



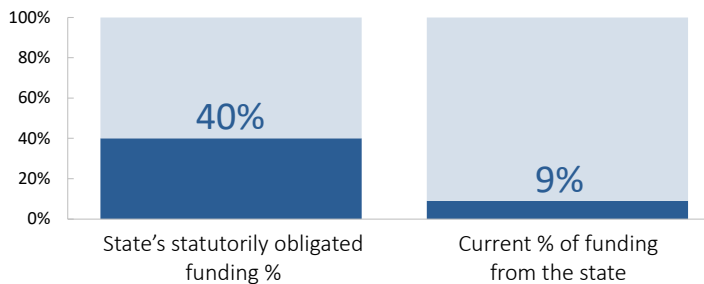
Parks Operations and Maintenance

Washington County requests the state abide by its commitment to **reimburse 40% of the metropolitan regional parks system’s operations and maintenance costs.**



Issue At-A-Glance

- The 56 metropolitan regional parks draw more than 65 million visits every year — more than the Mall of America. The system serves as a regional amenity to the metro area and improves the livability and attractiveness of communities. Washington County operates six regional parks and two regional trails. 38% of people using these facilities reside outside of the county, demonstrating the regional and statewide value of these recreational destinations.
- When the metropolitan regional parks system was created in the mid 1970s, the Minnesota Legislature established in law (M.S. 473.351) that the state would provide 40% of the funding to operate and maintain the system. Currently, the state is not meeting its statutory obligation, funding only 9% of these costs. The result is a shift of costs for this regional system to local taxpayers.



Support

All metropolitan regional parks implementing agencies are united in their support for this request.

Previous Consideration

In past sessions, the park implementation agencies have requested that the state abide by its 40% funding commitment. In 2021, state funding was set at \$10 million for the entire system, which accounted for 8.9% of the eligible costs.

No Action

The metropolitan regional park system serves as a regional amenity similar to the role state parks provide outside of the metro area. No or inadequate state funding results in local taxpayers continuing to be overly burdened with funding this system.

Financial Implications

In 2021, Washington County reported \$4 million of operations and maintenance costs eligible for state reimbursement. If the state were to provide the legally required 40% appropriation for reimbursement, Washington County would receive \$1.9 million yet in 2021, the county received only \$415,000.

