



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-093

Proposal Title: Metropolitan Regional Parks System Land Acquisition Phase 8

Project Manager Information

Name: Jessica Lee

Organization: Metropolitan Council

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Acquire properties with high-quality natural resources or natural resources restoration potential for the metropolitan Regional Parks System. This project will be matched over 100% with Council and local Agency funds.

Funds Requested: \$3,000,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2027

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Metro

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The Metropolitan Regional Parks System offers large-scale, natural-resource based recreation opportunities to all Minnesotans. This project proposes to acquire park and trail inholdings that have a broad range of ecological significance, from native prairies, wetlands, forests, and shoreline protection, to creating a brand new regional park that will protect a significant creek and lake. Many of these properties are at risk of being developed if they are not acquired for the Regional Parks System. Most of the trail inholdings are along water bodies and will provide shoreline protection. Acquiring these lands will contribute to the equitable use of the Regional Parks System by increasing access and protecting properties for public use in Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington Counties in perpetuity.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

The Metropolitan Regional Parks System is owned and operated by the ten Regional Parks Implementing Agencies (Agencies) identified in Minnesota Statutes, section 473.351. Working with the Agencies, the Council has compiled a list of properties that may potentially be acquired between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2027. The parcels range in size from one acre to 158 acres, with the average size of 34 acres. Some of these properties are under active negotiation; for others, the sellers have expressed an interest in selling to the Agency or are aware of the Agency's interest. Because the timing is uncertain as to when properties will be available from willing sellers, this proposal builds a funding pool which allows Agencies to capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will acquire lands for the Regional Parks System that are already included in locally-elected board-approved park or trail long-range plans, but are not currently owned by the Agencies. Acquiring these lands will provide public access to these natural resource-based, high-quality recreational opportunities, while protecting and restoring prairies, forests, wetlands, and shoreline. A brand new approved regional park will be created through the acquisition of a large tract of land that includes both a creek and lake, providing significant land and water protection for Minnesota's future generations.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Acquire properties for the Regional Parks System

Activity Budget: \$3,000,000

Activity Description:

The Agencies individually negotiate each acquisition. After they have obtained a signed purchase agreement, a certified appraisal, and a resolution of support from their elected boards, the Agencies submit a grant request to the Metropolitan Council. Agencies may close on the properties after the Council has approved the acquisition grant request. The Council serves as the fiscal agent and awards grants to the Agencies through its Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (PAOF) program. The PAOF program has four major funding sources: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (Legacy), and matching dollars. The Council matches every \$3 in ENRTF and Legacy funds with \$2 in Council funds. Agencies make up the fourth funding source, providing at least 25% of acquisition costs from non-state funds. The Council is requesting \$3,000,000 from the ENRTF. These funds will be matched with \$2,000,000 in Council funds, and an additional \$1,666,667 million in Agency funds, for a total project budget of \$6,666,667 million.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
PAOF application is open continuously as long as funds remain available	June 30, 2027
Agencies submit PAOF applications as parcels become available, if funds remain	June 30, 2027
Met Council staff present PAOF applications to the Met Council for approval	June 30, 2027
Agencies acquire properties once a grant agreement is executed for the project	June 30, 2027
Final reporting requirements for the Agencies and the Council are met	June 30, 2027

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Al Singer	Dakota County	Real Estate Manager	Yes
Kelly Grissman	Three Rivers Park District	Director of Planning	Yes
Sharon Price	Washington County	Acquisition Manager	Yes
Scott Yonke	Ramsey County Parks	Director of Operations	Yes
Marty Walsh	Carver County Parks	Director	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

This project will provide funding for an existing program managed by the Metropolitan Council, the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (PAOF) program. As properties become available for purchase, Agencies will apply to the PAOF program to receive funding. These applications are presented to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, then the Council's Community Development Committee, and then receive final approval from the full Metropolitan Council. After the project has been approved, the Agency enters into a grant agreement with the Council. Council staff then works with the Agency throughout the acquisition process, until final reimbursement and reporting is submitted.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Metropolitan Regional Parks System Land Acquisition	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$1,500,000
Metropolitan Regional Parks System Land Acquisition-Phase 7	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e	\$2,250,000
Metropolitan Regional Parks System Land Acquisition-Phase 6	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09h	\$1,000,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Jessica Lee

Job Title: Senior Parks Planner

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Ms. Lee has managed several ENRTF appropriations while working for the Metropolitan Council over the past four years. She works very closely with the Regional Parks Implementing Agencies to accomplish acquisitions for the Regional Parks System. She also managed projects from the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for the MNDNR for over six years.

