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Webinar Series for Comprehensive Plan Updates

Making Your Plan a Walk in the Park

Presented by Jan Youngquist and Michael Peterka
September 15, 2016
Today’s Presentation

Importance of Parks and Trails

Outdoor Recreation System in the Metro Area

Overview of the Regional Parks System

Requirements & Considerations for Your Comprehensive Plan

2040 Regional Parks Policy and System Plan

Resources
Importance of Parks and Trails

Why Are Minneapolis and St. Paul So Nice? Maybe It’s the Parks

-New York Times

• Personal Benefits
• Community Benefits
• Environmental Benefits
• Economic Benefits
Outdoor Recreation System in the Metropolitan Area

State and Federal Lands

Regional Parks and Trails

Private/Nonprofit Recreation

Local Parks and Trails

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National Parks/Federal Lands in the Metropolitan Area

• Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

• St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

• Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
State Parks and Trails in the Metropolitan Area

Afton State Park— MN DNR
Photo: Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota

Luce Line State Trail— MN DNR
Photo: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Regional Parks System

- Governed by the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
- Natural resource based
- Focused on water bodies
- Passive recreation
- Frequently crosses community boundaries
Local Parks

• Tot lots, neighborhood parks, athletic fields and courts, community centers
• Located near schools, neighborhoods, community facilities
• Serve the local community
• May offer active and passive recreation
## Classification System for Local and Regional Parks

### Table 2: Classification System for Local and Regional Park Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Site Attributes</th>
<th>Site Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini-park</td>
<td>Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as toots or senior citizens.</td>
<td>Less than 1/4 mile radius</td>
<td>&lt; 1 acre</td>
<td></td>
<td>May be publicly or privately owned and/or incorporated into a development site, such as apartment,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood park/playground</td>
<td>Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, apparatus area, skating, and neighborhood centers.</td>
<td>1/4 to 1/2 mile radius to serve a population of 4,000 – 5,000 (one neighborhood)</td>
<td>&lt; 25 acres</td>
<td>Physical geography suited for intense development.</td>
<td>Proximity to elementary schools or residential neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community playfield</td>
<td>Area for intense recreational facilities such as athletic fields and swimming pools; could include a neighborhood use.</td>
<td>3 - 5 neighborhoods or one community</td>
<td>25 - 50 acres</td>
<td>Physical geography suited for intense development.</td>
<td>Proximity to secondary schools and other public facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community park</td>
<td>Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking; could have some field and court games.</td>
<td>3 - 5 neighborhoods or one community</td>
<td>25 - 100 acres</td>
<td>Affords natural features with varied physical geographic interest.</td>
<td>Proximity to community facilities and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County park</td>
<td>Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking; could have some field and court games.</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>25 - 100 acres</td>
<td>Affords natural features with varied physical geographic interest.</td>
<td>Proximity to community facilities and resources and/or where resource occurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Private or Non-Profit Recreation in the Metropolitan Area

Examples:
• Golf courses
• Ski/snowboard areas
• Gun clubs
• Marinas
• Nature centers
Creation of the Regional Parks System

In 1974, State Legislature found that:

Pressure of urbanization and development threatens valuable recreational open space areas in the metro area at the same time as the need for such areas is increased.

Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park—Ramsey County

Minn. Statute 473.302
1974 Metropolitan Parks Act

Regional Parks Policy Plan shall:

• Identify generally the areas, which together with State facilities, will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area

Minnehaha Regional Park—Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Minn. Statute 473.147
Regional Park Implementing Agencies
Role of the Park Implementing Agencies

• Develop master plans
• Acquire land, develop, and rehabilitate regional parks and trails
• Operate and maintain the regional parks system
• Coordinate with local communities

Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park—Washington County
Master Plans

• Implementing agencies prepare master plans for each regional park and trail

• Metropolitan Council review and approval
Regional Parks System

- Currently includes:
  - 42 Regional Parks
  - 12 Park Reserves
  - 40 Regional Trails
  - 8 Special Recreation Features
  - 54,600 acres
  - 360 miles of regional trails

- Hosted 47.3 million visits in 2015
Regional Parks System Facilities: Regional Parks

- 100 to 500 acres
- 42 regional parks open to the public
- Diversity of nature-based resources
- Swimming, boating, picnicking, walking & biking on trails

Lebanon Hills Regional Park — Dakota County
Regional Parks System Facilities: Park Reserves

- 1,000 to 5,000 acres
- 12 park reserves open to the public
- 80% natural habitat
- Environmental education, nature centers, campgrounds, walking/biking trails

Baker Park Reserve—Three Rivers Park District
Regional Parks System Facilities: Regional Trails

- 40 regional trails
- Link regional parks, park reserves, and trails
- 360 miles open to the public
- Walking, biking, inline skating, commuting

Mississippi River Regional Trail—Anoka County
Regional Parks System Facilities: Special Recreation Features

- Como Zoo
- Como Conservatory
- Noerenberg Gardens
- Square Lake
- Gale Woods Farm
- Silverwood
- The Landing
- Kingswood
If you went to one regional park, park reserve or special recreation feature a week, it would take you more than a year to visit them all!
2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- Guiding document
- Identifies which parks and trails are part of the regional parks system
2040 System Plan

- Existing Regional Parks System Facilities
- Planned Regional Parks System Facilities
- Regional Parks System Boundary Adjustments
- Regional Park Search Areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- 2040 Regional Trail Search Corridors System Additions

Dakota Rail Regional Trail—Carver County
Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park—Scott County
Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail—Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Existing Regional Parks System Facilities

42 Regional Parks
12 Park Reserves
8 Special Recreation Features
40 Regional Trails
Existing Regional Park with Inholdings
Coon Creek Regional Trail—Anoka County
Planned Regional Parks
System Facilities
(Not Yet Open to the Public)

3 Planned Regional Parks
1 Planned Park Reserve
13 Planned Regional Trails
Planned Regional Parks
System Facilities

- **Boundary Adjustments:**
  General areas identified to be added to existing regional parks and trails

- **Search Areas:**
  General areas identified for future regional parks

- Implementing agencies will develop master plans
Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Regional Parks, Park Reserves, Special Recreation Features
- Existing Regional Trails
- Planned Regional Trails
- Regional Trail Search Corridors

2030 Regional Trail Search Corridors

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METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
Search Corridor (from 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan)

Subsequent Planned Alignment

Three Rivers PARK DISTRICT

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2040 Regional Trail Search Corridor System Additions
Key Changes in 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

• All proposed regional trails identified as regional trail search corridors

• New 2040 Regional Trail Search Corridor System Additions
Change in Trail Mapping Example

2030 System Statement
Proposed trails

2040 System Statement
Regional trail search corridors
Regional Parks System

Required Elements for Your Comprehensive Plan

- Describe, map, and label all Regional Parks System Facilities that are located in your community

Make sure to use up to date mapping in your comprehensive plan
Regional System

The City is fortunate to have two regional trails that loop through the City and extend for miles east and west. The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail stretches from Hopkins to the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis. The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail starts at Highway 169 and Excelsior Boulevard (intersecting with the Cedar Lake LRT) and connects to downtown Minneapolis. Both trails link up with the celebrated Minneapolis Grand Rounds Scenic Byway that encircles most of Minneapolis with 50 miles of off-street trails.

A possible third future regional trail is being studied by Three Rivers Park District. It would follow the Canadian Pacific (CP) railroad corridor and could stretch from the Minnesota River in Bloomington to Hopkins.

The regional trail system is the backbone of the City’s bicycle system. It also provides great recreational walking/jogging routes. The regional system has the highest level of use and is the highest priority for snow removal and other maintenance of the pedestrian and bicycle systems.
Regional Facilities

Three Rivers Park District is responsible for the planning, development and operation of "regional" park and recreation facilities in Maple Grove and throughout the park district. This regional outreach serves a large portion of the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region. The Maple Grove Park Board has always focused its planning and development effort so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of amenities and services. Five regional facilities exist or are planned in Maple Grove:

- Elm Creek Park Reserve - existing
- Fish Lake Regional Park - existing
- Eagle Lake/Pike Lake Regional Park - existing
- Rush Creek Regional Trail - partially complete
- Medicine Lake Regional Trail - partially complete
- Crystal Lake Regional Trail - partially complete

Regional Parks: Regional parks have maintained their philosophy of providing recreational opportunities in a natural resource type setting. The parks provide many of the amenities and special facilities that are not provided by the Maple Grove system.

Regional Trails: Regional trails provide a high quality trail experience typically through a broad corridor of diverse natural beauty. The regional trails are often designed to limit vehicle conflicts or interruptions which make them a very safe and attractive recreation amenity in the system. In Maple Grove the Medicine Lake Regional Trail will provide a central spine to the local trail network linking the City trail system to the larger regional context. Likewise, Rush Creek Regional Trail links Coon Rapids Dam to Elm Creek Park Reserve and is planned to continue west to Crow-Hassan Park Reserve.
Regional Park Search Area Example

2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

New Regional Park Unit / Northwest Anoka County Search Area – The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan includes three new regional park units needed to serve the expanding population by 2030 throughout the region. The Anoka County Parks Departments will be reviewing the potential for a new park on the west side of the City of St. Francis as a part of their process of updating the County Park System Plan. This new regional park is planned to be located on 1,000 acres likely, but could be up to 2,500 acres. This park unit has been identified as a reserve in order to protect the high quality natural resources found in this area, which are unique in Anoka County. This park is reflected on the City’s park plan as the western of the two large scale park complexes.
The Dakota County North/South Regional Trail search area is shown to connect Lebanon Hills Regional Park to the South Urban Regional Trail to Sun Fish Lake through Inver Grove Heights. A potential route for the regional trail is depicted on the trail master plan and the City should work with the County to develop this regional trail as development happens in the NW area.
## Regional Parks System

### Required Elements for Your Comprehensive Plan (continued)

- If there are no Regional Parks System Facilities in your community, state that fact in your comprehensive plan.

