STATE FISCAL YEAR 2027 FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO REGIONAL PARKS IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES FOR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

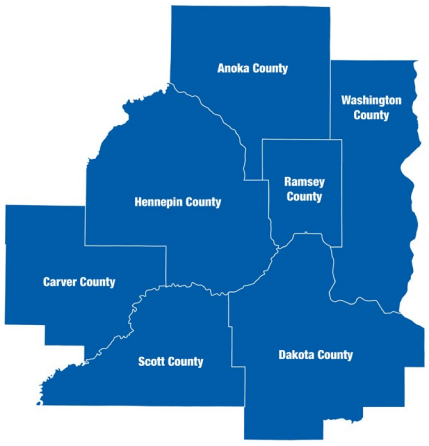


METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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Cover photo: Wargo Nature Center – Anoka County

Introduction

The Regional Parks System was established in 1974 by the Minnesota State Legislature to provide regional recreation open space for public use. With the assistance of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, the Metropolitan Council supports the system in partnership with 10 regional parks implementing agencies: Anoka County, City of Bloomington, Carver County, Dakota County, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Ramsey County, City of Saint Paul, Scott County, Three Rivers Park District, and Washington County.

Originally, about 31,000 acres of existing parks were designated as “regional recreation open space,” and these designated regional parks had about five million visits in 1975. Over the past 50 years, the Met Council has invested state and regional funds to help regional park agencies develop, expand, and acquire parks and trails for the growing metropolitan region. Annual visits have grown to over 67 million in 2025, and the system has grown to include:

- 58 regional parks and park reserves, totaling nearly 65,000 acres open for public use
- 55 regional trails with over 487 miles
- 8 special recreation features

Funds for Operations and Maintenance

Minnesota Statutes, section 473.351, subdivision 2, requires the Metropolitan Council to “distribute grant money received from the commissioner of natural resources to fund the operation and maintenance expenditures of the implementing agencies for the operation and maintenance of regional park and open space systems.” Each year, the implementing agencies report to the Metropolitan Council their expenditures for the previous calendar year. The Metropolitan Council reviews the submittals and applies the formula found in Minnesota Statutes, section 473.351, subdivision 3, to determine the allocation:

1. 40% based on the use that each implementing agency’s regional recreation open space system has in proportion to the total use of the metropolitan regional recreation open space system; and
2. 40% based on the operation and maintenance expenditures made in the previous year by each implementing agency in proportion to the total operation and maintenance expenditures of all the implementing agencies; and
3. 20% based on the acreage that each implementing agency’s regional recreation open space system has in proportion to the total acreage of the metropolitan regional recreation open space system. The 80% natural resource management land acreage of the park reserves must be divided by four in calculating the distribution under this clause.

Minnesota Statutes, section 473.351, subdivision 2, requires that the Metropolitan Council report annually to the legislature the amount distributed to each implementing agency and the Met Council’s estimate of the percentage of operation and maintenance expenditures paid for with operation and maintenance funds.

Allocation and History

The 2027 state fiscal year appropriation for regional parks operation and maintenance (*Minnesota Session Laws 2025, 1st Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 5*) totaled an estimated $11,740,000. Of this, *$2,540,000* came from the General Fund, and *$9,200,000* from the Natural Resources Fund. The amount is estimated because the Natural Resources Fund derives from lottery proceeds, which may vary with lottery ticket sales. Operations and maintenance revenue from the General Fund is paid to the implementing agencies annually in August, and the Natural Resources Fund revenue is paid in 12 monthly installments.

Minnesota Statutes, section 473.351, subdivision 3, provides that:

> *Each implementing agency must receive no less than 40 percent of its actual operation and maintenance expenses to be incurred in the current calendar year budget as submitted to the parks and open space commission. If the available operation and maintenance money is less than the total amount determined by the formula including the preceding, the implementing agencies will share the available money in proportion to the amounts they would otherwise be entitled to under the formula*.

The state fiscal year 2027 appropriation will reimburse 7.73% of the implementing agencies' total 2025 regional park operation and maintenance budget. The average since 1985 has been 9.13%.

