



Three Rivers

PARK DISTRICT

Sustainability Plan

Updated December 2016



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Section I: Introduction

Three Rivers Park District's (TRPD) updated Sustainability Plan is a natural outgrowth of its 50+ year focus on environmental stewardship and integrated sustainability efforts. Since 1957, the organization has been dedicated to the preservation and restoration of parkland, protection of watersheds, native flora and fauna, and has provided interpretive education and a broad array of outdoor recreation opportunities to Twin Cities metropolitan area residents. In the 1980s, Three Rivers adopted the mission:

To promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources based park system.

TRPD's goal for the sustainability initiative is to be situated as a leading sustainable regional parks system that meets the needs of the present while ensuring future generations' needs are also well met. The 2010 Vision Plan specifically directs Three Rivers to adopt and implement a comprehensive Sustainability Plan that reflects phased targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, waste reduction, and water consumption through 2050. A District-wide system plan will be initiated in 2017 and sustainability will be a key feature throughout the new guiding document.

TRPD initiated work on the first Sustainability Plan in 2008. While developing the formal plan and acquiring knowledge on both the theoretical and practical aspects of sustainability, Three Rivers' staff has continued to implement specific energy, water and waste reduction initiatives. Technological changes, increasing societal awareness of sustainability issues, and specific implementation areas' work plans have served to move the organization forward.

Development of both the original and this updated plan has not been conducted in a vacuum. Three Rivers staff networked with other public agencies, non-profit organizations and private businesses both regionally and across the country to increase understanding of sustainability best

practices. Specifically, Three Rivers has worked with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials (NACPRO), National Association of Counties (NACo), Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Hennepin County, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many other national, regional and local agencies and organizations to exchange information and gain insight into best practices.

This updated plan incorporates feedback from previous project successes, lessons learned, technological advancements, and innovations in sustainable practices to improve techniques and guidelines for the next five years. The challenges faced remain prevalent and TRPD will meet these challenges head-on for today and years to come.

Sustainability Defined

A critical component of this plan is to understand Three Rivers Park District's definition of sustainability. TRPD affirms:

Sustainability is the ability of a system to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Further, TRPD acknowledges the triple bottom line of sustainability that considers the benefits and challenges of the following:

- Ecological Impacts,
- Economic Impacts, and
- Social Impacts.

This sustainability framework measures success in terms of both organizational and societal success. The framework will assist TRPD in making relevant decisions to fulfill its mission and ensure the District

continues as a major contributor to the health and vitality of the region.

As further defined in the 2010 Vision Plan, this sustainability framework provides the basis for TRPD's commitment to apply prudent financial stewardship across five actionable goals:

- **Protect the region's water and natural resources,**
- **Inspire people to recreate,**
- **Connect people to nature,**
- **Create vibrant places, and**
- **Collaborate across boundaries.**

Sustainability Plan Structure

The purpose of the Sustainability Plan is to guide the organization's efforts toward achieving established sustainability goals and targets by outlining broad strategies for organizational implementation. It is important to recognize the plan continues to be fluid over time, allowing for revisions as needed to reflect societal and technological changes as well as changing economic situations. Further, TRPD is dedicated to utilizing best practices and networking with other agencies to increase knowledge and gain insight into new strategies and opportunities. The Park District will continue to acknowledge both successes and challenges in moving towards our targets. The plan will be reviewed at least every five years, more frequently as needed, to adjust for changing environmental conditions and technological advancements. The annual work program will delineate specific actions, projects, and programs as well as priorities and funding sources for each implementation area of this plan. The annual Sustainability Report, updated at the end of each calendar year, will provide analysis of movement towards targets and guide planning for the following year.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Board of Commissioners sets the policy direction for the District's Sustainability Plan and annually addresses the financial impacts of recommended action items - both expenditures and savings - through the

review and approval of the operating budgets and Asset Management Program. Ultimately, sustainability is the work of the entire organization and every employee has the opportunity to help move the organization towards its established goals and targets. Plan implementation, annual target assessment updates, development of the annual work program and periodic plan revisions will be guided by the Sustainability Committee and related sub-committees.

