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Application for Land Acquisition Assistance

**Overview:**

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota’s (P&TC) mission is *“To acquire, protect and enhance critical lands for the public’s use and benefit.”* This application is for use by agencies or other party (i.e., advocacy or “friends” group) to apply for assistance in acquiring a parcel of land for park or trail purposes. The application, plus any additional follow up by P&TC, will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant’s acquisition initiative aligns with P&TC’s *Strategic Land Acquisition Plan.*

P&TC’s *Strategic Land Acquisition Plan* defines several land acquisition categories and associated criteria to identify and rank land acquisition projects of merit. The plan was adopted by P&TC in early 2012. The entire plan is available at: [www.parksandtrails.org](http://www.parksandtrails.org). Applicants are encouraged to review the plan to gain additional insights into P&TC’s strategic priorities.

P&TC staff are available to discuss your project or review your application materials. For assistance, please contact:

* Brett Feldman, Executive Director ([bfeldman@parksandtrails.org](mailto:bfeldman@parksandtrails.org); 651.726.2457) or
* Steve Young, Land Acquisition Consultant ([land@parksandtrails.org](mailto:land@parksandtrails.org); 651.726.2457)

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to: [land@parksandtrails.org](mailto:land@parksandtrails.org). Subject line should include: *Application for Land Acquisition Assistance*. Submittals should be in both Word and PDF format. Hard copies submittals will also be accepted if electronic submittal is not available.

**Steps in the Application Process:**

The application process includes the following steps, each of which must be completed to the best of applicant’s ability:

**Step 1:** Complete application summary information section

**Step 2:** Determine land acquisition category and complete the appropriate section describing alignment with first tier evaluation criteria

**Step 3:** Complete the appropriate section describing alignment with second tier evaluation criteria

**Step 4:** Complete additional information section and provide required attachments

**Step 5:** Submit completed application to P&TC

**Step 1: Application Summary Information**

**Contact Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant organization: |  |
| Contact person: |  |
| Title: |  |
| Mailing address: |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Cell phone: |  |
| Email: |  |

**Project Narrative:**

|  |
| --- |
| *Provide an overview of the project – including a description, map, public need/benefit statement, how it complements other parks/trails in community/region, land history, project timeline, and project readiness (what needs to happen before land is acquired; e.g., permits, approvals, etc.).* |
|  |

**General Project Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project name: |  |
| County: |  |
| Parcel # |  |
| Property Owner’s name: |  |
| Property Owner’s address: |  |
| Property Owner’s phone/cell: |  |
| Property Owner’s email: |  |
| Estimated project cost: | $ |
| Amount requested: | $ |
| Intended Ultimate Owner |  |
| Is there a local match or other source of funding? *If yes, describe amount, source and whether it has been secured.* |  |
| If request is for parkland, indicate acres to be acquired: |  |
| If request is for new trail acquisition, indicate estimated length or acres: |  |
| Acquisition type: | ☐ Fee Simple ☐ Easement ☐ Other (describe): |
| Acquisition method: | ☐ Purchase ☐ Donation ☐ Combination (describe): |
| Legal description of land: | County: Section:  Township: Range: |

**Step 2: Determine land acquisition category and complete the appropriate section describing alignment with *first tier* criteria**

As defined in P&TC’s *Strategic Land Acquisition Plan* there are three land acquisition categories, as the following summarizes.

**Choose one category below that best fits your project, and then complete the first tier criteria relating to that category in the proceeding pages:**

☐ Category #1 – Trail-Related Land Acquisition

Focus is on providing high quality trail experiences close to densely settled, rapidly growing, and/or an established regional centers or tourist destination. All trails considered under this category must be part of an adopted or approved state or regional-level trail system plan to ensure an initial level of scrutiny.

☐ Category #2 – Park In-Holding-Related Land Acquisition

Focus is on park in-holding-related land acquisition in situations where the relative threat of opportunity lost is great, with particular emphasis (but not exclusive) on park areas near densely settled, rapidly growing, and/or established regional centers. All parks considered under this category must be part of an adopted or approved state or regional-level system plan to ensure an initial level of scrutiny. Land acquisition initiatives pertaining to boundary adjustments can also be considered as long as the adjustment is ultimately formally included in the adopted plan for the park.

☐ Category #3 – New/Unique/Innovative Park and Trail- Related Initiatives

Focus is on new, unique, or innovative park and trail initiatives that provide P&TC and its public and non-public partners an opportunity to explore new ways to expand participation in outdoor recreation by either building upon a growing success or fostering new or innovative initiatives that support changing trends and fills a definable gap in service. Preserving a unique natural resource not otherwise covered under the other two categories can also be considered. Although initiatives under this category do not necessarily have to be part of an adopted or approved state or regional-level system plan, ultimate support by the affected agency partner will be a significant consideration.

First tier criteria are unique to the selected category and focus on establishing the overall merit of an initiative relative to key value indicators. A weighted scoring approach will be used by P&TC determine overall scores and, ultimately, ranking of projects.

