



GREATER MINNESOTA REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION



Funding Guidelines and Criteria

March 2019

Introduction: The following document outlines the Commission's funding goals/considerations, application requirements, criteria, and eligibility lists. Only facilities that have been formally designated as Regionally Significant by the Commission are eligible for funding. Applications must be completed online at <http://www.gmrptcommission.org/applications.html>. For assistance contact the System Plan Coordinator at coordinator@gmrptcommission.org.

Considerations for Funding

The following considerations outline the Commission's goals for funded projects.

1. Requests are evaluated based on their ability to provide a high-quality experience, serve a regional population or visitor destination, enhance connectivity, fill a critical gap in a recreational opportunity and show a relationship to the Master Plan. Requests are further evaluated based on the applicant's response to the funding application requirements.
2. Takes advantage of one-time opportunities to expand or enhance an existing park or trail, or opportunities that may require larger-than-normal fund allocations.
3. The Four Legacy strategic directions (PILLARS) are given high consideration: connect people to the outdoors; acquire land, create opportunities; take care of what we have; coordinate among partners, i.e. funding matches, cooperative projects. Applications must align and clearly articulate their tie to one or more pillars.
4. Funding is further evaluated with regard to: connecting multiple destinations such as existing parks and trails; securing a critical piece of a trail system; investment in restoration of aging infrastructure; meeting Connecting People to the Outdoors criteria; and accessibility opportunities.
5. Take a balanced approach across the system to support a range of parks and trails needs—from acquisition, to development, to taking care of what we have, to restoration, and programming.
6. Selecting projects that meet the geographic diversity of the state, as well as leveraging other funding sources, should be taken into consideration; a local match is a significant factor in this consideration.
7. Project components that are ineligible costs will not be considered as a part of the funding request.
8. At the Commission's discretion, projects may be approved for grant funding that do not fit within current grant guidelines; innovation and exploring the potential to expand outdoor recreational user groups will be considered.

****Project Contract Deliverables Note****

Depending on your project, the following may be required

If funded, the grant contract will be executed by the DNR on behalf of the Commission. Therefore, all DNR contract requirements must be fulfilled and include, but are not limited to the following:

- Completion of an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS). Review of the project by the DNR's Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator.
- Compliance with water and wetlands regulations.
- Compliance with Minnesota EQB Environmental Review rules.
- Pre-approval of the project from the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office.
- For trails projects, a completed long term or permanent lease on land not owned by applicant.
- Provide as requested project status and final project reports to the DNR.
- NO funds may be expended until there is a fully executed contract. Work on the SHPO and Environmental Review may begin prior to contract execution.

More information on post-award requirements can be found at
www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/pt_legacy.html

Application Requirements

Applicants must address the following requirements in their funding application.

1. Describe how the project completes a regionally substantial or impactful component of the Master Plan.
2. Explain how the project fulfills any relevant pillars from the 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan. See tutorial for further definition.
 - Connect people to the outdoors
 - Acquire land, create opportunities
 - Take care of what we have
 - Coordinate among partners
3. The project budget must detail:
 - The full cost of the project
 - Grant request funds and where they will be applied
 - Grant match funds and where they will be applied
 - Non-eligible project expenses
 - Feasibility
 - Design / accepted standards / accessibility
 - Implementation
 - Project Lead
4. Applicants must describe how you will evaluate the outcomes of the project. What are the specific deliverables? How will the project be evaluated compared to the deliverables, i.e. the number of users who will benefit from this project/action, the quality of the facility, the impact of the repair or rehabilitation.

Required Attachments

- All funding applications must include an officially adopted resolution that meets Commission qualifications by their governing body. A template resolution is provided.
- For acquisitions, appraisals are required and must be performed by a qualified licensed appraiser and meet the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and the DNR Supplemental Appraisal and Appraisal Review Guidelines.
- A site design for the project must be completed and submitted with the application, per directions included under “Map and Site Plan Requirements”.

Building Plans – All buildings constructed with grant funds must meet the State Building Code.

Building plans are required for all proposed facilities to ensure the development addresses accessibility and design priorities. Plans must include the following:

1. Front and side views
2. A floor plan with all dimensions

Trail Plans – Trail plans are required for projects that include the development of any type of trail and should include the following:

1. A typical cross section of the trail
2. The trail width, surfacing and base materials

See the note on Americans with Disabilities Act compliance below.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: Grantees must comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the standards and guidelines listed below. In addition, all critical components must be made accessible even if they are not part of this proposal. Critical components include parking, restroom, drinking fountains and accessible routes to all facilities. This program requires all facility access routes to be a minimum of 5 feet wide.

The following documents are available from the U.S. Access Board at access-board.gov.

1. ADA Standards for Accessible Design, 2010 (For local government facilities and certain recreation facilities including playgrounds, recreational boating facilities, and fishing piers)
2. Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, 2013 (For outdoor developed areas such as campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, and beaches).

Scoring Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria.

1. Completes a regionally substantial component in the applicants Master Plan.
10 points
2. Fills a gap and provides an outdoor recreation benefit of regional significance for that district.
20 points
3. Is significantly linked to one or more of the four pillars in the 25-Year Legacy Plan.
20 points
4. Project is a critical acquisition or critical rehabilitation and repair of, but not limited to, a trail, facility or feature or provides significant recruitment, retention or reactivation of outdoor recreation participation.
15 points
5. Provides access to quality natural and cultural resources within the district.
10 points
6. Has a financial match. A higher match will receive greater point awards.