To have long-term success, decisions concerning targeted sustainability action implementation must be economically sound and seamlessly integrated with the Park District's established management and financial systems. Recommended actions may have financial implications in terms of capital investment or operating budget allocations or reductions. Some actions see long-term cost savings as a primary motivator within the three components of sustainability; however, the benefits of other actions may weigh more heavily on their environmental or social benefits. As with other Park District initiatives (such as education and outreach), some sustainability initiatives will be difficult to quantify, yet as studies have demonstrated, they will result in distinct benefits for the greater good.

In some cases, staff will be able to estimate the financial return on investment and/or budget savings. In other cases, staff may rely on an understanding of proven best practices to recommend a financial investment.

Asset Management and Annual Budgets

The Park District's Board of Commissioners has recognized the need to apply financial resources to implement the Sustainability Plan. The Board has identified a line item for annual allocations in its five-year capital forecast, which is used to plan the Park District's annual Asset Management Program. Actions may also be addressed in consideration of annual operating budgets and allocation of staff resources. Commissioners will review the annual sustainability program recommendations and approve a level of funding considerate of progress toward sustainability targets and within the Park District's financial means.

Capital Developments and Land Acquisition

The Board of Commissioners will consider capital improvements including land acquisition, building renovation, and new building construction to help meet sustainability targets. Funding for these improvements may reside within project budgets not directly tied to the annual sustainability program allocation. For example, the Park District has approached the design of new buildings using the Minnesota B3 (Buildings, Benchmarks & Beyond) standards. These building and renovation standards are based on local and national efforts, while maintaining regional values, priorities and requirements.

Leveraging Private and Public Incentives

The Park District will continue to seek both public and private incentives and assistance in implementing its Sustainability Plan. In the past, TRPD has received incentive grants such as solar project grants from the State of Minnesota and waste management grants from Hennepin County. Alternative financing options for renewable energy initiatives are available should TRPD decide to take such action at an appropriate time. Local, regional, and national agencies have contracted with Energy Savings Companies (ESCOs) to identify large savings throughout organizations.

Recently, legislation has created opportunities to participate in or develop onsite and off-site renewable energy technologies. This could include projects such as funding for retrofitting solar panels on Park District facilities or participating in community solar garden opportunities. Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) also allow financing and implementation of onsite renewable energy technologies. Each consideration offers benefits and challenges that will weigh into the feasibility and viability of implementation. Some of these options have been previously explored by the Park District, but staff did not see them as a good fit at the time. These options are worth revisiting as legislation and utility regulations change, as energy pricing and available resources fluctuates, and as the organization progresses towards its sustainability goals and targets.

Section II: Sustainability Goals and Targets

Sustainability Goals

The following goals provide broad guidance and intent to guide TRPD sustainability efforts. Individually, the goals describe implementation area conditions. Collectively, they provide an overall picture of the Park District's desired future as a regional park system dedicated to sustainable environmental stewardship.

- **Manage and operate District parklands and facilities in a manner that ensures the ecologic, financial and social integrity of the park system in perpetuity.**
- **Reduce dependence on fossil fuels to minimize GHG emissions and reduce public expenditures.**
- **Reduce the amount of waste sent to the incinerator and landfill to minimize costs and reduce GHG emissions.**
- **Preserve groundwater and surface water resources to ensure current and future water needs can be met.**
- **Reduce Park District environmental impacts to demonstrate or model TRPD's commitment to sustainable environmental stewardship.**
- **Provide opportunities for public education and involvement in Park District sustainability initiatives.**
- **Design and plan park facilities, amenities, and trails to maximize the public's ability to use non-motorized transportation and to meet the Park District's goal of sustainable environmental stewardship.**

Sustainability Targets

In 2009, TRPD's Board of Commissioners adopted sustainability targets for reduction of GHG emissions, waste, and groundwater consumption for the years 2015, 2025 and 2050. In 2017, the Board will be asked to review and endorse the updated 2025, 2040, and 2050 target benchmarks. The target projections are based on 2008 numbers, the year formal sustainability planning was initiated within the Park District. The Park District recognizes these targets provide guidance regarding the development of plan strategies and is also mindful of the difficulty of predicting 35 years into the future.

