



# State Funding for Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System

Washington County requests a state match of \$50 million dedicated to the Metropolitan Council’s regional park system for state fiscal year 2023-2024.



## Issue At-A-Glance

- Washington County depends on state funding to the Metropolitan Council regional parks system for ongoing acquisition, capital improvements, and parks operations and maintenance. The Metropolitan Council matches state funding 2:3 (up to \$33 million) 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.

## 2023–2024 Proposed Projects Requiring State Funding

- Lake Elmo Park Reserve Swim Pond Play Area
- Lake Elmo Park Reserve Parking Lots, Trails, and Roads Improvements
- St Croix Bluffs Regional Park Hilltop Shelter and Play Area Improvements

Residents say Washington County Parks are:

Source: 2022 Resident Survey



Top Rated County Service



Top County Characteristic



Service and Facilities Most Used by Older Adults

## Support

All metropolitan regional parks implementing agencies are united in their support for this request. Natural resource-based agencies and organizations have demonstrated support for this effort as well.

## Previous Consideration

This project was submitted for consideration in 2022.

## No Action

If the \$50 million of state funding 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

Total parks investment = \$83 million

- Metropolitan Council – \$33 million
- **State of Minnesota – \$50 million\***

\*Washington County would receive 6.8% or \$5.64 million.



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