

Park, Recreation, and Conservation – Planning Projects

This section provides more detailed information and guidance on projects involving planning. Planning projects "lay the groundwork" for future land acquisition, development and/or management of parks, recreational facilities, critical habitat, open space, natural areas, greenways, trails, and river/watershed corridors.

Ready-To-Go Checklist

This Checklist is to be used by the applicant to ensure the Planning Project is "Ready-To-Go". The items below need to be addressed, included and/or uploaded in the application. It will be used by DCNR in the grant application evaluation process. Only projects that are Ready-To-Go will be given consideration for grant awards. If you have questions regarding this Checklist, please contact the [DCNR Regional Advisor](#) assigned to the region in which your project is located.

*** Ready-to-Go Status is worth 15 points. It is essential to provide high quality, well-defined and/or detailed information for these items.**

Yes	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted Regional Advisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eligible Applicant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Applicant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eligible Project
*	<input type="checkbox"/> For Master Site Development Plans and Facility Rehabilitation Feasibility Studies: Applicant owns the project site or controls through a lease (minimum 25 years)
*	<input type="checkbox"/> Match secured and Letter of Match Commitment stating amount and source uploaded
*	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed list of eligible cash match and non-cash match included
*	<input type="checkbox"/> Realistic, accurate, and detailed cost estimate/budget outlining all cash costs and/or non-cash value uploaded
*	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear, concise, and detailed scope of work included
<input type="checkbox"/>	For Master Site Development Plans and New Facility Feasibility Studies: PA Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Receipt uploaded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accurate project site location map(s) uploaded (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	County/Municipal notification letter(s) uploaded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed the Sample Planning Project Timeline and agree that the project can be completed within 3 years from date of grant award
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of lease or easement uploaded (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	For River Conservation Plan (RCP): Letters of support are uploaded from more than 50% of municipalities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Properly completed Resolution Page uploaded

General Information and Funding Conditions

1. All facilities/sites planned with DCNR funding must serve a public purpose and help advance [DCNR goals](#) and [priorities](#). Applicants are encouraged to reinvest in existing park and recreation facilities.
2. All facilities/sites must be open for use by the public.
3. Applicants may not seek funding for the same site, in the same funding cycle, for both planning and development.
4. An application for the preparation of a master site development plan and/or feasibility study is limited to a single park/recreation facility. Funding will not be provided for these planning types at multiple parks/recreation facilities under a single grant application.
5. Match is required for all projects and is usually equal to the grant funds awarded (\$1 for \$1 match requirement). The local match may be eligible cash or non-cash.
6. If a project is selected for funding, DCNR will review the proposed cash and non-cash values and work items to determine eligibility. Adjustments to the proposed cash and non-cash values outlined in the application may be required.
7. Cash contributions being provided by other organizations to be used as a portion of the required local match should be transferred to the applicant/grantee to expend. If an outside organization/agency wishes to expend funds on behalf of the applicant/grantee, an agreement defining roles and responsibilities must be executed by all parties. Funds may include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, County Gaming funds, County Redevelopment Authority funds, etc. Draft Agreements should be provided to DCNR for review and approval prior to execution.
8. Planning projects generally entail the use of specialized consultants and expert professionals to work with local citizens and organizations to develop a community or regional-based plan and planning study report. Professional design consultants must be selected using a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The DCNR-approved RFP must be sent to at least five (5) consulting firms. The RFP provides a detailed Scope of Work and related requirements so that all firms are competing with the same information. Proposals from more than one consulting firm provide an opportunity to compare different approaches to the work, various cost proposals and the level of expertise of more than one firm. The firm selected through an RFP process does not have to be the one submitting the lowest cost proposal. The selected proposal must be cost-effective and responsive to the community and project needs.
9. Municipalities and non-profit organizations are encouraged to work together to form partnerships to develop regional plans. For regional, multi-municipal conservation, watershed, greenways or trails plans, applicants need to work with county government planning organizations to integrate new plan findings and recommendations into existing comprehensive plans and existing planning policy documents. County and local planning entities must be invited to participate in the planning process.