The targets provide a tangible system to measure our progress towards sustainability goals. To demonstrate TRPD's commitment to a sustainable future, these targets will be met based on the whole system instead of adjusting for annual increases in park visitors and amenities. A combination of organizational and individual commitment, combined with behavioral changes and technological advances offers the best opportunity to meet these target benchmarks.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The specific GHG targets were set knowing current climate science indicates an atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration exceeding 450 parts per million (ppm), defined as the "tipping point", will cause irreversible and potentially catastrophic changes to the global ecosystem (Alley, R.D., et al. 2002). Predicted impacts include warmer global and regional temperatures and increased frequency in extreme weather events resulting in significantly increased areas of local flooding, infrastructure impacts, potential operational or seasonal shifts, and accelerated loss of local biodiversity.

Climate scientists predict an 80% global reduction in GHG emissions is necessary to stabilize atmospheric CO₂ concentrations below 450 ppm. Many government agencies and private businesses are setting phased targets to significantly reduce their GHG emissions, help meet this global reduction, and realize cost savings from reduced energy usage. Proactive steps to minimize GHG emissions serve to protect the best interests of TRPD in its mission to act as environmental stewards. Within the Park District, the two largest contributors to GHG emissions are Facility Operations and Vehicle/Equipment Use.

GHG Emissions Targets

Reduce GHG emissions by Park District operations (facilities and vehicle use) from 2008 levels as follows:

30% by 2025

50% by 2040

80% by 2050

Waste Reduction

Solid waste can deposit harmful chemicals into the environment and generates GHG emissions through the extraction of raw materials, product production, and transportation to the consumer and to the landfill. Organic waste that is landfilled can release methane, which has a global warming potential approximately 28 times that of carbon dioxide (CO₂) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2016). Composting organic wastes typically avoids methane production and, when used, the compost provides increased carbon sequestration in the soils.

Waste hauling and disposal represents a significant cost to the Park District. In 2015, TRPD spent approximately \$106,000 on its waste services. Many public agencies across the country are setting zero-waste operations goals where all products are reused, recycled, or composted and “end-of-life” product options become the start of a new product life-cycle. TRPD has followed this goal and has set additional waste reduction targets for parks, facilities, and events.

Waste Reduction Targets

Reduce the amount of waste materials generated through Park District operations and park use that are landfilled or incinerated from 2008 levels as follows:

30% by 2025

50% by 2040

80% by 2050

Water Conservation

The population growth of the Twin Cities metropolitan area over the past few

decades has resulted in significant increases in groundwater withdrawals from regional aquifers. In some of the aquifers, withdrawal rates are exceeding the recharge capacity and the water level is declining at an unsustainable rate. Minnesota DNR is presently monitoring several regional aquifers to determine the extent of their capacity and what measures may be necessary to either reduce groundwater use or increase recharge rates. TRPD is partnering with MNDNR on this monitoring effort.

Surface water withdrawals are also rising for Park District activities. While much of the surface water is used within that same water bodies watershed, there is a small percentage which is lost from the system.

The Park District withdraws water from both groundwater aquifers and surface water reserves for irrigation, snowmaking and drinking water. Water conservation is necessary to ensure sufficient long-term availability of water resources for the metropolitan region and Park District lands.

Water Conservation Targets

Reduce consumption of groundwater resources by Park District operations from 2008 levels by:

10% by 2025

20% by 2040

30% by 2050

Baseline

The 2008 baseline for each of the target areas is estimated as follows:

GHG Emissions

GHG emissions is measured through use of electricity, natural gas and propane in facilities as well as consumption of gas and diesel through vehicle use. The amounts for each GHG metric is converted from its original annual measurement and converted to tons CO₂ using the U.S. EPA GHG equivalency calculator. All GHG equivalencies are then added to determine TRPD's annual GHG emission total. The 2008 baseline GHG emissions produced through facilities and vehicle/equipment fuel usage is estimated to be 8,267 tons of CO₂.

