

Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee Meeting: N/A

For the Metropolitan Council: July 8, 2026

Business Item: 2026-110

Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation & Maintenance Allocation

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the Regional Parks and Trails System state fiscal year 2027 operation and maintenance report, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. State Fiscal Year 2027 O&M Distribution

Agency	Reported Actual 2025 O&M Expenses	Estimated Distribution Amount
Anoka County	\$9,288,528	\$956,335
Bloomington Parks	\$621,661	\$107,358
Carver County	\$2,687,077	\$280,584
Dakota County	\$11,659,649	\$819,300
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB)	\$30,705,425	\$2,884,283
Ramsey County	\$9,785,242	\$1,087,291
Saint Paul Parks	\$27,485,469	\$1,531,349
Scott County	\$2,689,556	\$222,630
Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) - Hennepin & Scott	\$50,685,230	\$3,310,456
Washington County	\$6,336,510	\$540,414
TOTAL	\$151,944,347	\$11,740,000

Note on Community Development Committee Meeting

This year, the July Community Development Committee Meeting that would coincide with our annual Operations and Maintenance staff report was cancelled. In order to meet the statutory requirement to have the O&M allocations presented to Council by July 15th, the CDC has decided to accept the Operations and Maintenance allocations without review, allowing the report to move forward to the council by the statutory deadline.

Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Discussion/Questions

Rachel Neuville, Budget Analyst, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on June 30, 2026

Commissioner Wendy Wulf commented that this drop in relative funding has been a trend and noted that Legislature is not doing their job on funding the regional parks and trails system with regards to the Operations and Maintenance funding.

Commissioner Makiza Johnson noted that Minneapolis has lost a significant amount of tax revenue and asked if there were projected numbers if this trend continues. Chair Tony Yarusso responded

that he is not sure if they have seen anything on a per tax basis and noted that it might be something to ask of the implementing agencies. Emmett Mullin, Parks Unit Manager, added that implementing agencies commit to O&M as a high priority.

Chair Tony Yarusso asked what bill this funding typically ends up in. Lisa Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, responded that funding typically comes through the environment bill and sometimes gets lumped into an omnibus bill. Commissioner Wendy Wulf noted that the council does not get to choose what to lobby for, and that agencies need to be the ones that lobby.

Commissioner Lisa Freese asked if the omnibus is typically a budget bill. Lisa Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, confirmed that it is part of the governor's budget and that appropriations are determined on a biennial basis. It was noted that this upcoming year will be another budget year for Operations and Maintenance.

Commissioner Makiza Johnson asked if there is a report or graph that he can see prior numbers in order to have continuing conversations with others and park agencies. Emmett Mullin, Parks Unit Manager, responded that we produce a report every year with the funding and allocation graphs. Lisa Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, confirmed this.

Chair Tony Yarusso asked if there is an O&M appropriation for the greater MN Regional Parks. Emmett Mullin, Parks Unit Manager, responded that no there is not.

Commissioner Monica Dillenberg commented that it is astonishing that there isn't a lot of increased commitment to the regional system with regards to Operations and Maintenance.

Motion by Commissioner Dillenberg, seconded by Commissioner Makiza. Motion carried unanimously.



Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Committee Meeting Date: June 30, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: July 8, 2026

Business Item: 2026-110 SW

Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation & Maintenance Allocation

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.351 and 297A.94(e)(3); 2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Section 5
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Rachel Neuville, Budget Analyst (651-602-1216); Erin Acton, Grants Administrator (651-602-1938)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Finance and Administration

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reports to the Metropolitan Council the Regional Parks and Trails System state fiscal year (SFY) 2027 Operations and Maintenance Funding requests.

Background

By law, the Council serves as the fiscal agent to distribute state funds to the ten Regional Park Implementing Agencies for operation and maintenance costs.

[Minn. Stat. § 473.351](#) requires that by July 15 of each year, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) reports to Council “the funding requests from the implementing agencies based on the actual expenditures made” in the previous year.

Staff conduct a review of the Agencies’ operation and maintenance (O&M) submittals to determine eligibility of claimed costs and the appropriate dollar distribution. The statute directs that the funding distribution be based on three factors:

- 40% is based on the *use* that each Agency’s regional parks and trails has in proportion to the total use of the Regional Parks and Trails System. Each agency’s total count of visitors comes from the 2025 Regional Parks and Trails System Annual Use Estimate produced by the Council.
- 40% is based on the O&M *expenditures* made by each Agency in proportion to the total O&M expenditures for the entire Regional Parks and Trails System. These numbers were determined following the eligibility review of 2025 calendar year Agency submittals.
- 20% is based on the *acreage* for each Agency’s regional parks and trails in proportion to the acreage of the entire Regional Parks and Trails System. The numbers are based on 2025 acreage as reported to the Council by each Agency.

