

APPENDIX B

Funding Opportunities for Parks And Recreation

A wide variety of grants are available that could provide financial aid for land acquisition, easement acquisition, trail and corridor development. These funds are applicable to several of the recommendations for Parks and Recreation. Purchase of additional parkland, development of the River Trail, and maintenance of stream banks within park facilities are possible through the funding opportunities described below. Specific programs listed in this section are available through the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department, the Chester County Conservation District, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Chester County Parks and Recreation Department

The Chester County Heritage Park and Open Space Municipal Grant Program offers three different grants that are applicable to parks, and the construction of a pedestrian trail:

The Park Land and Open Space Acquisition Grant reimburses a maximum of 50 percent of the approved cost up to \$250,000 for fee simple property acquisition or easement purchase projects.

The Park Facilities Grant reimburses park facility improvements up to 50 percent of a project's cost up to a maximum of \$250,000.

The Greenways Grant reimburses a maximum of 50 percent of the approved cost up to \$150,000 for greenway acquisitions, access facilities, or biodiversity improvement projects for single municipality applicants. Multi-municipal projects are eligible for reimbursement of a maximum of 50 percent of the project costs up to \$200,000.¹ The County Parks and Recreation Department is located in the Government Services Center at 601 Westtown Road, West Chester. The Department phone number is 610-344-6415. The County Website is www.ChesCo.org

Chester County Conservation District

The Conservation District is a Federal program that is administered at the County level. Two grants are available to provide funding for the protection of greenways and for stream bank improvements.

The first grant provides funding for easements up to 85 percent although there is no local match so the municipality would have to bear the remaining 25 percent through its own provisions or other sources.

The second option is a grant that provides 75 percent of costs for streambank or corridor improvements. There is a limit of \$100,000 per property and municipalities are eligible for this funding. This grant can be used for a variety of purposes from streambank stabilization to re-vegetation of the stream corridor. The 25 percent match can be provided by the municipality in the form of capital or by other means such as volunteer labor. For example, a mutually agreed upon rate for a worker could be considered and the number of volunteer hours calculated to provide the amount necessary to fulfill the 26 percent match. The Conservation District phone number is 610-696-5126.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Grants

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources administers a federally funded program. This program, the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program, provides funding for construction and restoration of recreational trails, acquisition of property or easements, trail maintenance and

¹ Chester County Parks and Recreation Department Grant Manuals

educational activities. Grants of \$2,500 to \$100,000 are awarded with a 20 percent match required from the applicant. The application deadline is typically mid-Fall. More information is available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

The Keystone Planning Implementation and Technical Assistance Program (PITA) provides funding for projects that involve planning and feasibility studies for open space and recreation projects. There are three separate programs that offer a range of grants to meet different objectives. Rails-to-Trails and Rivers Conservation Grants are available to municipalities and non-profit organizations. The Community Grant Program is limited to municipalities. Park and recreation commissions, planning commissions and sports organizations are not eligible for funding. All grants require a 50 percent match and all but one have no maximum. The various grants are listed below. More information is available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

The Keystone Acquisition and Development Grant Program provides funding for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of park and recreation facilities, rails-to-trails projects, and river conservation projects. There are three separate programs. All grants require a 50 percent match by the applicant and all but one have no maximum. Rails-to-Trails and Rivers Conservation Grants are available to municipalities and non-profit organizations. The Community Grant Program is limited to municipalities. Park and recreation commissions, planning commissions and sports organizations are not eligible for funding. These are described in more detail below. More information is available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

Federal Highway Administration Funding Programs

The Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program is a reimbursement program where the federal government will fund up to 80 percent of a project once it is completed. Two of the twelve funding categories for TE provide funding for bicycle or pedestrian trails. The “Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles” provides for funding acquisition, development and construction of new facilities for pedestrian or bicycle use, or for improving existing facilities. These funds are available to municipal governments and non-profit organizations. Application deadlines are typically mid-Fall.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program is a reimbursement program where the federal government will fund up to 80 percent of a project once it is completed. This program is administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in southeastern Pennsylvania. One of the sixteen funding categories provides for the establishment of bicycle or pedestrian trails. The “Bicycle and pedestrian projects” category provides for a range of activities including construction of path tracks or areas for the use of pedestrian or other non-motorized modes of transportation. Funding is available for any public agency, incorporated private firms, and non-profit entities. The application deadline is typically mid-fall.

