

Master Plan Requirements Questions and Answers

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 5/1/15

Gmrptcommission.org

Question #1 – What is a master plan?

The intent of a master plan is to clearly describe the regional-level purpose and key features of a park or trail. Describing unique features and how the park or trail will provide a high quality outdoor experience is especially important. Master plans typically include written information, graphic layout plans, and photos. *Examples of master plans for various types of parks and trails can be found on the Commission’s website at the “Applications” page.*

Question #2 – Why is a master plan required?

The Commission’s review and acceptance of a master plan is vital to affirming that a park or trail is well-vetted, regionally significant, and merits formal regional designation. The master planning process is also seen as the best means to ensure that the initiator understands its own obligations and responsibilities as it relates to funding, ongoing operations, maintenance, and programming.

Question #3 – How detailed does a master plan need to be?

A master plan should be descriptive enough to meet the basic requirements defined on page 61 of the strategic plan (which is available on the Commission’s website at the “Our Work” page). It needs to convey the overall development intent, which typically includes a graphic plan and accompanying description of development features. *It does not* have to include detailed designs or constructive-level plan sets. The examples on the Commission’s website are intended to help convey the level of detail that is expected.

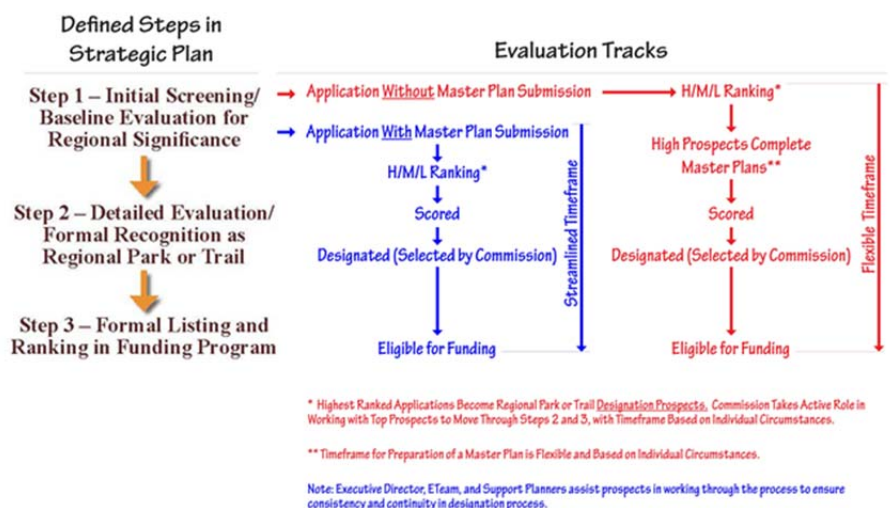
Question #4 – Is a master plan required to fill out an application for regional designation?

No! But a master plan will ultimately be required as part of formal designation as a regional park and trail. As the graphic illustrates, providing a master plan with an application can streamline the evaluation process.

Question #5 – Will the Commission Provide Guidance on How to Prepare a Master Plan?

Yes, for park or trail proposals that get through the initial screening with a high or medium ranking.

Steps in Designation Process – With/Without Master Plan
Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission



The Commission's staff will be available to offer suggestions and "point you in the right direction" on preparing a master plan. Periodic workshops and/or online tutorials may also be offered by the Commission on how to prepare a master plan.

Question #6 -- How much does a master plan typically cost?

Typically, the cost directly relates to the size and scale of a park or trail. On the smaller-scale end, or for less complex proposals, costs for a master plan can be very modest – in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range. On the other end, costs can range between \$25,000 to \$50,000 or more for larger parks or longer trails with complex site issues and extensive proposed development.

Question #7 – Will the GMRPTC or other groups help pay for a master plan?

Generally, local cities, counties, or partners sponsoring an application will be responsible for the cost to prepare a master plan. It is viewed as part of the proposer's commitment to receiving regional designation for a park or trail, and ultimately becoming eligible to receive funding on a priority basis. (Note that the cost for preparing a master plan can be considered as part of cost sharing agreements at the point of funding.)

In select cases, the Commission may, at its discretion, support grant requests to fund master plans. Typically, this relates to situations where a park or trail is ranked high for its regional potential but the local initiators do not have the wherewithal to prepare a master plan without assistance.

We also recommend collaboration to help in master plan development. For instance, a small city may ask its county to help with plan development costs, setting the stage for being of assistance in the construction phase later. Where a park or trail crosses jurisdictional boundaries, it may be cost effective for all benefitting jurisdictions to cost-share master plan completion.