The analysis this year will program \$11,740,000 appropriated by the State Legislature for state fiscal year 2027. The appropriation includes \$2,540,000 from the state General Fund and an estimated \$9,200,000 in lottery-in-lieu of sales tax revenue (LIL).

Table 1 below shows the Agencies' estimated distribution amounts for O&M funding for SFY 2027, as based on their reported actual eligible expenditures. The calculations underlying this year's distribution are attached in Table 2.

Table 1. State Fiscal Year 2026 O&M Distribution

Agency	Reported Actual 2025 O&M Expenses	Estimated Distribution Amount
Anoka County	\$9,288,528	\$956,335
Bloomington Parks	\$621,661	\$107,358
Carver County	\$2,687,077	\$280,584
Dakota County	\$11,659,649	\$819,300
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB)	\$30,705,425	\$2,884,283
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Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) - Hennepin & Scott	\$50,685,230	\$3,310,456
Washington County	\$6,336,510	\$540,414
TOTAL	\$151,944,347	\$11,740,000

Rationale

The State Legislature funds a portion of the expenses necessary to run the Regional Parks and Trails System because the System draws a significant percentage of its visits from people that live outside of the political jurisdiction of the park or trail, including outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the State of Minnesota. The O&M appropriation comes from the State in its entirety; the Council neither matches the funds, nor withholds any for administrative costs. The statute requires the Council to review the claims presented by each Agency for eligibility and MPOSC to report the claimed costs to the Council, so the amounts are paid appropriately.

Thrive Lens Analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the Thrive outcome of stewardship is supported by helping the ten Regional Park Implementing Agencies care for existing infrastructure within the Twin Cities' world-class Regional Parks and Trails System.

The Thrive outcome of livability is supported by investing in the System and providing access to outdoor recreation, enhanced quality of life, and opportunities for increased health and wellness.

Funding

Operations and Maintenance funding has been appropriated by the State of Minnesota for SFY 2027. Final passthrough amounts will be based upon actual revenues received.

Table 2. O&M Calculations by Agency, SFY 2027

Agency	Weighted Regional Park Acreage	Acres %	Regional Park Visits	Visits %	Regional Park Expenditures	Expenditure %	Funding %	FY27 General Fund Lump Sum	FY27 Lottery-in-Lieu Estimate	Projected total FY2027 distribution
Anoka	5,950.65	16.04%	4,217,524	6.23%	\$9,288,528	6.11%	8.15%	\$206,907	\$749,428	\$956,335
Bloomington	201.46	0.54%	1,086,865	1.61%	\$621,661	0.41%	0.91%	\$23,227	\$84,131	\$107,358
Carver	966.99	2.61%	1,965,230	2.90%	\$2,687,077	1.77%	2.39%	\$60,706	\$219,878	\$280,584
Dakota	3,878.69	10.46%	3,076,465	4.54%	\$11,659,649	7.67%	6.98%	\$177,259	\$642,041	\$819,300
MPRB	2,938.24	7.92%	25,218,132	37.25%	\$30,705,425	20.21%	24.57%	\$624,027	\$2,260,256	\$2,884,283
Ramsey	5,034.13	13.57%	6,720,539	9.93%	\$9,785,242	6.44%	9.26%	\$235,240	\$852,051	\$1,087,291
Saint Paul	2,482.42	6.69%	7,564,613	11.17%	\$27,485,469	18.09%	13.04%	\$331,314	\$1,200,035	\$1,531,349
Scott	1,602.78	4.32%	548,411	0.81%	\$2,689,556	1.77%	1.90%	\$48,167	\$174,463	\$222,630
TRPD/Scott County	1,783.20	4.81%	624,713	0.92%	\$3,151,212	2.07%	2.16%	\$54,870	\$198,742	\$253,612
TRPD/Hennepin Co	9,211.95	24.84%	14,482,293	21.39%	\$47,534,018	31.28%	26.04%	\$661,362	\$2,395,482	\$3,056,844
Washington	3,039.42	8.19%	2,193,644	3.24%	\$6,336,510	4.17%	4.60%	\$116,921	\$423,493	\$540,414
Totals	37,089.93	100.00%	67,698,429	100.00%	\$151,944,347	100.00%	100.00%	\$2,540,000	\$9,200,000	\$11,740,000