



## Funding Guidelines and Criteria

January 2018

**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](mailto: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.
- NO funds may be expended until there is a fully executed contract.

## **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.
  - 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.

## 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  
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
7. 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
- 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

## **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

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### **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

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