

Modernizing twin cities' regional parks and trails

Resilient landscapes and ecosystems

Governor Walz recommends **\$12 million** in a one-time state appropriation to be **matched by \$8 million** in Met Council dollars. This investment would provide \$20 million directly to the 10 regional park implementing agencies that own and operate the regional parks system.

This spending would go toward renewing well-used facilities, increasing accessibility for people who have a disability so the outdoors and outdoor recreation are available to all, and creating up to date features that are reliable, available, and meet the recreational needs for current and future generations.

IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS ARE NECESSARY

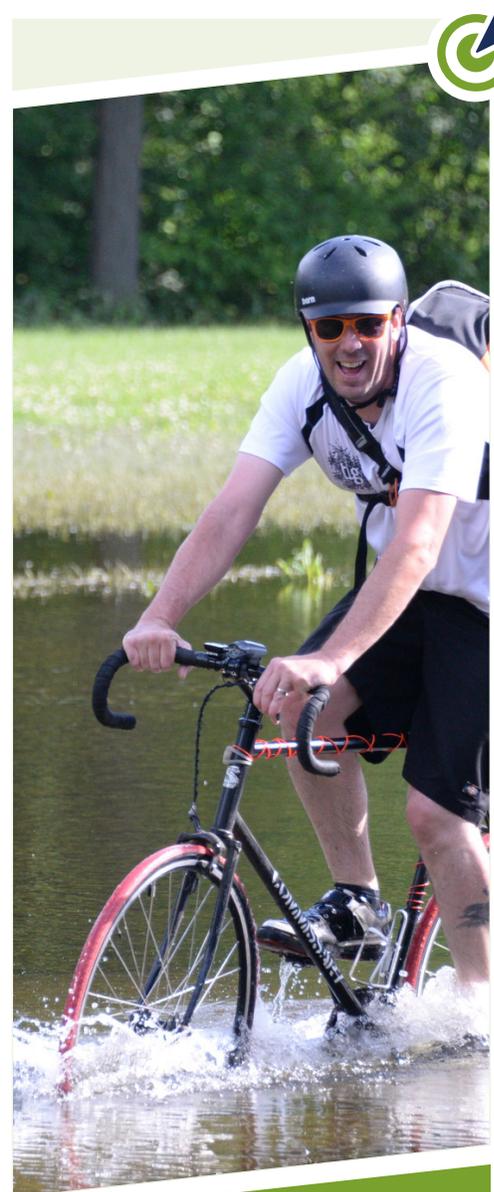
The Met Council's 2021 Regional Parks Visitor Study recurring themes included improvements like bathrooms and drinking water access, general maintenance, trail conditions, and improved signage or information.

This finding points to the many years that have had limited funds for modernization. Throughout the pandemic, more people have headed outdoors to use our parks and trails. The frequency and persistence of inland flooding, extended heat waves, and frequent freeze thaw cycles has intensified. All contributing to the growing need for repairs and improvements.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The Met Council will distribute this funding to the 10 regional park implementing agencies using the Regional Parks Bonding Program formula that is defined in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

This proposal also complements the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources request to modernize recreational facilities across the state of Minnesota.



Extreme
weather events
impact **natural**
resources

This one-time investment will modernize outdoor recreation experiences for visitors to the regional parks and trails system.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Mobility or accessibility improvements
- Updating or improving facilities or infrastructure in response to persistent flooding
- Improvements in response to heating events
- Managing invasive species like Emerald Ash Borer
- Modernizing bathroom facilities
- Providing drinking water

The Met Council in partnership with the implementing agencies will determine a more detailed list of eligible projects ahead of distributing the funds.



NATURE-BASED SYSTEM PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT



8 SPECIAL RECREATION FEATURES (LIKE COMO PARK ZOO & CONSERVATORY AND GALE WOODS FARM)



56 REGIONAL PARKS AND PARK RESERVES



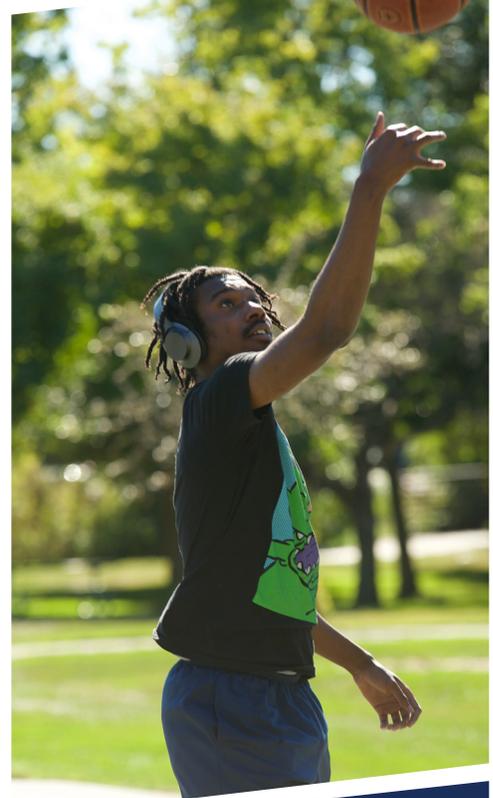
OVER 415 MILES OF INTERCONNECTED REGIONAL TRAILS



65 MILLION VISITS IN 2021



54,500 ACRES OF LAND



Fostering **wellness**, building **strong communities**



One Minnesota Budget

Mapping Infrastructure Climate Risk and Resiliency Opportunities

Governor Walz recommends a **\$5 million general fund appropriation** to create a web-based planning tool for metro area communities and watersheds to use to protect local infrastructure from the adverse effects of extreme weather events and climate change.

