



# Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails Legislative Forum - January 2025

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# Agenda for today

- ▶ GMPT's Legislative Advocacy & your role
- ▶ Previewing the legislative session
- ▶ GMPT's Legislative Agenda
- ▶ What's next and how you can help

# GMPT's Legislative Advocacy & Your Role

- ▶ At its core, GMPT founded to advocate for the parks and trails of Greater Minnesota
- ▶ Legislative Advocacy (AKA lobbying) is a team sport
  - ▶ Lead at legislature is our lobbyist, Elizabeth Wefel
  - ▶ Board/Executive Team drives the ship with our legislative policies/agenda as the guide stone
  - ▶ Our members play a crucial role as voices to their own legislators and other key legislators

# Preparing for success

Strong relationships are the foundation for success

Get to know your legislator before you need to ask them for something

Your goal: Your Legislators know you by name

# How do you build the relationship?

<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Introduce yourself and your position</b>
<b>Congratulate</b>	<b>Congratulate them on winning election/reelection</b>
<b>Ask</b>	<b>Ask for a meeting - formal or informal</b>
<b>Stop by</b>	<b>Stop by in-district “office hours”</b>
<b>Attend</b>	<b>Attend a townhall meeting</b>

# How do you build the relationship?

<b>Invite</b>	<b>Invite them to a park board meeting or similar gathering</b>
<b>Arrange</b>	<b>Arrange tour or visit to city facility. Include them at all openings</b>
<b>Recognize</b>	<b>Recognize their work and contributions publicly</b>
<b>Stop by</b>	<b>Any time you are in St. Paul, stop by your legislator's office and leave a note if they aren't there</b>
<b>Repeat</b>	<b>Schedule regular get togethers. Relationships take time and persistence</b>

# Legislative Session Starts January 14

What we'd like to see



What it's looking like



# Minnesota Senate

- ▶ Former Senator (&Senate Majority leader) Kari Dziedzic passed away late December
- ▶ Senate is tied at 33 DFL - 33 GOP until winner of January 28 special election is sworn in
- ▶ Sen. Mitchell's criminal trial further complicates matters.
- ▶ Without a majority, unclear how the body can organize and move forward
- ▶ Power sharing agreement is under discussion
- ▶ Updated committee list is not yet available
- ▶ We anticipate same chair for Environment and Legacy, Senator Fuong Hawj







## Minnesota House - WTH?!!

- ▶ Curtis Johnson elected to 40B. House tied at 67-67 for each party.
- ▶ Leaders of both caucuses announce power sharing agreement with equal control of committees and leadership
- ▶ Judge determines Curtis Johnson can not assume his seat because he does not live in that district
- ▶ Special election set for January 28. Seat will likely go DFL. GOP has sued to postpone.
- ▶ GOP has “operational majority” on opening day. They will use that to elect speaker and set committees in away that they control everything even when balance restored.
- ▶ DFL threatening to not show up at Capitol on January 14
- ▶ Open question - do 67 legislators constitute a quorum to transact business?
- ▶ Why matters? Court challenge to election of Brad Tabke. 14 vote margin, 20 ballots thrown away in heavily DFL precinct. Waiting for verdict. GOP claims they won't seat him. They can only do that if they have majority for quorum.
- ▶ What will happen?



# GMPT's Legislative Policies and Agenda

- ▶ Legislative policies guide our work at the Capitol
  - ▶ Our policies focus on ensuring that we have our fair share of funding for regional and local parks and trails, that we are supporting the Commission and they support our members, and that the Legislature does not place undo burdens on our ability to build parks and trails
  - ▶ Examples of problematic legislation include efforts to block funding for any park or trail that has used eminent domain, restricting the price at which land can be built, blocking any use of eminent domain
- ▶ Legislative agenda guides the specific issues that we will be working on.
  - ▶ We will introduce bills on some, but not all of these issues

# Legislative Agenda for 2025

The GMPT supports legislation that ties the reimbursement of state grant administration fees to the work actually performed by the state agency providing those services.

The GMPT supports legislation that would allow unspent parks and trails legacy funds to be reallocated to other projects.

The GMPT supports a recommendation to use a general fund appropriation to pay for the operating costs of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

The GMPT supports the passage of a Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources bill that includes funding for the Local Trail Connections, Outdoor Recreation, and Natural and Scenic Area grant programs and for selected local and regional park and trail projects.

Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT) supports a robust bonding bill that includes a bonding appropriation of at least \$4,000,000 to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund the local and regional grant programs under Minn. Stat. 85.019 and additional funding for local and regional parks and trails.

# Translating the Agenda & Policies into Legislation

- ▶ Bill one: Appropriate 20% of legacy funds to Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails. This bill will also address fees to DNR.
- ▶ Bill two: Pay for Commission out of general fund, not legacy.
- ▶ Other legislation
  - ▶ Support passage of LCCMR bill that include funding for local grants as well as member projects
  - ▶ Support inclusion of local parks and trails grants in final bonding bill
- ▶ Bill numbers, handouts, more will be available by end of month

# What's next?!

- ▶ Get to know your legislator
- ▶ Sign up for legislative action day and make an appointment with your legislator
- ▶ Read our monthly newsletter and legislative updates
- ▶ Let us know what you're hearing!
- ▶ Join us for the February forum February 14, 2:00 PM



# Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails

QUESTIONS?