10. Applicants must include evidence that the municipality(ies) and county where the facility/site is being planned have had the opportunity to comment on the project proposal. As a general policy, DCNR will not approve grant funding where local elected officials have expressed opposition to the proposed project.
11. DCNR requires substantial public participation to fully engage to community throughout the planning process. Grantees must have a DCNR-approved public participation process that includes an active study committee, two (2) public meetings (one with elected officials), and citizen survey/key person interviews. Techniques are outlined in DCNR's *Public Participation Guide*.
12. For Master Site Development Plan and Facility Feasibility Study – Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or long-term lease agreement (minimum 25 years) with terms and provisions acceptable to DCNR. If the property is currently leased, a copy of the lease(s) must be included with the grant application. If the property will be leased, the applicant should discuss the terms of the lease with the DCNR Regional Advisor. A draft lease should be included with the grant application for review and approval by DCNR.
13. For facilities that serve both eligible and ineligible areas and/or uses, DCNR will determine their eligibility and calculate a prorated percentage of the support facility and/or area eligible for grant funding. The applicant/grantee should discuss this possibility with the DCNR Regional Advisor.
14. DCNR is a strong proponent of green and sustainable best management practices and encourage all applicants/grantees to incorporate appropriate practices into their projects.

Project Types

For the purposes of the grant application you are required to provide a brief project description. Applicants should review the following brief project descriptions to assure that the proposed project will address the elements required for the respective project type. The brief project description is a summary of the scope of work that will be developed if selected for funding. We suggest you review the document links provided at the end of this document to obtain a realistic cost estimate for your project type.

1. **Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan and/or Greenways Plan**

A professionally prepared municipal, county, or regional plan that identifies the methods, resources, organizational capacity, and capital investment required to accomplish both the short-term and long-term recreation and open space goals of the community. The planning process must include substantial public engagement, inventory of existing conditions and facilities, analysis of needs and issues, and specific recommendations that establish priorities, actions, and associated costs.

For plans that address community parks and recreation, at least one member of the consultant team must be a park and recreation practitioner with a minimum of three (3) years of experience or holding a Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification with a minimum of (1) one year of experience. Generally, the role of the practitioner is to advise the

grantee of current park and recreation management, operation, and maintenance practices and formulate appropriate recommendations.

For plans that address greenways, County Greenway Plans will serve as a foundation for developing local greenways.

SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

- Prepare a Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan for Easton City, Northampton County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare an update to the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan for Monroe County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare a Greenways and Open Space Plan for Concord Township, Delaware County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare a multi-regional Greenway and Stewardship Plan for the Central Perkiomen Valley, Upper Perkiomen Valley, Indian Valley and Pottstown Metropolitan regions in western Montgomery County. Work to include an electronic written report.

2. Master Site Development Plan

A professionally prepared site-specific plan that includes analysis of site information, activities, facilities, maintenance, and operations. The planning process must include substantial public involvement, inventory of existing conditions and facilities, analysis of needs and issues, and specific recommendations that establish priorities, actions, and associated costs. These studies lead to completion of a report and site development drawing in conformance with current design standards and cost estimates for the full development or redevelopment of a park or other recreational site.

Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or long-term lease agreement (minimum 25 years) with terms and provisions acceptable to DCNR. If the property is currently leased, a copy of the lease(s) must be included with the grant application. If the property will be leased, the applicant should discuss the terms of the lease with the DCNR Regional Advisor. A draft lease should be included with the grant application for review and approval by DCNR.

The study/report narrative must address compliance with the 1990 American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

DCNR requires that the Master Site Development Plan, including the maps and report, be under seal of a licensed professional who is authorized by Pennsylvania law to apply the seal. Depending on the project, the professional could be a landscape architect, architect, or engineer.

SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

- Prepare a Master Site Development Plan for the 71-acre Scott Park in Scott Township, Allegheny County. Work to include an electronic written report and site development drawing.
- Prepare a Master Site Development Plan for the 30-acre Kuhn's Woods Park in East Berlin Borough, Adams County. Work to include an electronic written report and site development drawing.

3. Feasibility Study

Swimming Pool Complex Feasibility Study

A professionally prepared study to determine community support, market characteristics, physical/structural assessment and the legal and financial capability to acquire, develop or rehabilitate, manage and sustain a swimming pool complex. A swimming pool complex includes the pool, bath house, concession, parking, and other site amenities. Completion of a Swimming Pool Complex Feasibility Study is required for submission of a development grant application.

Indoor Recreation Facility Feasibility Study

A professionally prepared study to determine community support, market characteristics, physical/structural assessment and the legal and financial capability to acquire, develop or rehabilitate, manage and sustain an indoor recreation facility. Examples include a community recreation center, vacant school building, indoor swimming pool, gym, indoor sports complex or indoor ice rink. Completion of an Indoor Recreation Facility Feasibility Study is required for submission of a development grant application

General Information

Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or long-term lease agreement (minimum 25 years) with terms and provisions acceptable to DCNR. If the property is currently leased, a copy of the lease(s) must be included with the grant application. If the property will be leased, the applicant should discuss the terms of the lease with the DCNR Regional Advisor. A draft lease should be included with the grant application for review and approval by DCNR.