Table 1, below, illustrates the regional parks operation and maintenance calculations and allocations. Table 2 illustrates the history of operation and maintenance appropriations as compared to actual costs for 1985-2025 and the appropriation compared to eligible costs incurred for expense year 2025.

Table 1.
Regional Parks Operation and Maintenance Allocations

	Projected Total SFY 2027 Distribution	Percent of 2025 Eligible Expenditures
Anoka County	$956,335	10.30%
City of Bloomington Parks	$107,358	17.27%
Carver County	$280,584	10.44%
Dakota County	$819,300	7.03%
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	$2,884,283	9.39%
Ramsey County	$1,087,291	11.11%
City of Saint Paul Parks	$1,531,349	5.57%
Scott County	$222,630	8.28%
Three Rivers Park District / Scott County	$253,612	8.05%
Three Rivers Park District / Hennepin County	$3,056,844	6.43%
Washington County	$540,414	8.53%
Total	**$11,740,000**	**7.73%**

Table 2.
History of O&M Appropriations

Expense Year and (State Fiscal Year)	Operations & Maintenance Appropriation	Park Agencies' O&M Actual Costs	Percent of O&M Costs Covered by State Appropriation
1985 (1987)	$2,000,000	$19,091,548	10.48%
1986 (1988)	$2,000,000	$22,656,187	8.83%
1987 (1989)	$2,000,000	$24,595,929	8.13%
1988 (1990)	$2,000,000	$26,461,148	7.56%
1989 (1991)	$2,000,000	$29,294,759	6.83%
1990 (1992)	$2,817,000	$31,107,785	9.06%
1991 (1993)	$2,759,000	$32,076,220	8.60%
1992 (1994)	$2,356,000	$33,453,546	7.04%
1993 (1995)	$2,238,000	$35,646,465	6.28%
1994 (1996)	$2,238,000	$37,928,496	5.90%
1995 (1997)	$2,238,000	$40,158,254	5.57%
1996 (1998)	$2,238,000	$41,322,602	5.42%
1997 (1999)	$3,000,000	$44,338,618	6.77%
1998 (2000)	$3,000,000	$49,242,255	6.09%
1999 (2001)	$4,500,000	$50,748,152	8.87%
2000 (2002)	$9,695,105	$54,801,219	17.69%
2001 (2003)	$7,865,716	$60,595,484	12.98%
2002 (2004)	$8,009,857	$63,587,498	12.60%
2003 (2005)	$7,452,000	$66,825,266	11.15%
2004 (2006)	$7,353,000	$70,124,610	10.49%
2005 (2007)	$7,870,000	$77,584,716	10.14%
2006 (2008)	$7,870,000	$80,326,028	9.80%
2007 (2009)	$8,620,000	$85,009,472	10.14%
2008 (2010)	$8,620,000	$85,230,866	10.11%
2009 (2011)	$8,794,000	$86,239,884	10.20%
2010 (2012)	$8,854,000	$88,223,782	10.04%
2011 (2013)	$8,540,000	$95,286,344	8.96%

2012 (2014)	$8,540,000	$95,988,444	8.90%
2013 (2015)	$8,540,000	$94,485,576	9.04%
2014 (2016)	$8,540,000	$99,344,419	8.60%
2015 (2017)	$8,540,000	$103,852,564	8.22%
2016 (2018)	$8,540,000	$101,273,413	8.43%
2017 (2019)	$8,540,000	$110,622,565	7.72%
2018 (2020)	$9,140,000	$114,520,175	7.98%
2019 (2021)	$9,140,000	$114,395,347	7.99%
2020 (2022)	$9,990,000	$112,067,897	8.91%
2021 (2023)	$9,990,000	$120,159,947	8.31%
2022 (2024)	$17,490,000	$126,188,877	13.86%
2023 (2025)	$11,490,000	$133,185,919	8.63%
2024 (2026)	$11,740,000	$143,701,643	8.17%
2025 (2027)	$11,740,000	$151,944,347	7.73%
TOTALS	**$278,887,678**	**$3,053,688,265**	**9.13% avg.**



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