Waste Generation

In 2008, waste records provided by Allied Waste Services of Minnesota, the Park District's contracted waste hauler, shows Three Rivers sent 417.2 tons of waste to the landfill or incinerator and recycled 40.6 tons of waste. NOTE: TRPD had not yet incorporated a composting program in 2008.

Water Consumption

In 2008 TRPD operations consumed 80.0 million gallons of groundwater. The baseline for surface water consumption in 2008 was 27.6 million gallons.

Recommendations

1. Sustainability targets will be met without altering baseline numbers to accommodate for increased visitation or increased numbers in TRPD's facilities/amenities.
2. As a leading organization, TRPD is committed to meeting its targets and finding innovative and technologically sound means to offset amenity and visitor increases.
3. TRPD will manage parklands to maximize carbon sequestration within the context of its mission and sustainability goals.
 - a. This includes managing for large tree growth and reforest parklands when and where possible.
 - b. Carbon sequestration *will not* be used to offset GHG totals.

Commitment to a Steady Baseline

The sustainability targets are based on 2008 metrics; this was when TRPD initiated its formal Sustainability Program. Since that time, the District has seen an increase in land acquisition, park amenities, and visitors. To demonstrate TRPD's commitment to a sustainable future, the District is maintaining its position to meet target projections even with facility/amenity additions and increased service levels. Any changes to the 2008 baseline numbers will solely represent updated information due to improved data collection and record acquisition.

Land Acquisition

The Park District periodically purchases property and receives property as gifts. These properties may be agricultural cropland, former home sites, or other developed sites. New properties are either restored to natural habitat or developed for outdoor recreational use. When new properties are acquired or new facilities constructed, energy use can increase or decrease depending on the land use change. If the land use conversion results in additional natural areas, the CO₂ numbers will remain neutral. New development on acquired property may increase energy use via heating and cooling buildings or for maintenance activities. TRPD's commitment is to use the most technologically advanced equipment and management practices to reduce any potential additions to GHG emissions, waste generation or water consumption metrics. If additions are necessary, TRPD staff will look to offset these through improved efficiencies at alternate locations.

Park Visitation

Park District visitation has grown steadily over the past several years. Research figures indicate visitation went from 6.8 million visitors in 2008 to our 10.1 million annual visitors in 2015, a 48% increase. As park visitation rises, additional resources are needed to accommodate growth, requiring an increase in expenditures and possibly, a corresponding increase in energy and fuel use, waste production and water consumption. However, for sustainability efforts to be authentic, it is necessary to accommodate increasing use within the targets. As with land development, TRPD will look to offset any potential increases through improved elsewhere.

Carbon Sequestration

Carbon sequestration is the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere. Reforestation through conversion of acquired properties to natural areas and an increase in tree size through active management could further increase sequestration potential. However, the sequestration capacity is based on stable climate conditions and the region's climate is changing. While an added benefit of the natural resources management program, carbon sequestration calculations will not be used to offset the District's GHG emissions.

Section III: Areas of Implementation

Six areas of implementation have been identified to help the organization move towards the targets. Some areas address just one sustainability target, while others address multiple targets. Some areas will have a measurable impact while others will be more difficult to measure or will be reflected in different areas, i.e. reduced work-related travel using Park District vehicles will be seen in reduced fuel use; education on waste will be reflected in reduced trash sent to the landfill or incinerator. The seven areas include:

- **Facility Systems**
- **Vehicles and Equipment Fuel Use**
- **Waste Management**
- **Water Conservation**
- **Education and Advocacy**
- **System Planning and Development**

Facility Systems

Background:

Three Rivers owns over 450 buildings; approximately 350 of these buildings are for seasonal use only (limited heating or cooling). More than 250 provide office space for staff and/or provide visitors services. Buildings use energy for heating and cooling, lighting, and in most cases, have electrical (plug-load) use by building occupants or equipment. Heating and cooling, lighting, and use of electronics (computers) within buildings combine to be the largest factors in GHG production related to facilities.

