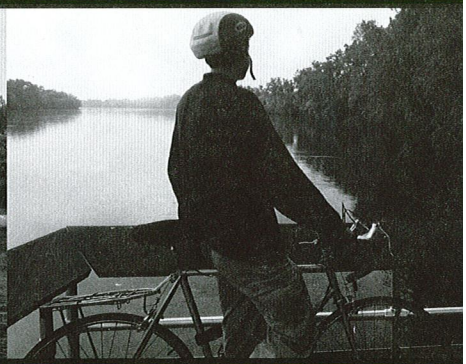


2030

Regional Parks Policy Plan



Outdoor recreation for future generations



best places

future

preservation

A renowned parks system

Thanks to the vision and commitment of previous generations, the seven-county Twin Cities area enjoys a regional parks and open space system with few rivals across the globe.

More than 100 years ago, visionaries like Horace Cleveland and Charles Loring helped establish an outstanding network of drives, parks and boulevards around the lakes and rivers of Minneapolis and St. Paul. In response to state legislation, the Metropolitan Council in 1974 designated about 31,000 acres of existing parks owned by counties, cities and special park districts as "regional recreation open space." Those parks had about five million visits in 1975.

Between 1974 and 2004, the Council – with both regional and state funds – invested \$367 million to help local park agencies develop these parks as well as acquire and develop new parks and trails for the growing metropolitan population. Today, the system includes:

- 52,000 acres
- 47 regional parks and park reserves
- Six special recreation features, such as the zoo and conservatory at Como Park
- 22 regional trails (170 miles currently open to the public)
- 30.5 million visitors annually (2003 estimate)

Between 1970 and 2000, the population of the seven-county area grew from 1.87 million to 2.64 million. The Council projects that by 2030 nearly one million more people will live in the region. Now is the time to identify and preserve the last best natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities in the region for future generations.







Preserving our future

As it works to preserve and expand the regional parks system, the Council will be guided by five major policies:

- Identify and protect, forever, lands with high-quality natural resources that are desirable for regional parks system activities.
- Provide adequate and equitable funding to acquire, develop and rehabilitate regional parks and trails.
- Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents while maintaining the integrity of the natural resource base.
- Promote master planning and integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.
- Protect the public investment in the regional parks system.


Expanding the system

To meet the needs of the region in 2030, the Council proposes a variety of changes to the current regional parks system. Among them:

- Designate two existing county parks and three trails as "regional."
 - In Washington County, Pine Point Park 
 - In Ramsey County, Tony Schmidt Park
 - In Ramsey County/St. Paul, three regional trails - Trout Brook, Summit Avenue, and Lexington Parkway 
- Acquire and develop three new parks. Search areas include:
 - Northwestern Anoka County
 - Empire Township in Dakota County 
 - Blakeley Township in Scott County
- Acquire and develop seven new trails. Search areas include:
 - The Crow River, in Carver County and Three Rivers Park District
 - Both a north/south and an east/west trail traversing Dakota County
 - An east/west trail traversing Scott County 
 - In Three Rivers Park District, a trail connecting parts of Baker Park Reserve; a trail connecting Baker and Crow-Hassan Park Reserves; and a trail connecting Crow-Hassan and Elm Creek Park Reserves
- Acquire land within the current boundaries of 30 existing parks and four trails
- Acquire natural-resource lands adjacent to six existing parks and six existing trails  

The last best places

To meet the needs of the region beyond 2030, the Council proposes to acquire four new regional parks or reserves and three new trails. These parks would not be developed until after 2030, but the opportunity to acquire them will likely be lost if the lands aren't identified and purchased before 2030. The goal is to secure the last best places, complete the acquisition of the regional park system, and secure opportunities for future generations, just as our predecessors did for us. Search areas include:

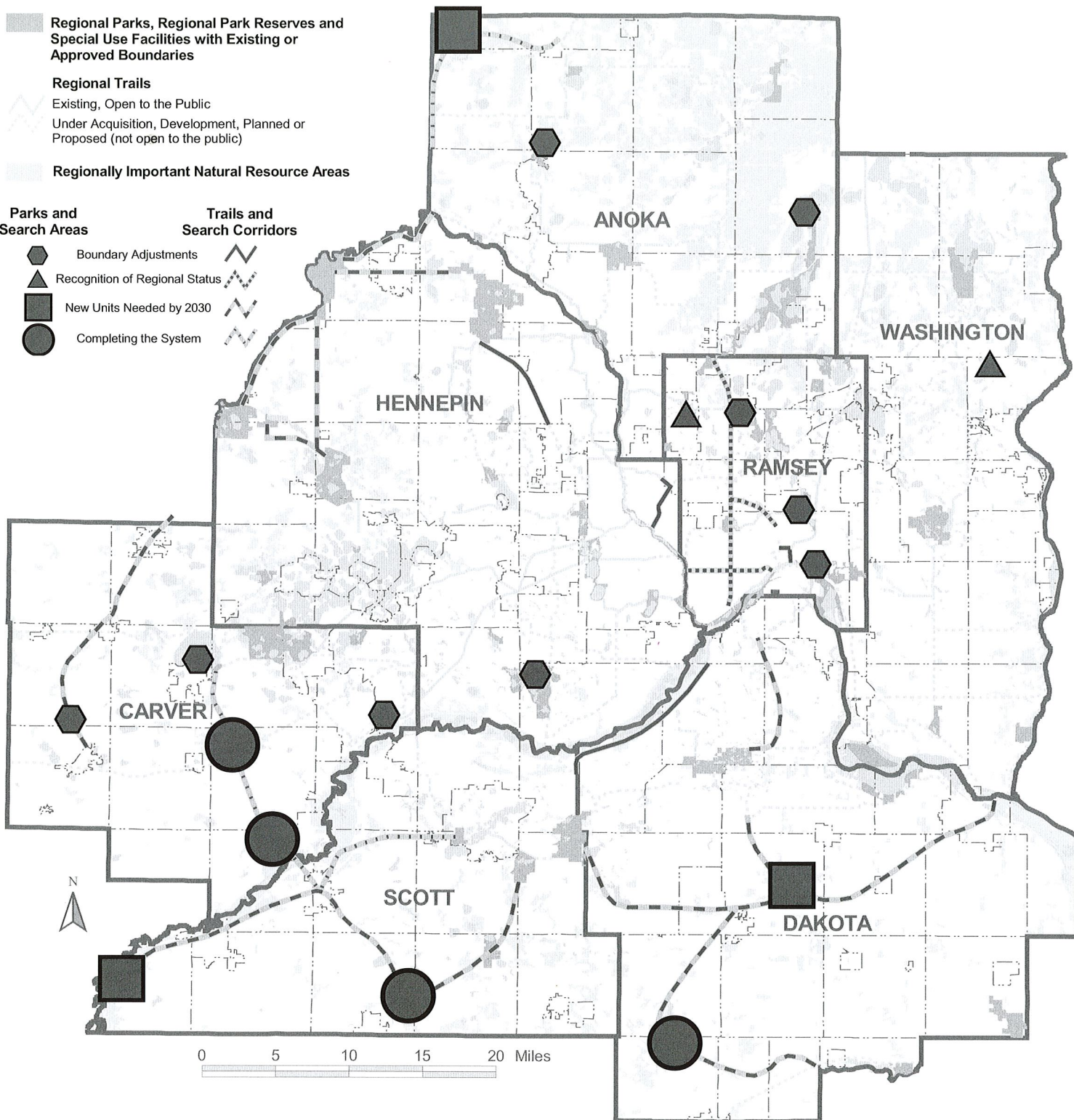
- Parks – Miller Lake area and Minnesota River Bluff and Ravines in Carver County; southwestern Dakota County; and Cedar Lake area in Scott County. 
- Trails – northwestern Anoka County; central to south Carver County; and Minnesota River to Spring Lake in Scott County.



opportunities

nationally renowned

Regional Parks System - 2030 and Beyond



Financing our legacy to the future

Estimated cost to rehab, develop and expand regional parks and trails (2005 dollars)

System component	Acres	Acquisition: 25-year total (\$ millions)	Rehab and dev. 25-year total (\$ millions)	Annual cost* (\$ millions)	% of costs
Rehab and develop existing parks/trails	52,000	0	187.6	\$7.50	43
Acquire land in current park boundaries	5,100	125.1	18.4	5.74	33
Acquire land adjacent to existing parks	1,546	10.8	5.6	0.66	4
Convert local parks/trails to regional status	547	0	2.0	0.08	<1
New units needed by 2030	8,000	45.3	28.9	2.97	17
Completing the system (units needed beyond 2030)	2,523	12.0	0	0.48	3
TOTAL	69,716	193.2	242.5	\$17.43	100

For the owner of a \$200,000 home in the seven-county metropolitan area, the average annual cost of the regional parks system, including the proposed system additions, would be \$6.75 per year on regional property taxes over the next 30 years. This estimate is based on the Council issuing a maximum of \$7 million annually of bonds as a 40% match to \$10.5 million in state, federal and other funds. The funding would be used to acquire land, rehabilitate aging parks and trails, and develop new park and trail facilities.

The estimates are in 2005 dollars. They do not include any assumption concerning the effect of inflation on costs over the next 25 years, or assume any private sector donations. Consequently, these are conservative estimates. Additional funds from the public and private sectors will be needed to finance actual costs over this time period. Estimates will be considered again and refined every four years when the parks policy plan must undergo a comprehensive review required by Minnesota law.

Help build our legacy for the future

The Metropolitan Council works closely with 10 county and city park agencies to acquire, develop and maintain the regional parks system. The Council invests regional and state funds for acquisition and development of the system, and the 10 partner agencies operate and maintain the parks. The bulk of funds for parks operation and maintenance are raised from local property taxes. From 1985 to 2004 the state provided to local park agencies an average of 9.3 percent of the cost to operate and maintain the parks each year.

The Council's 10 regional parks system partners are:
Anoka County Parks (763) 757-3920
www.anokacountyparks.com/

Bloomington Parks and Recreation (952) 563-8877
www.ci.bloomington.mn.us/cityhall/dept/commser/parkrec/parkrec.htm

Carver County Parks (952) 466-5250
www.co.carver.mn.us/parks

Dakota County Parks (952) 891-7000
www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/index.htm

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (612) 230-6400
www.minneapolisparcs.org/home.asp

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation (651) 748-2500
www.co.ramsey.mn.us/parks/index.asp

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation (651) 266-6400
www.stpaul.gov/depts/parks/

Scott County (952) 496-8475
www.co.scott.mn.us

Three Rivers Park District (763) 559-9000
www.threeriversparkdistrict.org/parks/

Washington County Parks (651) 430-8368
www.co.washington.mn.us/parks

About the Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council is a 17-member body appointed by the governor. It was created by the Legislature in 1967 to ensure "the coordinated, orderly and economical development" of the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area – consisting of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties.

In addition to its planning functions, the Council operates a regional transit system that carries about 150,000 passengers a day, provides wastewater collection and treatment services for 103 communities, and oversees a regional parks system that attracts more than 30 million visitors a year.