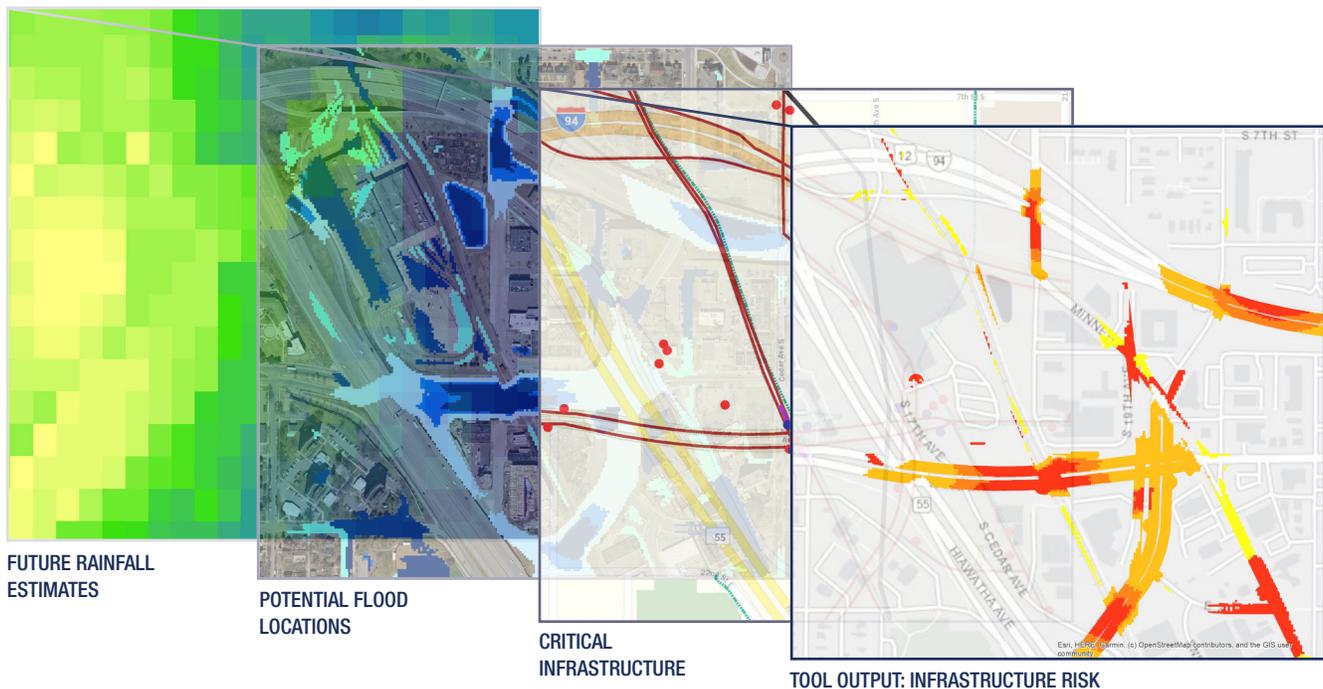
Local governments can use this resource to help prioritize funding to build and retrofit infrastructure to be resilient to more frequent and intense weather patterns.

COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

This project aligns with the Met Council's Climate Action Work Plan commitment to support and collaborate with partners to advance regional climate adaptation efforts. It directly supports both the State Water Plan and the Minnesota's Climate Action Framework goal to build more resilient communities.

- **Improve data and modeling** Minnesota needs accurate climate data to assess vulnerabilities to the changing climate and guide planning for new and replacement infrastructure.
- **Climate-smart communities** Build the capacity of Minnesota communities to protect against and withstand the effects of climate change.
- **Healthy community green spaces and water** Expand and protect tree canopies; parks and other green spaces; and lakes, rivers, and wetlands that provide community resilience benefits.
- **Resilient buildings, infrastructure, and business:** Help the built environment and local economies become more resilient to climate change.

BRINGING INFORMATION TOGETHER TO MAKE DECISIONS



SAFEGUARDING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Twin Cities represents over half the population of Minnesota, and adverse climate impacts present increasing risk to its residents and businesses. Extreme weather events over the last decade, including flooding, severe weather, and even drought, are already impacting Minnesota's built and natural systems just like it has in other parts of the country and the world.