Site facilities also contribute to GHG production through consumption of electricity or fossil fuels. Ski lifts, well pumps, trail lighting and other outside lighting are the primary site facilities that create GHG emissions. Currently, the Park District only accounts for facilities and the Park District's vehicles and equipment fuel usage to calculate GHG emissions – GHG emissions from waste is not included in the calculations. In 2015, facilities were responsible for 83% of all GHG emissions for Three Rivers.

Metrics:

GHG production by the use of facilities is measured through:

- **Electricity Consumed**
- **Natural Gas Consumed**
- **Propane Consumed**

Baseline:

The 2008 baseline GHG emissions by Three Rivers' facilities are estimated to be 6,544 tons of CO₂. Facilities produced 7,021 tons of CO₂ in 2011. The 2015 target for facilities was 5,562 tons of CO₂ and the actual total was 7,445 tons of CO₂; a 14% increase in GHG emissions from the 2008 baseline.

Strategies:

- Make facility upgrades and efficiency improvements a District-wide priority as this is the greatest contributor to GHG emissions;
- Improve GHG monitoring and documentation techniques and resources to track efficiency improvements;
- Strategically invest in facility energy-efficiency improvements, focusing first on the greatest reductions at the lowest costs;
- Consider consolidation and closing of under-used or highly inefficient facilities;
- Educate staff to promote energy conservation efforts within facilities;
- Identify, assess and install new energy-efficiency technology as it becomes available.

For future facilities, Three Rivers will:

- Develop the most energy-efficient facilities possible while meeting the planned public service objectives;
- Use B3 efficiency standards on all new facility construction and facility rehabilitation projects.

Vehicles and Equipment Fuel Use

Background:

Three Rivers manages a large vehicle fleet with 569 pieces of equipment

that use either gasoline or diesel fuel. Currently the Park District tracks consumption on 508 of them. In addition, fuel is used to power ATVs and snowmobiles, and to power some hand tools such as snow blowers, chain saws and leaf blowers. Fuel use accounts for 21% of carbon emissions.

Metrics:

GHG production from vehicles and fuel use is measured through:

- **Gasoline Used**
- **Diesel Used**

Baseline:

The 2008 baseline GHG emissions by Three Rivers is estimated to be 1,724 tons of CO₂. In 2011, Three Rivers used 78,806 gallons of diesel and 99,207 gallons of gasoline, together producing 1,581 tons CO₂.

The 2015 target for vehicle and fuel use was 1,465 tons CO₂ and the actual usage was 1519 tons of CO₂; a 12% reduction in GHG emissions from the 2008 baseline.

Strategies:

- Invest in the most fuel-efficient vehicles/equipment feasible for its necessary function;
- Promote fuel-efficient guidelines and vehicle use behaviors for staff;
- Become an early adopter of alternative equipment and fuels as operations allow;
- Work to reduce mileage through efficient meeting scheduling, alternative office reporting options, conference calls, and web-conferencing opportunities.

Waste Management

Background:

In the context of this document, solid waste includes all the solid material purchased, used or generated within the system, such as durable goods (appliances, furniture), non-durable goods (single-use, disposable products), containers and packaging, food wastes, yard wastes, and miscellaneous inorganic wastes (concrete, asphalt) from both staff and

public areas within the Park District.

Construction/deconstruction waste is not included in this area; however, these contracts now include an expected percentage of materials that will be recycled in the construction/deconstruction process.

Solid waste management is defined as any of the work and programs to collect, process or eliminate solid waste. These programs include efforts to reduce waste and reuse materials, as well as recycling, composting, incineration and landfilling. Purchasing recycled-content supplies and equipment and education are also part of TRPD's solid waste management program.

Integrated solid waste management considers all of the work and program in solid waste as part of one system. By considering solid waste management as an integrated system, spending money on one program may save money in another program.

Metrics:

Waste is measured by:

- **Tons of waste sent to the incinerator or landfill**
- **Tons of recycling materials**
- **Tons of composting materials (organics)**

The Park District's waste hauler is required to provide accurate monthly records of waste materials hauled from each site. Waste reduction is measured by the amount of waste diverted from the incinerator or landfill to recycling and composting.