*Contact P&TC staff if you have any questions regarding which category your project fits into.*

**Category #1 – Trail-Related Land Acquisition**

**First Tier Criteria**

*Complete the following section only if your project falls into this category. Select only one category!*

The following lists and describes first tier criteria for trail-related land acquisition. *In the accompanying boxes, describe how your project addresses the criteria.*

|  |
| --- |
| Criteria #1: **Provides a high-quality “destination” trail experience** – features include high quality natural/scenic setting, safe, convenient, and with limited interruptions |
|  |
| Criteria #2: Well-located – in or close to a densely settled, rapidly growing, and/or an established regional center or well-established tourist destination |
|  |
| **Criteria #3:** Enhances connectivity – with emphasis on completing missing links in established systems, or adding a trail in underserved areas; sub-criteria includes:  • Connection to communities (schools, work, business districts)  • Connection with existing state trails and/or regional trails  • Connection with parks, recreation facilities and natural resources  • Connection to multiple destinations  • Filling a critical gap in an area with a trail-related recreation opportunity shortage |
|  |
| **Criteria #4:** Threat of opportunity lost **–** with priority given to time-sensitive factors such as development pressure, threat of significantly escalating land values, land owner interest in selling or making a donation, or other discernible threats/opportunities |
|  |

Category #2 – Park In-Holding-Related Land Acquisition

**First Tier Criteria**

*Complete the following section only if your project falls into this category. Select only one category!*

The following lists and describes first tier criteria for park in-holding-related land acquisition. *In the accompanying box, describe how your project addresses the criteria.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Criteria #1: Threat of opportunity lost** – priority given to time-sensitive factors such as development pressure, threat of significantly escalating land values, land owner interest in selling or making a donation, or other discernible immediate threats/opportunities |
|  |
| Criteria #2: **Well-located** – in or close to a densely settled, rapidly growing, and/or an established regional center or *well-established* tourist destination, with an emphasis on meeting local needs |
|  |
| **Criteria #3: Preserves natural diversity and provides natural resource/conservation value** – with emphasis on ecologically rare or important parcels, such as unique landscapes and wildlife habitats, endangered species; emphasizes water quality-related and historically/culturally significant lands: also focuses on connectivity of natural lands and habitats |
|  |
| **Criteria #4: Fills a land gap to improve parkland continuity and/or provide space for high value end-uses** –which pertains to in-holding lands that are important to the continuity of a park and/or enhances connections between existing park units; also relates to lands that provide space for high value outdoor recreation, education, health/wellness, social/cultural end-uses, with an emphasis on underserved locations and/or populations |
|  |

Category #3 – New/Unique/Innovative Park and Trail- Related Initiatives

**First Tier Criteria**

*Complete the following section only if your project falls into this category. Select only one category!*

The following lists and describes first tier criteria for new/unique/innovative park and trail-related land acquisition. *In the accompanying box, describe how your project addresses the criteria.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Criteria #1:** Provides a high-quality outdoor recreation experience – with an emphasis on activities that broaden the appeal of parks and trails to new or expanded user groups/populations; fills a discernible and critical gap in an area with a recreation opportunity shortage; supports a unique opportunity or experience; enhances connectivity; requires a higher level of evaluation and scrutiny to confirm viability of the proposed recreational use(s)  **and/or ...**  Preserves natural diversity and provides natural resource/conservation value – with emphasis on ecologically rare or important parcels, such as unique landscapes and wildlife habitats, endangered species; emphasizes water quality-related and historically/culturally significant lands: also focuses on connectivity of natural lands and habitats |
|  |
| Criteria #2: Appropriate size and scale – with a focus on facilities that are best accommodated at a state or regional park or trail level; requires a higher level of evaluation and scrutiny to confirm that recreational use(s) is compatible with park policy and resource protection |
|  |
| **Criteria #3:** Well-located – in or close to a densely settled, rapidly growing, and/or an established regional center or well-established tourist destination is still preferred; however, in this category, well-located might also relate to a site-specific land resource that is uniquely suited for the proposed recreational end use; new initiatives that enhance connectivity also fall under this criteria |
|  |
| Criteria #4: Support from grassroots and/or established advocacy group(s) – must have evidence of local momentum, advocacy, grassroots support, and “boots on the ground;” must have a defined/designated project leader and/or “friends of” group; also must provide evidence that grassroots effort is supported by local community leaders to enhance prospects for ongoing success; this includes providing an individual responsible to lead the project and/or serve as liaison to P&TC for the duration of the initiative |
|  |

**Step 3: Complete the appropriate section describing alignment with *second tier* evaluation criteria**

Second tier criteria focus on discerning factors related to feasibility, commitment of partners, grassroots support, funding potential, etc. that P&TC feels are required for an initiative to be successful. Although second tier criteria are non-scored per se, they will influence whether an initiative is a “go/no-go” or “knocked-out” of consideration due to questions about feasibility. *Importantly, whereas second tier criteria factor into deciding the viability of an initiative, first tier criteria are the primary means by which the merit of an initiative is judged and further considered by P&TC for supporting.* Second tier criteria are common for categories 1 and 2, but differ for category 3.