We have critical knowledge gaps in regional water and infrastructure data. This makes it challenging to get current and accurate information about threats to infrastructure. This project will bring updated information together in an interactive tool that will guide local government funding and design decisions around critical infrastructure used daily by residents of the region like roads, bridges, bike paths, housing, electricity, and the internet.

EMPOWERING STAKEHOLDERS

Input from a broad cross-section of city, county, watershed, and agency stakeholders shaped this proposal to support local governments, organizations, and residents of the region with current and accurate data. It can also help lessen disproportionate impacts to people experiencing inequities because of geography, historic disinvestment, or limited household resources.

- Local government staff can prioritize and target community public works projects and grant opportunities.
- State agencies can prioritize state bonding funds, and award climate and resiliency grants.
- Communities and advocacy organizations can identify areas of risk that might affect people experiencing inequities.

Infrastructure doesn't stop at the borders of city or township. That's why a regional approach is critical. Once developed, this planning and decision support toolset could be a baseline to expand statewide.

RECOMMENDING RESOURCES AND SOLUTIONS

This project will go beyond compiling data to create a map of future climate risk. It includes resources to help local organizations and communities apply that knowledge, and take the steps toward resiliency. Resources like an "Adaptation Scorecard" will highlight areas of improvement and offer a menu of potential solutions to consider.

Additionally, this proposal will build knowledge and capacity through trainings and engagement with GreenStep Cities, Minnesota GreenCorps, University of Minnesota Extension, and University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership

PROTECTING OUR FUTURE

With accurate data, effective resources, and community capacity we can proactively take steps to reduce the shocks to our infrastructure systems caused by extreme weather and truly develop regional resiliency.





February 10, 2023

RE: Support for Metropolitan Council's Mapping Infrastructure Climate Risk and Resiliency Opportunities

Dear Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

My name is Ross Bintner and I am a Professional Engineer and Engineering Services Manager for the City of Edina.

I am writing in support of a Metropolitan Council initiative to establish an infrastructure risk and investment toolset that is included in the Governor's budget recommendations. This proposal has been vetted through the Governor's Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor's Interagency Coordination Team.

Extreme weather events that have happened across the region and nation over the past decade are a visceral reminder that our climate is changing. Flooding, severe weather, and even drought are already impacting Minnesota's transportation, power, internet, water, sanitary and stormwater systems just like they have in other parts of the country and the world. In our community, we have already seen the impacts of extreme weather when early summer 2014 storms caused widespread flooding, road closures, sanitary sewer backups into homes, and emergency wastewater discharge to a surface pond near Yancey Park. The City of Edina sustained damage to streambanks and the foundation of its Browndale Bridge downstream west wing wall. Nearly 5,500 sandbags were delivered to approximately 50 homes. A major disaster was declared for the State on July 21, 2014. Tensions were high again in 2019 as the state received record precipitation causing Lake Minnetonka to rise over the emergency spillway at Gray's Bay Dam resulting in two weeks in the spring when flows to Minnehaha Creek could not be controlled.

Our organization is concerned about extreme weather events impacting our community in many different ways, including degraded water quality, overwhelmed and aging infrastructure, and structural flooding. We are preparing for extreme weather events by using updated precipitation statistics when we install and replace infrastructure as well as visualizing the risk for engineers, residents, and decision makers through an interactive web map. This tool has increased our collective awareness of the risk so that we can make better informed capital investments to reduce exposure to flooding as well as planning, programs, and outreach to reduce vulnerability to flooding across the community. While Edina has made significant investments over many years and been at the forefront of visualizing flood risk, we know many of our peer communities don't have access to these same planning tools. Further, while we're using the industry standard for updated precipitation statistics in our models, it does not look forward to future climate change scenarios. These tools are essential to prioritizing projects and spending funds in a way that best minimizes exposure and vulnerability to flooding across the community, both now and into the future.

The Metropolitan Council is proposing to use \$5 million to develop a set of tools to help local partners quantify the risks of a changing climate and prioritize strategies that mitigate risks while providing

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resources to adapt to a new climate. As the regional planning agency for the Twin Cities metro area, Met Council is the right fit to lead this effort. Climate impacts will cross jurisdictional boundaries, and many of the data needs for the toolset should be developed and maintained at a regional scale. The Met Council has shown a willingness to partner and collaborate with metro area communities and entities before on planning and wastewater efforts and their work is important for future-proofing the infrastructure across communities.

The City of Edina recommends the Senate and House support the Metropolitan Council request in the supplemental budget for the '23-25 biennium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Bintner".

Ross Bintner, PE
Environmental Services Manager
City of Edina
7450 Metro Blvd
Edina, MN 55439

Cc: Judy Sventek, Manager, Water Resources, Metropolitan Council
Judd Schetnan, Director, Governmental Affairs, Metropolitan Council
Hannah Pallmeyer, Government Affairs Liaison, Governmental Affairs, Metropolitan Council
Chad Millner, Engineer Director, City of Edina
Brian Olson, Public Works Director, City of Edina

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