



General

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Park/Trail ID # 16-043D	Funding Application 17-0082-F	Park/Trail Name Tioga Recreation Area
Last Update July 13, 2017		
District 2	Project Name Tioga Recreation Area – Phase 2	

Project Description

It is the goal of the City of Cohasset to develop the Tioga Recreation Area in a way that is collaborative, that engages the necessary expertise, and that results in a multi-use non-motorized recreation area that meets the highest standards of quality, sustainability, safety, and fun. The city believes this approach will not only result in a recreation area that is repeatedly accessed and enjoyed by local residents, but will also lead to an area that is distinctive enough to act as a destination, drawing repeat visitors from around the region, state, and beyond. In pursuit of this goal, Cohasset would utilize the proposed funding request to implement Phase 2 of the Tioga project. As detailed in the Implementation Plan of Tioga's Master Plan, Phase 2 includes initial trail improvement and development. This will include the basic improvement of the existing six miles of trails and service roads, construction of a paved one-mile walking/biking path between Tioga Beach and Tioga Pit, and the construction of nearly 10 miles of green, blue, black, and double black single-track trails. The trails will accommodate multiple types of recreation, will include an accessible portion for individuals with disabilities, and will provide varying degrees of single-track difficulty from beginner to expert. The working committee for the Tioga Recreation Area project feels that development of single-track trails of all levels of difficulty must fall in Phase 2 because this will be the surest way to attract multiple user groups. This will help generate excitement, increase and strengthen support, and create awareness about the Tioga area as a high-quality destination for locals and visitors alike. Additional Phase 2 activities that will immediately help increase the usability and appeal of the Tioga Recreation Area include improvements to parking, the swimming beach, fishing pier, and signage. Finally, Phase 2 will include the development of a trailhead, a day use area, a bike repair station, the addition of picnic tables and satellite toilets, and the construction of trail and changing shelters. The completion of Phase 2 will result in a fully usable recreation facility that will be an exciting addition in Itasca County and the state of Minnesota as a whole. After the initial improvements are tested, user numbers and types are evaluated, and additional funding is secured, Phase 3 will be implemented. Phase 3 will consist of the construction of additional single-track trails (approximately 15 miles) as well as construction of a restroom/shower facility, a bike repair/wash station, and other day use amenities.

Project Area Maps

Project Area Map

[http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Tioga Recreation Area Existing Trails and Facilities_763f6c.pdf](http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Tioga%20Recreation%20Area%20Existing%20Trails%20and%20Facilities_763f6c.pdf)

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Funding

Legacy Pillars:

- Connect People and the Outdoors
- Acquire Land and Create Opportunities
- Take Care of What We Have
- Coordinate Among Providers

Project Outcomes

Connection to Pillars

Connect People and the Outdoors – Development of the Tioga Recreation Area will increase opportunities for local residents and visitors to participate in non-motorized outdoor recreation activities. This means that more people will receive and understand the benefits those activities bring, including health, social bonding, and education for children. In addition, the people who engage in these activities will be more likely to appreciate and care for the natural world.

Acquire Land and Create Opportunities – Development of the Tioga Recreation Area will increase the availability of high-quality non-motorized recreational opportunities in an area that is already a regional center as well as a popular tourist destination. These new amenities will help satisfy current users as well as create exciting opportunities for new users.

Take Care of What We Have – The Tioga Recreation Area includes existing amenities as well as important historic features. Multiple agencies including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, City of Cohasset, and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board have already invested in the area. New investment is needed to take care of the area, to ensure safety, and to improve the extent of high-quality experiences for current and future users.

Coordinate Among Providers – Coordination has been an integral component in regard to maintenance of the current facilities within the Tioga Recreation Area as well as planning for future development. Involved stakeholders include the city of Cohasset, Itasca County, the Grand Rapids Itasca Mountain Bicycling Association (GRIMBA), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota Office of School Trust Lands, the city of Grand Rapids, Get Fit Itasca, Visit Grand Rapids, the Itasca Trails Taskforce, and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. Coordination between these partners has been

essential to develop the vision for the Tioga Recreation Area and will result in wise and efficient use of public funds.

