



# *Strategic Plan*

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2021-2025

## *Our Mission*

To acquire, protect, and enhance critical land for the public's use and benefit.

## *Our Vision*

We envision an interconnected system of parks, trails, waterways, natural areas and open spaces that provide all Minnesotans with outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities and that preserve the natural diversity of our state.

## *Our Values*

Openness and inclusivity in our organization, programs and advocacy.

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Sustainable, long-term statewide land stewardship and conservation.

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Outdoor recreation for all Minnesotans for its educational, health and community benefits.

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Collaboration and volunteerism.

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Service as an independent, honest and forthright voice for parks and trails.

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Decisions informed by the best available science and data.

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# *Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement*

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Parks & Trails Council's work is rooted in a belief that sustainable land conservation provides invaluable benefits—recreational, health, social, economic, and ecological—for individuals and communities.

We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion that uplifts diverse voices, perspectives, and styles, especially of those who experience more barriers based on their identities and backgrounds. We will continually examine our own biases and welcome difficult truths as we strive to ensure our programs and policies contribute toward a more just society, where the benefits of parks and trails are equitably felt by everyone.

# 2021 - 2025

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## STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

1. Acquire & Protect Land

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2. Advocate

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3. Engage & Empower

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4. Research

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5. Endure

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# GOAL 1

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## ACQUIRE AND PROTECT LAND

Provide all Minnesotans with outstanding recreational opportunities by acquiring lands for state and regional parks and trails including land that contains important geological, historical, scientific and scenic characteristics of state and regional significance.

**BACKGROUND** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota partners with state, regional, and local agencies across Minnesota to assist in the acquisition of critical lands for parks and trails. Key to this program is a revolving fund known as the Samuel H. Morgan Land Fund, which has grown with generous donations from supporters. This fund, paired with staff resources and our commitment to the public good, enables us to act quickly in buying land before the opportunity is lost.

## STRATEGIES

- 1 Proactively pursue land acquisition consistent with our vision statement.
- 2 Collaborate and coordinate with partners (e.g. MnDNR, regional providers, friends groups) and peer non-profit groups.
- 3 Actively seek public and private funds to support increased land acquisition activities.
- 4 Maintain organizational capacity and policies to ensure the ability to respond quickly to high priority opportunities.
- 5 Use a clearly defined land evaluation and purchase decision-making process to arrive upon transparent decisions with consideration of risk factors including financial exposure.

# GOAL 2

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## ADVOCATE

Advance policies that cultivate a world-class system of interconnected parks, trails, waterways, natural areas, and open spaces.

**BACKGROUND** Over the past 60 years, Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota has developed a reputation for being an important voice for parks and trails at the Minnesota Capitol thanks to our expanding membership and working relationships with community groups, legislators and local governments from throughout the state. As the political and environmental landscape continues to shift and evolve, our many constituencies are increasingly looking to us to provide leadership on a variety of policy matters. In order to be effective at advancing our policy goals and mobilizing our supporters, we need to clearly focus our advocacy work and identify, expand and enhance our alliances with strategic partners.

## STRATEGIES

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- 1 Continue strong relations with Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission, Metropolitan Council, and the MnDNR.
  - 2 Build relationships and cultivate support for our policy goals from culturally diverse and influential entities, and individuals from other sectors including, but not limited to, tourism, healthcare, transportation, conservation, outdoor recreation, and economic development.
  - 3 Foster strategic two-way communication with stakeholders and partners to elevate awareness of Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota as a unifying and inspiring voice for parks and trails.
  - 4 Engage an increasing number of members and supporters that are active in advancing our policy goals.
  - 5 Identify and nurture opportunities, relationships, and actions to advance our policy goals using the best available research, data, and best practices.
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# GOAL 3

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## ENGAGE AND EMPOWER

**Build a larger, more inclusive, diverse, and active base to help advance our mission and vision.**

**BACKGROUND** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota's work relies on the support of the many people who use and appreciate parks and trails. We work to engage this community in support of efforts to acquire, protect and enhance these special places.

## STRATEGIES

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- 1 Develop and implement relevant engagement opportunities that grow and diversify our supporters while maintaining our existing membership base.
  - 2 Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with friends group partners, including developing their organizational capacity.
  - 3 Empower friends groups and other supporters to engage with parks and trails by strategically partnering with management agencies.
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# GOAL 4

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## RESEARCH

Conduct and disseminate research findings on key park and trail issues.

**BACKGROUND** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota values decisions informed by the best available science and data. Our independent research complements the work of our public partners and together brings clarity and confidence to our public policy advocacy. We strive to be an independent, honest and forthright voice for parks and trails at the State Capitol where critical decisions are made.

## STRATEGIES

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- 1 Establish a diverse committee of respected experts and researchers to serve as a review board for our research agenda and reports to ensure that research is high-quality and has integrity and credibility.
  - 2 Continue to conduct research on trail use and trail conditions.
  - 3 Expand the reach of our research program as an independent, nonpartisan source that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping Minnesota's parks, trails, waterways, natural areas and open spaces.
  - 4 Strengthen relationships with entities such as universities, the MnDNR, local units of government and MnDOT in order to collaborate on key research initiatives, and learn from each other.
  - 5 When possible, generate revenue from research activities.
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# GOAL 5

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## ENDURE

**Strengthen organizational capacity and capital resources to align with our mission, vision, and values.**

**BACKGROUND** Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota is a very lean, well run organization that makes excellent use of the resources the community has entrusted in us. As the organization continues to evolve and take on new challenges, however, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that our staff/contractor capacity can meet organizational goals and that people and organizations that have an inclination to support our work are aware of our existence.

## STRATEGIES

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- 1 Increase annual revenue to fulfill our goals and strategies through the implementation of a comprehensive revenue plan inclusive of capital resources with goals and strategies for each revenue source.
  - 2 Annually, during the budgeting process, evaluate organizational staffing plan with the intent of meeting organizational needs.
  - 3 Enhance and maintain adequate technology infrastructure to successfully implement programmatic goals and strategies.
  - 4 Implement, review, and update annually the JEDI Action Plan through creation and implementation of annual work plans.
  - 5 Diversify the Board of Directors and staff in support of our JEDI Action Plan.
  - 6 Maintain a supportive, healthy, and inclusive work environment.
  - 7 Review and revise committee structures and work plans annually as part of our mission, vision, and strategic documents.
  - 8 Employ a comprehensive communication and public relations strategy to raise awareness of the organization and support achieving our goals.
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