0 – 4%	match = 0 points
5 – 9%	match = 5 points
10 – 24%	match = 5 points
25% and up	match = 5 points
Maximum of 15 points	

- Includes a fully detailed budget and implementation plan.
10 points

Each item is a maximum of points and may be less depending upon the quality of the application. Top score is 100 points

Criteria for Connecting People to the Outdoors Projects

Connecting People to the Outdoors funding is available to cities and counties with regionally designated parks and trails. Funds may be used for agencies or contracts to deliver outdoor recreation programming based out of the regional park or trail.

- Scale and magnitude is sufficient to affect a significant number of active and potential program participants, park visitors and/or trail users; identifies projected number of active and potential program participants.
- Has attainable goals and objectives accompanied by a well-developed outreach and marketing plan
- Utilizes existing program models with a proven record of effectiveness and best practices, or melds successful models into new, innovative, or unique approaches with reasoned justification
- Is deliberate and intentional in inviting, welcoming, and engaging diverse populations, and has a well-developed plan to do so
- Identifies barriers to visitation/participation and has specific strategies to address them
- Enlists partners among community groups and recreation industry sectors for mutual benefit, to advance delivery strategies, and to maximize return on public investments
- Able to provide trained and effective leadership with the proven ability to deliver high-quality outdoor recreation experiences
- Demonstrates an enduring impact through short-term, intensive interventions, or has a plan for ongoing implementation outside of Legacy funding.
- Does not supplant existing local funding for existing programming.

Project Eligibility Guidelines

The following list of eligible and ineligible project components should guide all project requests. Only eligible components can apply for funding or be included as a match for the project budget. List is subject to change at any time. Contact staff if clarification on any component is needed.

Eligible Park Funding Projects

Including, but not limited to:

- Acquisition of land for future development of recreation facilities, protection/preservation of high value land for public use, critical park inholding
- Rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing facilities
- Development of outdoor recreation facilities – except those noted below as ineligible
- Accessibility enhancement
- Connect People to the Outdoors Programming

Eligible Recreation Facilities

Including, but not limited to:

- Water access sites
- Campgrounds and sewer to campsites within park boundaries
- Fishing piers and shore fishing areas
- Nature study, visitor center and observations areas
- Picnic shelters
- Nature scape playgrounds
- Swimming beaches, natural surfaced swimming ponds and splash parks with a regional setting
- Trails within park boundaries
- Shooting ranges

Eligible Recreation Support Facilities

These facilities are eligible for funding as a part of a grant application that includes at least one facility from the above list. Including, but not limited to:

- Changing rooms, restrooms, shower buildings and warming houses
- Fencing, lighting, interpretive signage both cultural and natural, and directional signage, not including monument signs and off site directional signs on road ways.
- Landscaping and natural area restoration
- Park roads and parking areas, but this may not exceed 40% of the total project cost
- Permanent benches, seats, drinking fountains, grills and picnic tables
- Trash receptacles and fire pits
- Walkways

Eligible Trail Funding Projects

Including, but not limited to:

- Land acquisition *refer to acquisition requirements
- Trail development and connections
- Trailhead improvements
- Accessibility enhancement
- Motorized trail development
- Construction of trails on public or private lands where a minimum of a 20-year easement must be obtained
- Restoration of existing trail facilities; resurfacing and trail repair or trailhead restoration
- Construction or restoration of trail bridges
- Natural resource restoration along trails

Eligible Park and Trail Reimbursement Expenses

Including, but not limited to:

- Materials and supplies
- Design, engineering and construction management costs, provided they do not exceed 20% of the total cost of the trail project or 10% of the cost of the park project
- Construction labor
- Equipment costs related to rental, not purchase of equipment for construction
- Land acquisition, including permanent easements and long-term lease agreements

Ineligible Park and Trail Projects and Reimbursement Expenses

Ineligible park facilities, amenities and costs are items that may not be funded by a GMRPTC grant or included as part of a local match. Including, but not limited to:

- Construction of any facility on land not owned. Construction of a trail not having a 20-year lease agreement
- Construction of ballfields or soccer fields
- Construction projects within state parks, state recreation areas and state trails
- Administration expenses – examples include:
 - Appraisals
 - Closing Costs
 - Boundary Surveys
 - Archeological Surveys
- Design and engineering expense in excess of 10% for park projects and 20% for trail projects
- Concession only buildings
- Decorative fountains, statues and plaques
- Facilities not available for public use
- Dredging, water impoundments and dams
- Golf courses
- Indoor recreational facilities
- Acquisition of land already in public ownership
- Legal fees
- Non-permanent skate park ramps and equipment
- Press boxes
- Hard structure playground
- Memberships
- Overhead
- Insurance
- Fund raising
- Volunteer or donated labor
- Bad debt, interest or contingency funds
- Lobbyists or political contributions
- Condemnation costs
- Wages and expenses of grant recipient's employees
- Entertainment or gifts
- Advertising expenses
- Office rental costs and overhead
- Any expenditure that occurs outside the dates of the grant contract
- Maintenance equipment
- Improvements to highways or roadways, including but not limited to lighting, striping on street/road routing and shoulder work

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