Organization: Metropolitan Council

Organization Description:

The Metropolitan Council is the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities metropolitan region, including Metro Transit's bus and rail system, Metro Mobility, Transit Link, wastewater treatment services, planning, affordable housing, and regional parks. The Twin Cities metropolitan area is home to a system of regional parks and trails that are nationally renowned for their beauty, size, and variety of features. The

Regional Parks and Trails System attracted 65 million visits in 2021. With 56 regional parks and park reserves totaling more than 54,000 acres, over 415 miles of interconnected trails, and 8 special recreation features, the system provides a wealth of opportunities for recreation and exercise while preserving significant natural resources and wildlife habitat. While operated by partnering cities, counties, and special districts, the Council is charged with overseeing the acquisition and development of regional parks and trails.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Trail Easement Acquisition	Parcels: 4 Miles: 1						\$1,000,000
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 200 Parcels: 6						\$2,000,000
							Sub Total	\$3,000,000
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								

							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$3,000,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Metropolitan Council	The Metropolitan Council matches every \$3 dollars in ENRTF with \$2 in council funds. Council funds will be used for ancillary costs (such as appraisals and legal fees) as well as stewardship and restoration costs. Council funds may also be used toward the purchase of parcels. The Council funds all administrative support for the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund program through its own budgeting process (no ENRTF/match funds are used for administrative costs).	Secured	\$2,000,000
Cash	Regional Parks Implementing Agencies	The Agencies must provide at least 25% of the total acquisition project cost. Agency funds will be used for ancillary costs (such as appraisals and legal fees) as well as stewardship and restoration costs. Agency funds may also be used toward the purchase of parcels.	Secured	\$1,666,667
			Non State Sub Total	\$3,666,667
			Funds Total	\$3,666,667

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Battle Creek Regional Park	Ramsey	Undeveloped, woodlands, atop the bluff line.	Fee Title	2.91	-	-	Private	Ramsey County	Negotiations In Progress
Baylor Regional Park #1	Carver	Property has 1600 linear feet of lakeshore.	Fee Title	18.4	-	-	Private	Carver County	Has Not Begun
Baylor Regional Park #2	Carver	Property has wetland and woodland features.	Fee Title	50	-	-	Private	Carver County	Has Not Begun
Big Marine Park Reserve #1	Washington	2235 feet of Mud Lake shoreline; Preservation of Maple Basswood Forest, Alder Swamp and Emergent Marsh.	Fee Title	45.09	0.4	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #10	Washington	Wetland restoration and forest restoration and expansion.	Fee Title	19.62	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #11	Washington	Prairie restoration including pollinator habitat.	Fee Title	38.54	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #12	Washington	Prairie restoration and protection of 1,588 linear feet of Turtle Lake shoreline.	Fee Title	28.6	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #13	Washington	992 feet of Turtle Lake shoreline; wetland and prairie restoration.	Fee Title	34.79	0.2	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #2	Washington	Preservation of Mesic Oak Forest and Alder Swamp.	Fee Title	39.53	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #3	Washington	Forest restoration and expansion; 1,600 linear feet of Mud Lake shoreline.	Fee Title	25.67	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #4	Washington	943 feet of Mud Lake shoreline; wetland restoration.	Fee Title	35.86	0.2	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #5	Washington	Forest and wetlands restoration.	Fee Title	40.03	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #6	Washington	Forest restoration and 1,000 linear feet of shoreline protection.	Fee Title	-	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #7	Washington	Forest restoration and expansion; 2,391 linear feet Turtle Lake shoreline and 1,714 linear feet of Mud Lake shoreline protection.	Fee Title	18.8	-	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress

Big Marine Park Reserve #8	Washington	1819 feet of Turtle Lake shoreline; 340 feet of Mud Lake shoreline; forest restoration and expansion.	Fee Title	15.27	0.4	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Big Marine Park Reserve #9	Washington	2055 feet of Turtle Lake shoreline; wetland and forest restoration.	Fee Title	23.64	0.4	-	Private	Washington County	Negotiations In Progress
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #1	Hennepin	Property along Diamond Lake, with 2,450 linear feet of shoreline; adjacent to DNR lake access.	Fee Title	66.15	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #10	Hennepin	Property includes uplands and wetlands.	Fee Title	34.33	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #2	Hennepin	Property along Diamond Lake with 215 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	10.14	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #3	Hennepin	Property along French Lake, with 2,000 linear feet of shoreline; includes a conservation easement.	Fee Title	6.32	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #4	Hennepin	Property along Grass Lake, with 1,275 linear feet of shoreline, near to Henry's Woods Park.	Fee Title	10.01	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #5	Hennepin	Property at the corner of Grass Lake, adjacent to a conservation easement.	Fee Title	9.48	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #6	Hennepin	Property includes a stand of maple/basswood forest and wetlands.	Fee Title	77.89	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #7	Hennepin	Property is adjacent to the South Fork of Rush Creek.	Fee Title	9.18	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #8	Hennepin	Property includes a large stand of maple/basswood forest, uplands, and wetlands.	Fee Title	57.31	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Diamond Lake Regional Trail #9	Hennepin	Property includes a stand of maple/basswood forest, uplands, and wetlands.	Fee Title	60.89	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Has Not Begun
Lake Byllesby Regional Park #1	Dakota	Property contains forest and woodlands.	Fee Title	42	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Negotiations In Progress
Lake Byllesby Regional Park #2	Dakota	Property contains forest and woodlands along Chub Creek, including 2,300 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	34	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Negotiations In Progress
Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail #1	Dakota	Property contains grasslands along 2,600 linear feet of South Creek shoreline.	Fee Title	22	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail #2	Dakota	Property contains grasslands along 1,550 linear feet of South Creek shoreline.	Fee Title	16	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun

Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail #3	Dakota	Property contains grasslands along 1,600 linear feet of South Creek shoreline.	Fee Title	15	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail #4	Dakota	Property contains grasslands along 1,200 linear feet of South Creek shoreline.	Fee Title	11	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #1	Dakota	Partially undeveloped and will provide sustainable water access to the Cannon River; will protect 300 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	9	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Negotiations In Progress
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #2	Dakota	Property contains forested hills and bluffs.	Easement - Other	69	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #3	Dakota	Property contains grasslands, ravine, and forested hills.	Easement - Other	33	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #4	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and woodlands.	Easement - Other	24	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #5	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and forested bluffs.	Easement - Other	22	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve #6	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and forested bluffs.	Easement - Other	38	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Miller Lake Regional Park	Carver	Property has restored prairie, woodlands, 1340 linear feet of lakeshore, and 7,400 linear feet of Carver Creek shoreline.	Fee Title	162	-	-	Private	Carver County	Negotiations In Progress
North Creek Greenway Regional Trail #1	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and woodlands along North Creek; will protect 3,400 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	32	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
North Creek Greenway Regional Trail #2	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and woodlands along North Creek; will protect 2,900 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	45	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
North Creek Greenway Regional Trail #3	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and woodlands with a small segment of North Creek (100 linear feet of shoreline).	Fee Title	14	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
North Creek Greenway Regional Trail #4	Dakota	Property contains grasslands and woodlands with a tributary to North Creek.	Fee Title	10	-	-	Private	Dakota County	Has Not Begun
Rush Creek Regional Trail #1	Hennepin	Property along Rush Creek includes steep, wooded bluffs, and 2,900 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	20	0	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Negotiations In Progress
Rush Creek Regional Trail #2	Hennepin	Property along Rush Creek with 385 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	1.25	0.15	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Negotiations In Progress