- Describe, map, and label the Federal and State recreational lands that are located in your community.
### Regional Parks System

**Required Elements for Your Comprehensive Plan (continued)**

- Depict existing regional parkland with a land use of "Park" on your **Existing Land Use Map**.

- Acknowledge the Council-approved boundaries of regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features by guiding the properties with a land use of "Park" on your **Future Land Use Map**.
• Existing regional parkland at Elm Creek Park Reserve shown as “Parks/Schools/Public Open Space”
• Existing residential land within Elm Creek Park Reserve boundary shown as “Low Density”
• All land within Met Council approved boundary of Elm Creek Park Reserve guided with a future land use of “Parks/Schools/Public Open Space”
Vision

In recognition of the surrounding park use, the community envisions these seven (7) properties as part of the Lebanon Hills Regional Park. However, the interim use of these properties as single family residential homes does not negatively impact that vision. The City seeks to allow the occupants of the residences to remain as conforming uses, while not allowing any future subdivision. Thus, to achieve the required land use consistency between the Land Use Plan and Zoning Map, the City has adopted policies to guide the transition of the existing residential use to a future park use.
Lebanon Hills Special Area Plan

Background

The Lebanon Hills Special Area overlays a portion of Lebanon Hills Regional Park located south of Cliff Road between Galaxie Avenue and Dodd Road (along the City’s southern municipal boundary). More specifically, the Special Area encompasses seven (7) privately-owned single family residential properties, totalling 18.5 acres, which currently exist within the boundaries of the regional park. The community’s intent is for these properties to become a part of the regional park at some point in the future because having private owned residences within the park is contrary to public use. These properties have been designated as a special area to facilitate the transition to that vision.
Land Use Designation

Recognizing that the purpose of the Land Use Guide Plan is to identify the long-term desired use of property, all parcels in this Special Area have been guided P, Parks and Recreational Open Space.

Land Use/Zoning Designation

While the land use plan and the zoning designation need to be consistent, the City does not want to make these properties subject to the Zoning Ordinance’s nonconforming use requirements. In addition, the continued use of these properties as single family homes is deemed consistent on an interim basis. Thus, instead of the P, park zoning designation, which would be consistent with the Land Use Plan, all of the properties will be zoned R-1, Single Family Residential. Under the R-1 zoning designation, existing homes will remain as “conforming” uses. Once the properties are acquired by Dakota County the parcels should be rezoned to P-Park.
Regional Parks System

Considerations for Your Comprehensive Plan

- Collaborate with staff from the regional park implementing agency for your community in the development of your comprehensive plan

- Plan for compatible land uses and buffers adjacent to regional parks system facilities in your community
Local Parks and Trails

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<tr>
<td>• Describe and map your existing and proposed local parks, trails, and recreation facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Include a capital improvement program for parks and open space facilities as part of your implementation plan.</td>
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## Local Parks and Trails

### Considerations for Your Comprehensive Plan

- Identify and include high quality natural resources as part of your local park planning
- Plan local trail connections to regional parks and trails
- Coordinate with adjacent communities in planning for local trails that cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Consider people’s changing recreational preferences
Resources

Classification System for Local and Regional Facilities

GIS Data

Local Planning Handbook’s Interactive Mapping Tool
Resources

Safe Routes to Parks:
Improving Access to Parks through Walkability

Parks, Trails, and Health Workbook
A Tool for Planners, Parks & Recreation Professionals, and Health Practitioners

REGIONAL PARK USE AMONG SELECT COMMUNITIES OF COLOR
A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

March 2014

PlanIt
Resources


http://www.metrocouncil.org/Handbook/PlanIt.aspx

http://lphonline.metc.state.mn.us/commportal
Questions?

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Michael.Peterka@metc.state.mn.us
Upcoming Events

Transit Planning Basics, Market Areas, and Comprehensive Planning
Presented by Mike Larson and Michael Mechtenberg
Thursday, September 22, 2016

Local Planning, the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network & Regional Trails
Presented by Steve Elmer and Jan Youngquist
Thursday, October 13, 2016

Housing Requirements Discussion
Presented by Lisa Barajas
Thursday, October 27, 2016