

Regional Parks and Trails Grant Program

AT A GLANCE**2022 Request Amount:** \$15,000**Priority Ranking:** 2**Project Summary:** The Metropolitan Council requests \$15 million in State bonds to match \$10 million of Metropolitan Council Regional Bonds to improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Parks System.**Project Description**

The Metropolitan Regional Park System is owned, operated, and maintained by the 10 Regional Park Implementing Agencies (Agencies) defined in Minnesota Statutes 473.341, Subd. 1(a).

The Twin Cities region is home to a system of regional parks and trails that is nationally renowned for its beauty, size and variety of features. The system provides an abundance of opportunities for recreation, exercise, mental and physical health, and, of course, just plain fun. It also preserves significant green space and wildlife habitat. In 2017, there were over 58 million visits to the Regional Parks System, more than twice as many visits to the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks – combined. Our parks and trails draw visitors from across the region, state, and United States.

The Council proposes to match \$15 million of state bonds with \$10 million in Regional bonds for a total Regional Parks System capital investment of \$25 million. 100% of bond funds are allocated to Implementing Agencies. The Council keeps no state funding for administrative costs.

Each agency is allocated a share of the combined state and regional bonds according to a formula set in Council policy: 70% is based on each agency's jurisdictional population, and 30% is based on the agency's relative share of non-local visits.

Note that under limited circumstances, Regional Parks Implementing Agencies may request Metropolitan Council approval to begin a capital project prior to funding being available, with reimbursement coming from their share of a future bonding cycle. These "reimbursement" grants are funded entirely with Council bonds. For this reason, some individual grants may be funded 100% by State bonds, but the proposed \$25 million total is split, with 60% paid from State bonds and 40% from Council bonds.

Project Rationale

The purpose of the Metropolitan Regional Parks program is to maintain, expand, and improve the Metropolitan Regional Parks System, which consists of more than 54,000 acres of parks and 389 miles of trails. The program funds regional parks that provide recreational services similar to those provided

in state parks in Greater Minnesota.

Project Timeline

Other Considerations

None

Impact on Agency Operating Budgets

There is no direct impact on State agency operating budgets since the State of Minnesota does not operate Metropolitan Regional Parks System units.

Description of Previous Appropriations

2016- \$8.5m GF and \$18.2 Legacy/ENRTF

2017- \$8.5m GF and \$18.1m Legacy and \$5.0m GO Bonds

2018- \$8.5m GF and \$18.1m Legacy/ENTRF

2019- \$8.5m GF and \$18.9m Legacy and \$10.0m GO Bonds

2020- \$9.1m GF and \$19.8m Legacy

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