Baseline:

In 2008, waste records, as provided by allied Waste services of Minnesota – the Park District's waste hauler, showed Three Rivers produced 417.2 tons trash and 40.6 tons recycling. Compost materials were not collected in 2008. In 2011, Three Rivers generated 542.5 tons trash, 59.9 tons recycling and 61 tons composting.

The 2015 target/goal for waste reduction was 354.6 tons trash. The actual

waste collected was 425.1, a 2% increase in waste production from the 2008 baseline. Although TRPD did not quite meet its 15% reduction goal, both recycling and composting went up significantly to 201.3 tons and 74.11 tons, respectively. The Park District will reevaluate and develop best management practices to meet its 2025 goal of 292 tons of trash collected.

Strategies:

- Develop and promote a waste reduction ethic that emphasizes waste prevention as the first step and disposal in a landfill or incinerator as the final and least desirable alternative:
 - Minnesota Waste Management Hierarchy (in preference order):
 - **Waste Prevention/Source Reduction**
 - **Reuse**
 - **Recycling and Composting**
 - **Incineration**
 - **Landfilling**
- Treat waste as a valuable commodity, rather than simply “garbage,” and seek innovative waste reduction programs to become a model for other organizations;
- Use the waste management ethic for planning all Park District projects and make waste reduction imperative throughout the lifecycle of a project.

Water Conservation

Background:

Three Rivers Park District uses significant quantities of groundwater and surface water in daily operations to: provide drinking water to park guests and staff, ensure adequate bathroom operations at park facilities, provide irrigation for District golf courses, and enable snowmaking during the winter months. The largest users of water in the Park District are irrigation and snowmaking, which annually use more than 50 million gallons to support golfing and skiing operations, respectively.

Water usage is the most dynamic of the sustainability metrics as it depends heavily on annual precipitation. Measuring water conservation will be more relevant when reviewing metrics on a five to ten year cycle versus an annual

basis. Annual reports will reflect annual numbers, but true sustainability measures and future operations recommendations will focus more on longer term trends.

Metrics:

Water consumption is measured by:

- **Gallons of Groundwater Used**
- **Gallons of Surface Water Used**

Baseline:

In 2008, Three Rivers consumed 80.0 million gallons of groundwater and 27.6 million gallons of surface water. In 2012, which was a dry year, TRPD used 80.9 million gallons of groundwater and 40.7 million gallons of surface water for its operations. In 2015, TRPD consumed:

- 58.0 million gallons of groundwater for a 27.5% decrease from the 2008 baseline;
- 36.6 million gallons of surface water for a 32.4% increase from 2008 usage.

Strategies:

- Reduce building water use through design and operational activities;
- Minimize turf areas receiving irrigation water and research turf management practices to help reduce water consumption;
- Provide landscape materials that reduce the need for future water irrigation requirements;
- Research feasibility to recycle excess surface runoff for turf irrigation;
- Recycle groundwater where feasible and review possible recharge zones during future projects;
- Maximize snowmaking efficiency to minimize groundwater use and review future operational shifts to coincide with seasonal climatic changes;
- Research opportunities for alternative water storage facilities and options to assist with future snowmaking operations.

Education and Advocacy

Background:

To effectively promote sustainability, TRPD needs to address internal sustainable work practices and share information with the public regarding efforts to reduce GHG emissions, waste production and water consumption. As a large organization, decisions are made daily by many individuals throughout the system. Through education and training programs, interpretive materials, website updates, and key interactions with Park District staff, TRPD will inform both staff and the public on sustainability efforts and drive personal behaviors to incorporate sustainability actions, both in the parks and at home.

Metrics:

This area of implementation will be measured by assessing sustainability literacy of the Park District's workforce and public visitors. Numbers of staff trained through TRU or other internal education programs will reinforce best practices. Staff and visitor surveys can be conducted by the Park District's research section to measure the impact and success of specific educational programs and initiatives.

