

State Bonding for Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System

Washington County supports \$30 million of state bonding be dedicated to the Metropolitan Council’s regional park system for state fiscal year 2022-2023. This funding would be matched with \$10 million of Metropolitan Council bonds, for an investment of \$40 million in regional park and trails.

Issue At-A Glance

- Washington County depends on state bonding to the Metropolitan Council regional parks system for ongoing acquisition, capital improvements, and parks operations and maintenance. The Metropolitan Council matches funding received through state bonding and then passes along 100% of it to regional park agencies.
- Washington County owns, operates, and maintains four regional parks, two park reserves, one special recreation feature, and two regional trails that are visited 1.8 million times every year.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted — and continues to highlight — that investment in parks and trails is an investment in services and infrastructure that are essential to public health and wellness.

2022-2023 Proposed Projects

- Lake Elmo Park Reserve Inclusive Playground
- Lake Elmo Park Swim Pond Filtration Improvements
- Big Marine Park Reserve Facility Safety Improvements

In 2019, Washington County conducted a survey asking residents to assess the county’s performance. Residents identified the county’s park system as the top rated service, characteristic and most used service by older adults.



Top Rated County Service



Top County Characteristic



Service and Facilities Most Used by Older Adults

Washington County regional park and trail facilities are one of the most visible and well-used services the county provides.

Contact

Sandy Breuer | Parks Director
Washington County Public Works
651-430-4371
sandy.breuer@co.washington.mn.us

Support

The Metropolitan Council and the 10 partnering park implementing agencies that make up the regional park system are united in their support for increasing state bonding. Natural resource-based agencies and organizations have demonstrated support for this effort as well.

Previous Consideration

In 2020, the regional park system advocated for \$15 million of state bonding. The amount approved was \$5 million, impacting the projects that relied on this funding source. The \$30 million request this session will help alleviate the impact of reduced funding from previous years.

No Action

If the \$30 million of state bonding is not dedicated to the Metropolitan Council’s regional park system, the proposed projects will either not proceed, or will be scaled back significantly.

Financial Implications

The county would receive \$1.6 million if the Metropolitan Council’s regional park system receives \$15 million of state bonding.