

Policy Council Charter

Purpose

The Policy Council is responsible for developing mission-related policies and organization-wide practices for the Trail Conference and presenting policies to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Responsibilities

- The Council will act as the clearinghouse for all mission-related policy work.
- The Council will, at its discretion, also address practices with broad, organization-wide scope.
- The Council will prioritize work on policies and practices with input from stakeholders, focusing on matters which have organization-wide impact. The Board has the authority to assign a policy or practice matter for priority attention.

Membership

- The Board appoints the Council Chair, who must be a board member.
- Each Regional Trails Council (RTC) names one member of the Policy Council. This member must be a volunteer in the RTC region. An RTC may name an alternate in case the regular representative cannot attend.
- In the fourth quarter of each year, a selection committee consisting of the Policy Council Chair, the Chairs of the RTCs, and the Chair of one non-trail Program Committee chosen by the Policy Council Chair will nominate at-large Policy Council members. The selection committee will determine the number of at-large members, which will normally be between 6 and 9. The Board must approve the nominees chosen by the selection committee and may remove or replace them at any time.
- Terms on the Policy Council are for one calendar year and members may be reappointed.
- The Council may elect other officers from among its members.
- The Executive Director will name a staff member as the primary liaison to the Council. The Executive Director or Council liaison will designate additional staff members when needed to join a task force or contribute to the development of a policy or practice.

Meetings

- The Council will determine the frequency, times, and locations of its meetings, except that meetings must normally be held at least quarterly. The Chair will notify members of meetings.
- The Chair will prepare meeting agendas with staff input and work with members to set priorities.
- Decisions will be by vote of the members in attendance at a meeting, either in person or by remote communication, or by electronic or email voting. Voting by proxy is not allowed.
- It is anticipated that much of the ordinary work of the Council will be done using electronic communication rather than in meetings.
- The Council may establish task forces or may delegate matters to existing Program Committees, which may draft proposals for Council consideration. Task forces will generally include Policy Council members and staff and may include other volunteers with subject matter expertise.
- Meetings of the Council will be announced on the Trail Conference web site. Non-members may attend meetings and the Council will determine the manner in which they may participate.
- The Council will keep minutes of meetings, which will be communicated and archived electronically.

Process for policy and practice development and approval

- The process for development and revision of mission-related policies and practices is documented in Fig. 1 below.
- Task forces and Program Committees drafting practices (not policies) must present the concept to the Executive Director or designee and receive approval before proceeding.
- The Board may specify a different fast-track process for issues requiring rapid resolution.

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- The Council may develop mechanisms to handle smaller issues in a way which gathers appropriate input, but is less formal than the documented process for policy development.
- For policies or practices requiring significant implementation activity, an implementation plan must be developed and must be agreed to by the Policy Council staff liaison before the policy or practice is approved.
- The policy development process and the functioning of the Council will be re-evaluated periodically and may be modified as deemed appropriate by the Board.

This charter approved and adopted on October 24, 2017 by the Board of Directors. It replaces the previous charter adopted on October 22, 2015.

Figure 1: Process for development and revision of mission-related policies and practices with organization-wide implications