Details Of State Grants

PITA Programs and Grants

Community Grants Program

Circuit Rider Grant - Funding to hire full-time recreation, park and/or conservation directors to share services with two or more municipalities, for four years.

Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans Grant - Funding for a comprehensive long-range planning document that provides strategies for a municipality's recreation and open spaces needs.

Conservation/Sound Land Use Grant - Funding for studies that advance conservation or sound land use planning, or studies that make recommendations to implement sound land use in existing plans.

Feasibility Studies Grant (Swimming Pools/Recreational Facilities) - Funding to determine the feasibility of acquiring, developing, or rehabilitating swimming pools, ice rinks, etc.

Greenway Plans Grant - Funding to explore establishing, developing and managing linear corridor of open space along streams, canals, ridge tops, etc., for use as recreational trails environmental protection.

Master Plan Sites Grant - Funding to develop site-specific designs, but not construction drawings, for proposed development of a neighborhood, community or regional park on land already owned or leased.

County Natural Areas Inventories Grant - Funding to inventory important natural areas, habitats for species of special concern, significant natural plant communities, and other open space and recreational areas.

Peer-Peer Technical Assistance Grant - Funding of studies of problem-specific issues dealing with the administration of recreation, park and conservation service and facilities.

Rails-to-Trails Grant Program

Rail-Trail Feasibility Studies Grant - Funding for studies to determine the feasibility of converting an available rail road right-of-way to a trail. Property ownership is not required.

Rail-Trail Master Plans Grant - Funding to develop a design detailing the proposed development of a rail-trail. Property ownership or a long-term lease is required.

Rail-Trail Special Purpose Studies - Funding for detailed studies on particular issues or structures (culverts, bridges, tunnels) in a rail corridor. Property ownership or a long-term lease is required.

Rivers Conservation Grant Program

Rivers Conservation Plans - Funding to study watersheds, rivers, creeks and streams to identify significant to potential threats and recommend restoration, maintenance or enhancement actions.

Rivers Implementation Projects - Funding to resolve specific issues for a river on the PA Rivers Conservation Registry, such as river access and the preparation of zoning documents.

Keystone Acquisition and Development Programs and Grants

Community Grants Program

Acquisition Grant - Funding for the purchase of land for park, recreation and conservation purposes, including the expansion of existing sites.

Park Rehabilitation and Development Grant - Funding for the rehabilitation of existing parks, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, and development of new park and recreation areas.

Small Communities/Small Projects Grant - Funding for projects, for the material costs and professional design fees required for the rehabilitation and development of basic outdoor park and recreation facilities and minor indoor recreation facilities. Funding is limited to municipalities with a population of 5,000 or less.

Rails-to-Trails Grant Program

Rails-to-Trails Acquisition Grant - Funding for the purchase of abandoned railroad right-of-way for public recreational use, and purchase of adjacent land for access or related support facilities.

Rails-to-Trails Rehabilitation and Development Projects Grant - Funding for the rehabilitation and development of abandoned right-of way and support facilities for recreational use.

Rivers Conservation Grant Program

Rivers Conservation Acquisition Projects Grant - Funding for the purchase of land for rivers conservation purposes. The purchase must be recommended in an approved Rivers Conservation Plan, and lie within river segments or water shed listed on the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry.

Rivers Conservation Development Projects Grant - Funding for the development of river conservation projects. The conservation project must be recommended in an approved Rivers Conservation Plan, and lie within river segments or water shed listed on the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry.