rentals, trolleys, bicycle rickshaws, electric golf cart rides where the driver is fundraising for a charity, etc.).

Comments on the Public Comment (90%) draft 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

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N/A	(Name not listed) ternes99@gmail.com	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Open comments from social pinpoint) These parks don't exist in isolation. Integrating/developing nearby restaurant and retail to provide incentive to visit the area of a regional park should be a consideration - obviously not going to be like a National Park gateway town (Springdale UT, Jackson WY, Medora ND) but more like dinner at a nearby restaurant with a walk to an event (ex., Lake Harriet Bandshell) or a place (ex., Como botanical gardens) and then a stroll in the nearby nature provides a more complete experience. Establish food truck areas inside the parks. Think about how to connect people to sights within these large parks and things outside the park (reasonable e-bike rentals, trolleys, bicycle rickshaws, electric golf cart rides where the driver is fundraising for a charity, etc.).
	Malachi Moser	Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	(RE: Questions for future) "Accessibility to the parks by trails (biking or walking) What activities do we want to offer at the parks. (Rope jungle gym for kids, mountain biking, nature preserve, flower gardens, fishing availability, etc)."
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming	The Council will support waived fees for entry, activities, and events for the American Indian communities and facilitate conversations with implementing agencies to that end.
Dakota County	Joe Atkins	Section 8: Finance	The existing OM funding formula is inadequate for funding natural resources management. Dakota County recommends consideration of establishing a dedicated fund, particularly for long-term maintenance after restoration.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 8: Finance	Three Rivers requests that any and all future revisions to the Grant Administration Guide be required to obtain approval and review by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, and by the Metropolitan Council. The Finance Section of the Policy Plan used to be one of the most detailed and complex sections of the Parks Policy Plan. Much of the section detail (and rules) have been moved to the Grant Administration Guide. Staff of the agencies appreciate that move. However, the Guide provides significant detail and interpretation of the policies outlined within this chapter. It is an extension of the policy plan. The Grant Administration Guide needs to have the protocol for how it is modified noted in the Policy Plan at the start of this section. Modification should require approval by the Metropolitan Parks and Opens Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council. Doing so guarantees input and review by the implementing agencies, as well as coordination across the Council.
MPRB	Adam Arvidson	Section 8: Finance	Serious concerns about the evolution of the financial policies away from collaboration and advocacy toward pure management. Older language called for "providing adequate and equitable funding," while new language says Met Council will "administer and provide oversight for state and regional funding." Throughout the funding section are references to specific dollar amounts and match ratios that have remained the same at these levels for a decade or more. This is not visionary. We believe that like other state agencies, the Met Council has the responsibility to advocate for full funding, seek additional sources, and creatively address the realities of funding shortfalls. This document commits Met Council to exactly what it's doing now (\$40 million bond max, 2:3 match), which is not working to adequately and equitably fund the system. We are disappointed that current unsustainable funding realities will be enshrined for another decade. We are frustrated that instead of exploring visionary partnerships, Met Council parks staff are opting to continue the evolution toward exclusively providing financial oversight.
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	Section 8: Finance	Addressing Increased Demands and Funding Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington County and the other Regional Implementation Agencies are experiencing increased demands on infrastructure, land/water management, programs, and services without additional financial resources. If funding does not keep up with growing demand and maintenance, the system will experience deterioration. The Regional Parks Policy Plan must set the stage for the Met Council and agencies to address this. For example: Washington County would like Section 8 policies (State and Met Council bonding 3-2 match and the 40M bonding limit) to be increased. Some policies proposed in the RPP may directly or indirectly obligate agencies to increase investment. This must come with the financial resources to offset this. From Washington County perspective, the existing funding formulas are not sustainable. It favors higher resourced agencies - and it allows these systems to continue grow at the expense of smaller agencies. We want to explore this conversation more in depth during 2050 RPPP implementation.
Scott County	Barb Weckman Brekke	Section 8: Finance	This Board desires continued dialogue with the Metropolitan Council on use of the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. This Fund is extremely important in the County's ability to purchase land in our regionally recognized Park Reserves; land that may not be developed for active park use for several decades. Purchasing these parcels today and holding them for future use is a prudent use of these Funds, but it has been discovered that the Funds limit the County's ability to rent the land for continued agricultural use during the interim period. It is our understanding that this limitation is because these Funds are partially financed with tax-exempt Council bonds, which restricts the ability to generate income from Bond-financed land acquisitions. We hope that the County can work with the Metropolitan Council and State to find a solution to this limitation.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 8: Finance	Finance Policy – Regional and State Bond Funds (page 91). The legislature has been unreliable in matching the capacity of Council bonds. The regional system has grown significantly since this amount was initially created. The Council should consider new funding methods to increase the ability to fund capital investments in the regional system.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 8: Finance	Finance Action 1 (page 93). The funding formula does not recognize what it takes to create a new regional park. Emerging regional park agencies are not able to fund initial development costs under this funding formula. Other metrics are needed to bring a new regional park online to a service level that provides roads, parking, utilities, shelter, restrooms, and a level of amenity to attract users. Other metrics should be incorporated to advance the ability of emerging regional park agencies to fund capital costs beyond a formula basis. Without development, the ability for an emerging regional park agency to attract visits is diminished.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 8: Finance	Finance Action 3 (page 94). Eligibility for the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund should be broadened to include Phase I Development for new park areas to provide infrastructure of roads, parking lots, utilities, and restrooms.
Carver County	Paul Moline	Section 8: Finance	Finance Action 5 (page 95). Regarding Federal funding for regional trails, there is a need to develop a two-tier system which allows urban/suburban projects to compete against one another and a second tier for the suburban/rural areas to compete for the funding.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 8: Finance	Section Eight (Finance Policy and Actions) Regional Trails – The plan talks about the need to expand regional trails but does not provide additional funding mechanisms in order to implement. This is the same for search corridors as well.

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Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 8: Finance	Climate – The plan has been beefed up with additional initiatives for climatic resilience but no additional funding source to help combat. These initiatives will require use of existing fund sources that are under-funded and may hinder park and trail improvements without additional funding.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 8: Finance	O&M - The plan identifies the need of maintenance but does really provide any steps for reducing the shortfall of O&M funding. State law indicates this should be 40% but it is much lower.
TRPD	Jonathan Vlaming	Section 9: Work plan	The list is ambitious, but is it achievable? It is not clear if this is a comprehensive list of all work actions proposed in the Policy Plan or if it is a boiled down list of the highest priority items. The section would benefit from a discussion of how work plan tasks were identified and prioritized, and how it is updated between the 5-year cycle of Policy Plan updates.
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	Section 9: Work plan	Coordination in New Initiatives and Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As implementation of the workplan provided in the 2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan begins, Washington County is looking for continued coordination with Regional Implementation agencies. As the owners and operators of the park and trail systems, we want to be involved early and often in the new initiatives and efforts - specifically The Historical Landscape and Open Space/Natural Systems sub-classifications. Coordination is needed to increase Met Council services across different departments
Washington County	Stan Karwoski	Section 9: Work plan	Areas for Additional Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met Council and the regional parks implementation agencies can improve coordination around marketing and supporting the park system's potential for tourism. Invasive species management (in the water and on the land) continues to threaten the natural resources that the regional park system was founded to protect. Additional support and resources are needed to mitigate this regional threat. Investment in improving accessibility and mobility will be needed to serve our aging population. Washington County's Land and Water Legacy program has helped acquire and protect some of the best land in the east metro area, including parkland. With other park agencies also doing this work across the region, coordination is needed to share resources and best practices.
Ramsey County	Mark McCabe	Section 9: Work plan	Section 9 (2025 – 2028 Work Plan for the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan) It would be beneficial to include a climate change adaptation/mitigation goal in this section.
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 9: Work plan	The Council will develop a training program for staff from parks implementing agencies about indigenous land management practices.
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 9: Work plan	The Council will assess the regional parks Equity Grant Program to encourage pilot programs that develop harvesting practices and policies.
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 9: Work plan	The Council will convene conversations with American Indian partners and implementing agencies to develop policies and processes to ensure harvesting is respectful and meets community needs.
American Indian Advisory Council		Section 9: Work plan	The Council will partner with American Indian organizations and Tribes to lead an inventory of harvestable plants in regional parks to increase understanding of existing resources and open conversations with implementing agencies.
Ramsey County	Kris Lencowski	Section 9: Work plan	Recommendation to include a climate change adaptation/mitigation goal in the work plan. I think that climate change is a big issue where parks has a role to play and starting that work in the next three years would show commitment to the goals.