The study/report narrative must address compliance with the 1990 American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

DCNR requires that the plan/report be under seal of a licensed professional who is authorized by Pennsylvania law to apply the seal. Depending on the project, the professional could be a landscape architect, architect, or engineer.

For new recreation facilities, at least one member of the consultant team must be a recreation and parks practitioner, preferably holding a Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification with a minimum of three (3) years of experience in managing the type of facility under study.

SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

New Facility:

- Prepare a Feasibility Study for development of a multi-municipal outdoor swimming pool for Huntingdon Borough, Oneida Township, Smithfield Township, and Walker Township, Huntingdon County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare a Feasibility Study for development of a Manheim Regional Community Center, Lancaster County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare a Feasibility Study for a municipal skate park in Brookville Borough. Work to include an electronic written report.

Existing Facility:

- Prepare a Feasibility Study for the rehabilitation of Coudersport Borough Municipal Swimming Pool, Potter County. Work to include an electronic written report.
- Prepare a Feasibility Study for the rehabilitation of WCCRA Recreation Center in Renovo Borough, Clinton County. Work to include an electronic written report.

4. Conservation, Management, and/or Stewardship Plan

A professionally prepared plan consisting of inventory, analysis and recommendations to establish acquisition priorities and/or a long-term management plan for the preservation and environmental protection of specific natural areas or important environmental aspects of specific regions. These studies typically include substantial research conducted by experts in critical habitat identification and assessment and substantial mapping of sensitive environmental and important habitat areas.

Conservation plans include projects that develop plans for the conservation of open space, natural resources and agricultural land utilizing aggressive land use control and land development techniques. This may include the development of these plans or, for example, the development of zoning and subdivision regulations that truly integrate conservation and sound land use concepts into these regulations and foster the implementation of existing plans.

For plans that include a master site development plan, the property must be owned or controlled by the applicant/grantee. Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or long-term lease agreement (minimum 25 years) with terms and provisions acceptable to DCNR. If the property is currently leased, a copy of the lease(s) must be included with the grant application. If the property will be leased, the applicant should discuss the terms of the lease with the DCNR Regional Advisor. A draft lease should be included with the grant application for review and approval by DCNR.

SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

- Prepare a Land Conservation and Stewardship Plan for the 1,058-acre Camp Kresge in Dennison Township, Luzerne County. Work to include an electronic written report.

- Prepare a Conservation and Landscape Management Plan for the 48-acre Curtis Arboretum in Cheltenham Township, Montgomery County. Work to include an electronic written report.

5. Rivers Conservation Plan

A professionally prepared comprehensive watershed or river corridor-based study requiring an inventory of existing natural, recreational and cultural resources; analysis of the issues, concerns and threats to river resources; and specific recommendations that establish actions, priorities and costs. These studies lead to the development of a long-term watershed or river corridor management program.

River Conservation studies are multi-community in scope and often undertaken in cooperation with non-profit organizations. The planning process includes substantial citizen involvement and identifies key organizations and individuals that can assist in the establishment of a watershed or river corridor plan.

This program is open to non-profit and municipal entities. However, non-profit organizations are encouraged to partner with a municipal entity to develop and execute this type of project. A resolution from at least one municipality and resolutions or support letters from at least 50% of the affected municipalities in the proposed study area are required. For more information, reference the Rivers Projects section of the grant manual.

SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

- Prepare a Watershed Conservation Plan for the Saucon Creek Watershed from the headwaters to its confluence with the Lehigh River in Bucks, Lehigh and Northampton counties. Work to include a written, bound report.
- Develop a Rivers Conservation Plan for the Sugar Creek and Towanda Creek Watersheds in Bradford, Tioga and Sullivan counties. Work to include a written, bound report.

Resources

The following resources may be helpful for developing a competitive Grant Application.

[Grant Program – Grant Management Documents](#)

- Consultant Qualifications – Land Conservation, Rivers and Watershed Plans
- Consultant Qualifications – Planning Grant Projects
- General Information & Scope of Work Guidelines
 - Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan
 - Indoor Recreation Facility - Feasibility Study
 - Swimming Pool Complex - Feasibility Study
 - Greenway Plan
 - Master Site Development Plan
 - Municipal Greenways and Open Space Network Plan
 - Rivers Conservation Plan
- Planning Grant Administrative Instructions & Process

- Public Participation Guide
- Resolution for Listing on Pennsylvania Rivers Registry
- Rivers Conservation Program Guidelines
- Rivers Conservation Registry Petition
- Sample Estimated Planning Project Timeline

Grant Program – Policies

- ADA Policy
- Planning Eligible and Ineligible Grant Project Activities/Costs Policy
- Greening Policy
- Ownership and Control Policy
- PNDI Policy
- Planning Project Management Process Policy
- Waiver for Retroactivity Policy