

Business Item

Community Development Committee



Community Development Committee: December 1, 2025

Metropolitan Council: December 17, 2025

Business Item: 2025-310

Accept the Public Comment Report and Adopt the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan
Amendment: Modernizing Mapping Project

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.147
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Tracey Kinney, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029), and Kevin Phan, Planner (651-602-1333)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Accept the Public Comment Summary Report on the draft amendment to the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan; and
2. Adopt the revised final 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Amendment as shown in Attachment 2.

Background

The Modernizing Regional Parks and Trails Mapping project proposes to amend Section 2, System Plan, of the *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan*, to:

1. Establish the Regional Parks and Trails Geographic Information System (GIS) dataset as the Met Council's primary reference for park and trail boundaries; and
2. Align the boundaries described in the System Plan with those delineated in the GIS dataset.

This proposed action seeks to formalize the Met Council's use of the Regional Parks and Trails GIS dataset as the primary reference for regional park and trail boundaries for planning and funding purposes regardless of the long-range plan status. This will provide the regional parks and trails system with a consistent, reliable mapping approach to delineate the park and trail boundaries. Regional park and trail long-range plans will continue to be the Met Council vehicle for approvals.

The GIS data will be an important part of the Regional Parks and Trails System's mapping that is comprised of System Plan mapping, approved long-range plan boundaries, proposed GIS data, and legal land records. In addition to regional park and trail boundaries, the data will be used for acreage dependent calculations and reporting. It will also serve as a resource for the Policy Plan, web, and promotional mapping.

The Regional Parks and Trails System has grown substantially since its inception in 1974, making

it necessary to embrace technological advancements and policy plan process improvements. This GIS effort began in January 2021 with the first annual implementing agency GIS submittal and it continues to the present day through this plan amendment.

The Council has consulted with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, Community Development Committee, and has partnered with Regional Park Implementing Agencies as part of the Modernizing Mapping Project. This plan amendment refines the policy direction established in the most recent policy plan update adopted in 2025, as well as the direction provided in *Imagine 2050*. As part of the Modernizing Mapping project, there are several corrections needed in the data to ensure the System Plan reflects the actual regional park and trail boundaries. Implementing Agencies with significant corrections will have until December 31, 2026, to submit a “GIS correction” long-range plan amendment to the Met Council.

At the recommendation of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, the Met Council released a draft amendment to the *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan* for public comment on September 24, 2025. The Met Council held a public hearing on the draft for public comment at the November 5, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, and the public comment period concluded on November 17, 2025. During the public comment period, the Met Council received comments from a resident and an agency. After the public comment period, staff finalized the language with this guidance in mind. Attachment 1 highlights the changes in the Policy Plan. Attachment 2 includes the Final *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Amendment*.

Public Comment Report Summary

The Public Comment Report (Attachment 3) includes the Public Comment Log and staff response. Only two comments were received: one was supportive and another asked clarifying questions about local impacts on a local unit of government. No proposed changes in the draft amendment language were made in response to comments.

Schedule and Next Steps

On December 1, 2025, Council staff will share the Public Comment Report that summarizes the public comments received on this Amendment with the Community Development Committee.

Next, staff will return to the Metropolitan Council on December 17, 2025, to share the Public Comment Report on this Modernizing Mapping business item. If approved, this item will go into effect as recommended.

The proposal was shared at the September 4, 2025, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting and at the September 16, 2025, Community Development Committee meeting, which refined the actions to reflect the public comment period and public hearing dates.

This process started on June 5, 2025, with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, and June 16, 2025, with the Community Development Committee. It has been refined and clarified to reflect the feedback received (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Schedule for Imagine 2050 amendment resulting from Modernizing Regional Parks and Trails Mapping project

Date/Timing	Milestone
September 4, 2025, MPOSC September 15, 2025, CDC September 24, 2025, MC action; next day notice, period opens	Release the Draft Amendment to the <i>2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan: Modernizing Mapping Project</i> for Public Comment and Set Public Hearing Date
November 5, 2025 (week of) Committee of the Whole or MC	Public Hearing on the draft amendment to the <i>2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan: Modernizing Mapping Project</i>
November 17, 2025	Public comment period closes
End of November	Final public comment reports prepared
December 1 CDC; December 4 MPOSC; December 10 MC or December 17 Committee of the Whole	Accept the Public Comment Report and Adopt the <i>2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Amendment: Modernizing Mapping Project</i>

Rationale

This Modernizing Mapping *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan* Amendment refines the policy direction established in the most recent policy plan update adopted in 2025, as well as the direction provided in *Imagine 2050*. The current use of tracking regional park and trail boundaries with long-range plans is limited to infrequent plan amendments and unit-level illustrations. Recent advancements in GIS mapping technology offer opportunities for more precise and regionally consistent mapping through interactive tools and annual updates.