Categories #1 & #2 – Trail-Related Land Acquisition & Park In-Holding-Related Land Acquisition

**Second Tier Criteria**

*Please complete the following section only if your project falls into one of these two categories.*

*In the accompanying box, describe how your project meets the criteria.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Criteria #1:** Baseline feasibility – with a focus on the following key factors:  • Extent to which land owners are willing participants and/or sellers  • Resources required from P&TC (acquisition and holding costs)  • Prospects for capital reimbursement and long-term funding – acquisition through development and maintenance |
|  |
| Criteria #2: Support from grassroots and/or established advocacy group(s) – primarily used to separate closely scored initiatives, in which having local grassroots support can help move the initiative forward, and foster P&TC’s cause |
|  |
| **Criteria #3:** Commitment from project partners at agency level – relates to extent to which an agency can fulfill its role in collaborating with P&TC to move the initiative forward (i.e., commitment of staff time, willingness to commit via formal agreement/letter of interest, etc.) |
|  |
| **Criteria #4:** Designated and committed project lead – relates to extent to which an agency or designated support group can fully commit to and provide an individual responsible to lead the project and/or serve as liaison to P&TC for the duration of the initiative |
|  |
| **Criteria #5:** Fund-raising potential – considers the potential to support the initiative through fund raising activities with project partners |
|  |

Category #3 – New/Unique/Innovative Park and Trail- Related Initiatives

**Second Tier Criteria**

*Please complete the following section only if your project falls into this category.*

*In the accompanying box, describe how your project meets the criteria.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Criteria #1:** Baseline feasibility – with a focus on the following key factors:  • Extent to which land owners are willing participants and/or sellers  • Resources required from P&TC (acquisition and holding costs)  • Prospects for capital reimbursement and long-term funding – acquisition through development and maintenance |
|  |
| Criteria #2: Support and commitment from project partners at agency level – which will likely be gained through active participation in the evaluation process since at least some of these initiatives will be outside established plans |
|  |
| **Criteria #3:** Fund-raising potential – considers the potential to support the initiative through fund raising activities with project partners |
|  |

**Step 4: Complete general information section and provide required attachments**

The following pertains to providing additional general information about the project that will aid P&TC in its evaluation. Applicant should complete the forthcoming section to the extent possible.

**Basic land disclosure information:**

1. When did you acquire the property? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the subject property listed for sale? ☐Yes ☐No If yes, realtor name & phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Has the subject property been listed in the past 12 months? ☐Yes ☐No

4. Has the land been surveyed? ☐Yes ☐No

By Whom: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Is a copy available? ☐Yes ☐No

5. Are you aware of any property markers on the property? ☐Yes ☐No

6. To your knowledge are there any neighborhood boundaries or trespass concerns?

☐Yes ☐No If yes, please explain:

7. To your knowledge are there any easements? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

8. Have you given permission to anyone to use your land (i.e. hunting)? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

9. Are there any shared driveways? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

10. To your knowledge, does the property conform to current zoning? ☐Yes ☐No

If no, please explain:

11. Are you aware of any proposed zoning changes? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

12. Are there any structures or improvements included in the acquisition? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

13. Are there any problems or defects with any of these items? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

14. Were there any previous structures on the property? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

15. Are you aware of any gravel reserves on the property? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

16. Are there any buried storage tanks, debris or waste on the property? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

17. Are there any environmental concerns, hazardous or toxic substances or wastes in, on or affecting this property? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

18. Are you aware of any human remains, burials or cemeteries located on the property?

☐Yes ☐No If yes, please explain:

19. Are you aware of any methamphetamine production that has occurred on the property?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

20. Are you aware of anything else that may materially and adversely affect the property?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain:

21. Is there a private well? ☐Yes #\_\_\_\_ ☐No In use? ☐Yes ☐No Abandoned? ☐Yes ☐No

Sealed? ☐Yes ☐No (attach certificate)

22. Is there a septic system? ☐Yes ☐No In use? ☐Yes ☐No Abandoned? ☐Yes ☐No

Comments:

**Attachments:**

Applicant should provide the following, as reasonably available and pertinent:

☐ Complete legal description of acquisition, if it doesn’t fit in space provided

☐ Initial site assessment

☐ Hazardous waste location map, if applicable

☐ Improvement disposition sheet, if applicable

☐ Terms of easement or lease to be acquired

☐ Receipt for Landowners’ Bill of Rights

☐ Copy of Deed by which ownership was acquired

☐ Plat book map showing parcel and contiguous ownership, GIS Data Maps

☐ Sketch or survey of property, if available

☐ Aerial photo, if available

☐ Landowner contact documentation

For Water Access, Wildlife, Fisheries, Scientific & Natural Areas, and Forest Roads

☐ Project Proposal, if not on file at Division of Lands and Minerals

☐ Project Unit Map, if not on file at Division of Lands and Minerals

**Step 5: Submit the completed application to P&TC**

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to: [land@parksandtrails.org](mailto:land@parksandtrails.org). Subject line should include: *Application for Land Acquisition Assistance*. Submittals should be in both Word and PDF format.