Connection to Regional Values

This project will complete a user-friendly, regionally substantial, and impactful component of the Master Plan for the Tioga Recreation Area. The project will be user friendly because it will result in exciting improvements including trail development and construction of other basic amenities, which can all be enjoyed as soon as the project is complete. Trail development during the project will include the improvement of the existing six miles of trails and service roads. These will be used for general recreation as well as for access to the recreation area by emergency vehicles.

In addition, the project will include the extension of the paved walk/bike trail from Tioga Beach to the Tioga Pit. The plan is for this portion of the trail to be accessible.

Single-track development during this phase of the project will include the construction of approximately 10 miles of flow trails, technical trails, jump lines, and trails with features. The idea is to develop enough trail in Phase 2 so that the area will draw regular local users as well as begin to attract visiting riders. In addition, it will be necessary to build single-track in Phase 2 that accommodates the full “bell curve” of riders, including young families and other beginners, intermediate recreationalists, and hard-core experts.

Phase 2 will also include the improvement and construction of other basic amenities that will enhance Tioga’s overall usability, safety, and accessibility. This immediate usability will generate additional understanding about the potential of the area. Increased understanding will result in new users, new interest in seeing the area fully developed, and new partners and advocates who can contribute to the long-term sustainability of the recreation area.

The project will complete a regionally substantial component of the Master Plan because it will result in a completed project that significantly advances the overall vision for the Tioga Recreation Area. This will begin to address the pressing need for a high-quality, non-motorized, multi-use recreational area in the Cohasset and Grand Rapids area.

Finally, the project will complete an impactful component of the Master Plan in that it will result in a recreation area that is complete and exciting enough to attract a range of users. The green flow trails will attract families and other new riders. The blue trails will attract the majority of riders, and the black and double black trails will begin to attract mountain biking devotees from outside Itasca County. In particular, it’s these black and double black trails that will distinguish Tioga from other single-track trail systems. There will be multiple jump lines, boulder fields, a variety of features, and significant elevation in the trail system. Tioga will also be attractive because the soil type is porous (similar to Cuyuna). This means the trails will dry quickly and can be open earlier in the spring and shortly after rainfall. As a whole, the outstanding system will both complement other ride opportunities in the state and help round out opportunities for those thinking of Northern Minnesota as a mountain biking destination.

Project Readiness

Project Lead

In its most recent Comprehensive Plan, which was finalized and approved in 2013, the city of Cohasset defined its community goal, which remains “to protect Cohasset’s public waters, retain rural and shoreland neighborhoods, increase Cohasset’s economic base, and grow Cohasset’s small-town image.” In addition, at that time, Cohasset defined a number of central aspirations, which it deemed as key to the community’s future. Two of those most relevant to the proposed project at Tioga include:

- Healthy and self-sustaining lakes, rivers, and natural rivers benefitting residents, visitors, and future generations.
- A trail system offering a variety of options for residents and visitors that accommodates bicycles,

snowmobiles, and pedestrians linking housing, recreational facilities, natural areas, and downtown centers within and near Cohasset.

In addition, within the natural resources section of Cohasset's Comprehensive Plan, Cohasset named a number of relevant policies. These include:

- Enhance opportunities for tourist recreation including passive recreation (hiking, skiing, bicycling, and paddling) and some more intensive recreation uses (snowmobiling, ATVing, and boating).
- Limit residential development or conversion of lands to non-natural resource uses, but expand and enhance passive and active recreational opportunities.
- Work with public and private entities to develop new trail systems within the natural resource area and connecting to residential areas in and adjacent to Cohasset.

Beyond the alignment of its Comprehensive Plan with the proposed development at the Tioga Recreation Area, Cohasset has documented success in administering and implementing large-scale projects. Currently, the city is working with multiple partners including the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Agency (IRRRB) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to construct a major expansion of the city's industrial park located just north of State Highway 2. Both the IRRRB and DEED have provided grants to help with project implementation.

In addition, Cohasset has obtained and administered funding from various partners to implement additional projects including commercial demolition, infrastructure construction, and housing development.

For the proposed project, Cohasset has been partnering with a variety of stakeholders since 2013. These include Itasca County, GRIMBA, the DNR, the Minnesota Office of School Trust Lands, the city of Grand Rapids, Get Fit Itasca, Visit Grand Rapids, the Itasca Trails Taskforce, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, and others. Cohasset representatives have regularly participated in committee meetings, have assisted in the research and development of grant applications, and have sought input and guidance on land use agreements, permitting, trail construction, mountain biking, and other topics from the relevant subject matter experts.

In addition, to ensure that the Tioga project achieves exceptional levels of quality and is implemented as responsibly, intentionally, and professionally as possible, Cohasset plans to contract with a number of outside vendors prior to and during construction. This will not only ensure that high levels of expertise are leveraged during the project, but will take some pressure off of volunteers.

Starting in August, the city is working with SEH Engineering to complete permitting including Wetlands and the Environmental Assessment Worksheet. In addition, the city and project committee will work with a consultant during the remainder of 2017 and early 2018 to finalize planning, process, team building, and design. This consultant will be a professional with long-standing expertise in trails, recreation, and project planning/management.

Cohasset will also hire a project manager to assist with on-the-ground, day-to-day management during trail construction. This will be a certified professional who has experience in the design and construction of best-practice-built trails. Cohasset will utilize two vendors for trail construction in order to ensure that different types of single-track trail are built by individuals with the requisite set of skills and experience. Other consultants will provide guidance and input regarding landscape architecture, additional engineering, and marketing.

Beyond the plans for assistance from outside vendors, Cohasset is seeking guidance and input about the project by connecting with others who have been closely involved in the development of single-track trail systems. City representatives recently met with Jim Schoberg, who is a project coordinator in Duluth's Parks and Rec Department. Jim has been closely involved with trail development in Duluth and provided Cohasset with advice on permitting and overall strategy. In addition, Cohasset representatives are meeting with Jeff

Staley, general manager at Detroit Mountain. Finally, Cohasset has been working closely with Peter Gustafson, who is a long-time mountain biker and works within the industry. Peter is a member of GRIMBA, lives in Grand Rapids, and works at mountain biking races and events around the world. He and other members of GRIMBA will provide on-site support during construction to help ensure that the completed trails are highly rideable and fun.

For the City of Cohasset, Max Peters, Director of City Operations and Finance Manager, and Jessica Piche, Assistant Finance Director, will administer the project. Max has been in his position for four years and has a professional background as an engineer and entrepreneur. He obtained a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from the University of Colorado – Boulder and a master's of business administration at the University of Minnesota – Carlson School of Management.

Jessica holds a bachelor of accountancy from North Dakota State University and worked as a staff accountant at B. Johnson and Associates in Brainerd from 2009 to 2013. She has been the assistant finance director in Cohasset since 2013 and has been involved with the Tioga project since the beginning. She has served as a city representative on the project committee, helped develop the contract for trail design, has written related grant applications, and has coordinated and managed various other project tasks.

Implementation Timeline

The single-track trail design for the Tioga Recreation Area was completed in spring 2017.

Currently, the city of Cohasset is working with SEH Engineering to complete the permitting process including Wetlands and an Environmental Assessment Worksheet. This process will be complete by spring 2018.

During the remainder of 2017 and early 2018, Cohasset will begin working with a consultant to refine and finalize project planning, process, team building, and design.

Cohasset is also working with Itasca County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to finalize lease agreements and undertake the permitting process. These tasks will be completed before construction begins in 2018.

It is anticipated that the Phase 2 project will begin in summer 2018 and will be finished by summer 2019. A grand opening will take place in late summer 2019.

It is the full intent of Cohasset to complete Phase 3 of the project as soon as is feasibly possible after Phase 2 is completed. Ideally, this work would begin by 2020 at the latest.

Design Standards

In order to ensure that the project meets current industry and state of Minnesota design standards, as well as any relevant ADA standards and state regulations, project implementation will be overseen by a committee consisting of representatives from the city, county, DNR, GRIMBA, and other stakeholders. This committee will review all design plans and will solicit input from outside experts as needed to ensure that all project components are fully compliant.

Specifically, to ensure environmental sensitivity and long-term sustainability:

- Trail construction will follow recommendations and guidelines as outlined in the MN DNR's Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines as well as Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Single-Track.
- A machine-build process will help avoid erosion and will promote long-term sustainability.
- The completed professional design will optimize available terrain while maximizing environmental sensitivity.
- State studies have already determined that the ore and timber resources are low in the Tioga area. These were referred to during trail design.
- Safety and liability concerns will be top-of-mind.

Other important design considerations:

- The new parking spaces, trailheads, and signage will minimize the impact of traffic and maximize safety along Tioga Beach Road.
- The recreation area is designed to be family friendly as well as cater to expert riders.
- Trail design will minimize noise and visual impact for neighboring residences.
- As feasible and appropriate, ADA accessibility will be incorporated.

The trail design for the single-track system at the Tioga Recreation Area was completed in spring 2017 by Trail Source, LLC. Trail Source was founded in 2001 by Tim Wegner, who is a long-time professional in the field of sustainable trail design. A member of the Professional Trail Builders Association, Wegner continually seeks out training opportunities in trail building dynamics. He also has a wide network of colleagues who build trails around the county and are versed in the best practices of sustainable trail design and construction.

Wegner has participated in more than a dozen trail building/design classes over the past 20 years. In addition, he has taught numerous classes on trail design in Minnesota. In the past 10 years, he has designed trails in Iowa, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Some of the more significant trails he has designed include Cuyuna, Lebanon Hills, Welch Village, Lake Marion, and Duluth Traverse Trail (Mission Creek area).

Project Cost Breakdown

The estimated costs for the Phase 2 project include:

Land lease fees \$60,000
Project management and marketing \$50,000
Green trails \$130,000
Blue trails \$150,000
Black trails \$75,000
Double black trails \$80,000
Trailhead \$25,000
Bike repair area \$5,000
Signage \$25,000
Fishing pier / beach \$69,700
Day use / picnic area \$100,000
Trail and changing shelters \$25,000
Existing trail improvement \$50,000
Tioga trail connection \$100,000
Parking lot improvements \$150,000

Total \$1,094,700

As described above, the Phase 2 project will result in a user-friendly, regionally substantial, and impactful component of the Master Plan for the Tioga Recreation Area. The full project cost (Phase 2 and Phase 3) is estimated at approximately \$2 million. These costs are detailed in the Master Plan, which was updated in July 2017. The updated number is approximately \$900,000 more than the budget that was originally included in the plan, however, it is more accurate as it includes construction estimates based on the completed trail design. It also allows for more robust improvement of existing amenities, which the project committee believes is necessary to create a high-quality recreation area.

Note: In 2016, the city of Cohasset received a grant of \$50,000 from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. This grant is being used for the permitting process and will also applied toward the additional planning, team building, design, and process work that is needed during the remainder of 2017 and early 2018.

Funding Request Breakdown

Please use valid currency formats (e.g. \$100,000/100,000/100000)

Grant Funding Request

\$750,000

Local Match #1

\$300,000

Funder #1

0

Local Match #2

\$17,500

Funder #2

0

Local Match #3

\$10,000

Funder #3

0

Local Match #4

\$17,200

Funder #4

0

Local Match #4

0

Funder #5

0

Non-Eligible Local Match

0

Non-Eligible Item Description

NA

Total Funding

\$1,094,700

Percentage of local match

0.31

Completion Timeframe

12

Funder #1

City of Cohasset

Funder #1 Resolutions

Cohasset Resolution

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Cohasset Resolution_ae0d20.pdf

Funder #2

Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board

Funder #2 Resolutions

IRRRB Contract

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/IRRRB Contract_2fde48.pdf

Funder #3

Itasca Trails Taskforce

Funder #3 Resolutions

Itasca Trails Taskforce Letter

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Itasca Trails Taskforce_ca5124.pdf

Funder #4

Local Donors

Funder #4 Resolutions

Local Donor Letters

http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Local Donor Letters_e24614.pdf

Funder #5

None

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
Funder Resolution One	Cohasset Resolution	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Cohasset Resolution_ae0d20.pdf
Funder Resolution Two	IRRRB Contract	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/IRRRB Contract_2fde48.pdf
Project Area Map	Project Area Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Tioga Recreation Area Existing Trails and Facilities_763f6c.pdf
Additional Attachment	Tioga Phase 2 Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Tioga Phase 2 Map_a8c2c0.pdf
Additional Attachment	Tioga Master Plan Map	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Tioga Master Plan Map_b780f4.pdf
Funder Resolution Three	Itasca Trails Taskforce Letter	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Itasca Trails Taskforce_ca5124.pdf
Funder Resolution Four	Local Donor Letters	http://dms.gmrptcommission.org/uploads/funding/17-0082-F/Local Donor Letters_e24614.pdf