Baseline:

n/a

Strategies:

- Establish, maintain and promote a consistent message regarding our sustainability plan and targets by sharing targets and progress reports both internally and with the public
 - When the new website comes on-line in April 2017, TRPD's sustainability efforts will have an increased presence and visibility to the public, highlighting successes and evaluating lessons learned
- Engage both staff and the public in making parks more sustainable and in achieving sustainability targets
- Partner with credible resources outside the Park District to deliver sustainability messages
 - On-going planning efforts with area communities to enhance trail system and parks connectivity
 - Efforts to engage event and program sponsors in supporting

sustainability efforts (non-motorized transportation, zero-waste events, etc.)

- Incorporate sustainable work practices to include, but not limited to:
 - Purchasing:
 - Consider the life-cycle cost of each item purchased including capital, transportation, installation, operating, maintenance and disposal costs
 - Encourage employees to share information when they find a good product that meets sustainability standards
 - Paper Use:
 - Make every effort to reduce overall paper use
 - Purchase environmentally sustainable papers
 - Insist on sustainable alternatives to paper disposal such as reduction, reuse, and recycling
 - Travel Practices:
 - Utilize technology-based solutions to reduce employee travel, i.e., web-meetings, teleconference, etc.
 - Provide opportunities and incentives to reduce individual work-related driving and travel, including alternative work locations and schedules
 - Cleaning Practices:
 - Make every effort to use environmentally friendly, third-party certified, cleaning products
 - Minimize the use of hazardous chemicals
 - Ensure employees are properly trained on the use of cleaners
 - Ensure cleaning practices maximize the benefits of green cleaners
 - Employee Education:
 - Encourage the use of green practices throughout work groups and work locations
 - Provide opportunities and resources for all staff to increase their knowledge of sustainability
- Utilize the research department to survey and benchmark staff and visitors' awareness to track changes of the sustainability mindsets
- Recognize employees for their sustainability efforts

System Planning and Development

Background:

There are several initiatives that, while not a direct contribution to Park District targets, can help reduce the carbon emissions of park and trail users while promoting regional sustainability. These include: increasing non-motorized commuting (reducing carbon emissions) through strategic development of the regional trail system; providing closer access points to encourage non-motorized entry into a park; and encouraging local communities to provide local trail connections to TRPD's regional trail network. Although all trails have the potential to increase non-motorized commuting trips, some trails will be more convenient and serve a larger population base than others. If the Park District wants to further increase trail use and reduce the need to travel and park at trailheads, the Park District may consider a more pro-active position on local trail connections through cost-share opportunities.

Several other ways System Planning and Development will assist the sustainability initiative is through providing a holistic and district-wide system plan identifying the Park District's various moving pieces, updating Regional Park and Park Reserve master plans to include additional sustainability strategies, and ensuring plans provide the most foresight and innovative ideas as new technologies become available.

Metrics:

System planning and development sustainability initiatives is measured by:

- **Regional trail routes and additions (number and mileage)**
- **Local connections to regional trails (number)**
- **Non-motorized access points for parks (number)**

Baseline:

The Park District operates 140 miles of regional trails spread among 17 named trails. With the addition of two trails, currently undergoing master planning, and the expansion of existing trail, the current vision for the regional trail network totals over 220 miles.

Local connections to regional trails are currently being inventories and are anticipated to be documented by 2017.

There are 69 non-motorized park access points spread among Park Reserves, Regional Parks and Special Recreation Features.

Strategies:

Three Rivers will:

- Place priority on regional trail routes that have the potential for the greatest number of non-motorized commuting trips over routes with lesser commuting potential;
- Work collaboratively with municipalities and neighborhoods to reconfigure park and regional trail access points to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access;
- Remain current with technological insights and project innovative ideas during all master planning projects.

Evaluation and Tracking

On an annual basis, the Park District will:

- Analyze each implementation area for its impact on sustainability targets and prepare a report that records movement toward established targets;
- Develop an annual work program and five-year goals with designated strategies and funding priorities to address the changing needs of the organization;
- Identify lessons learned and areas for improvement to evaluate established program goals and determine funding, education and advocacy priorities to continue reaching projected sustainability targets;
- Update the annual report to measure if TRPD is on track towards its projected sustainability targets and make this available through the website;
- Provide an annual update to the Board of Commissioners.

Section IV: References

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