West Mississippi River Regional Trail #1	Hennepin	Property on Mississippi River with gradual access to 135 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	1.98	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Negotiations In Progress
West Mississippi River Regional Trail #2	Hennepin	Property on Mississippi River with steep bluff overlooking the river, wooded ravine, and 580 linear feet of shoreline.	Fee Title	4.79	-	-	Private	Three Rivers Park District	Negotiations In Progress
Totals				1,404.47	1.75	-			

Fee Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The Regional Parks Implementing Agencies have identified parcels that are within their approved park or trail boundaries and have high natural resource value or restoration potential. These inholdings are currently in private ownership but negotiations have begun in hopes of the Agencies acquiring these properties to protect or restore their natural resources and provide access to the public. The ten Agencies have identified all properties that meet this criteria and have potential to be acquired within the next three years. Because all of the parcels on this list are crucial to completing the Regional Parks System and they all have natural resources value, parcels will be funded as they become available, on a first-come-first-served basis.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Each parcel on this list has been included in a regional park or trail long-range Plan. Each regional park or trail has its own long-range plan with a plan boundary that identifies all future acquisitions. These long-range plans are developed by the Agencies, and the Agency Boards have approved them. In addition, these long-range plans have been approved by the Metropolitan Council upon recommendation from the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee. Each long-range plan should be available on the corresponding Agency's website. The only exception is Miller Lake, which is an approved Regional Park Search Area as noted in the Regional Parks Policy Plan. The long-range plan for Miller Lake will be completed and approved before funding is available for this acquisition.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

The Agencies will prepare their own restoration and management plan for each parcel acquired. These plans will identify activities and timelines for natural resource restoration work if needed. They will also identify the long-term maintenance and management needs, the time frame for those needs, and the sources of funding to meet those needs. The Agencies will keep these on file for reference.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

These parcels will be purchased and held by the Agencies. They are all required to obtain county or park board approval before purchase.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Not applicable

Easement (Other) Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The Regional Parks Implementing Agencies have identified parcels that are within their approved park or trail boundaries and have high natural resource value or restoration potential. These inholdings are currently in private ownership but negotiations have begun in hopes of the Agencies acquiring these properties to protect or restore their natural resources and provide access to the public. The ten Agencies have identified all properties that meet this criteria that have potential to be acquired in the next three years. All of the parcels on this list are crucial to completing the Regional Parks System. Parcels will be funded as they become available, on a first-come-first-served basis. Most of the

easements included in this proposal will help protect wetlands and/or shoreline of rivers, creeks, or lakes, along with providing recreation opportunities. Acquiring these easements will prevent private development along these water bodies, protecting water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Each parcel on this list has been included in a regional park or trail long-range plan. Each regional park or trail has its own long-range plan with a plan boundary that identifies all future acquisitions. These long-range plans are developed by the Agencies, and the locally-elected Agency Boards have approved them. In addition, these long-range plans have been approved by the Metropolitan Council upon recommendation from the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee. Each long-range plan should be available on the corresponding Agency's website.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

The Agencies will prepare their own restoration and management plan for each parcel acquired. These plans will identify activities and timelines for natural resource restoration work if needed. They will also identify the long-term maintenance and management needs, the time frame for those needs, and the sources of funding to meet those needs. The Agencies will keep these plans on file for reference.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

These parcels will be purchased and held by the Agencies. They are all required to obtain county or park board approval before purchase.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Not applicable

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [7f1c969e-6de.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The PDF contains maps of each parcel in the proposal. When the location allows, maps may contain multiple parcels to reduce the total length....

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Background Check	485febd0-14c.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Easement (Other) Acquisition, Fee Acquisition,

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

No

Is the purpose of the acquisition for construction of a building(s), trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more, either now or in the future?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No