Imagine Lens Analysis

On February 12, 2025, the Council adopted *Imagine 2050*, which builds on the policy direction established in *Thrive MSP 2040*. Under *Imagine 2050*, this Policy Plan Amendment is consistent with the Regional Core Value of Stewardship. The Met Council's investment in the Modernizing Mapping Project provides an accurate GIS database for regional park and trail acreage calculations for use in long-range planning and funding processes. This is consistent with several of our Regional Goals including "Our communities are healthy and safe" and "We protect and restore natural systems".

Funding

No additional funding is needed to support the proposed action. Maintenance of the GIS system is part of the Community Development division's regular budget.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct interactions with small businesses with this item.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Proposed Policy Plan Amendment

Attachment 2: Final Policy Plan Amendment Language

Attachment 3: Public Comment Report

Attachment 1: Proposed Policy Plan Amendment

Additional language is proposed to be added to Section 2, System Plan, Action 1: Review and update system plan, classifications. This section is excerpted from the Policy Plan and is shown below with proposed amendment language underlined. This begins on page 31 of [the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan](#).

System Plan - Action 1: Review and update system plan, classifications

The Met Council reviews and updates the system plan and evaluates the regional park and trail classifications every four years to determine what is relevant and necessary in partnership with the regional park implementing agencies.

The Met Council reviews the system plan portion of the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Chapter in partnership with the regional park implementing agencies every four years as part of the policy plan revision process and may add, modify, or delete planned elements to the system. Additions, including major boundary adjustments, or deletions to the system proposed outside the regular plan review process are substantial revisions to the policy plan, and as such require an amendment to the policy plan. Identification of specific boundaries and detailed planning for individual units of the system are addressed in long-range plans for each unit. The long-range plans are prepared and implemented by the regional parks implementing agencies. As circumstances or public expectations change, implementing agencies may need to update their plans through a long-range plan amendment. Refer to the Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Section Five Planning, to learn more about the amendment process.

Since its inception in 1974, the Regional Parks and Trails System has grown substantially. Additionally, there have been significant advancements with mapping technologies and policy plan process improvements. While the Regional Park and Trail Long-Range Plans will continue to serve as the vehicle for Met Council approvals, this 2025 Policy Plan Amendment establishes the GIS dataset as the primary reference for regional park and trail boundaries.



Attachment 2: Final Policy Plan Amendment Language

This additional language will be added to Section 2, System Plan, Action 1: Review and update system plan, classifications. This section is excerpted from the Policy Plan and is shown below with proposed amendment language. This begins on page 31 of [the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan](#).

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DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE 2050 REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAIL POLICY PLAN, MODERNIZING MAPPING PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT

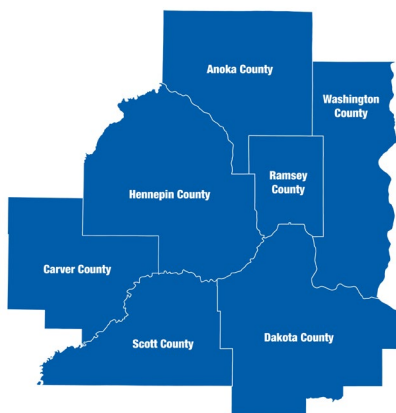
November 2025



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Public Comment Summary

The public comment period for this draft policy plan amendment began on September 24, 2025 and concluded on November 17, 2025. During the comment period, the Met Council received the following two comments included in the table below along with the Council's response (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Public Comments and Met Council Staff Responses

Name	Comment	Response
Zach Bodenner	I'm actually surprised this hasn't been done already! GIS is an essential tool for any geospatial data, especially boundaries.	Thank you for your comment. We agree. Formalizing the Regional Parks and Trails Geographic Information System as the primary reference for regional park and trail boundaries will improve accuracy and provide interactive tools for acreage calculations.
Heidi Honey, City of the Village of Minnetonka Beach	Our council discussed the regional parks and trails plan amendment at their meeting last night. They do not have any specific comments on the plan but asked that I reach out to you for a better understanding of what this amendment may have on the City of Minnetonka Beach. Specifically, they asked that I find out the following: • Is this new proposed GIS data system to replace survey monuments or is it replacing an older GIS system? • Would this system show only regional parks and trails or would it also show the very small walking paths/trails in the City?	Thank you for sharing your Council's discussion on the regional parks and trails policy plan amendment. Your proposal takes our Regional Parks and Trails Geographic Information System to a more advanced level that needs more rigorous data architecture. This new Regional Parks and Trails Geographic Information System focuses only on the regional parks and trails system, such as the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. We are in conversation with the Metro GIS group which is interested in a more robust GIS data system at the community level. These are complex conversations that are moving forward but very slowly.

	We understand that it would note the Dakota Rail Regional Trail but we also have a few connecting paths and wooded walking trails in the city.	
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