**PROJECT TITLE: Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail – West Segment**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Otter Tail County is requesting LCCMR funding for the West Segment (6.83 miles) of the 32-mile Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail that will connect the two communities via Maplewood State Park. The trail master plan can be reviewed here: <https://ottertailcountymn.us/project/perham-to-pelican-rapids-trail>. The West Segment will connect the City of Pelican Rapids to Maplewood State Park. The park is a significant destination for residents and visitors alike. Maplewood State Park hosted over 154,000 visitors in 2017 with attendance trends on the rise. There is not currently a safe, non-motorized transportation alternative from Maplewood State Park to any local communities, including Pelican Rapids.

Alignment with LCCMR Funding Priorities

Section G (i.e. Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation) - This proposal specifically aims to expand outdoor recreational opportunities by connecting the community of Pelican Rapids to Maplewood State Park via a 6.83-mile recreational trail. It will also expand existing state trail systems by connecting the Central Lakes and Heartland Trails in the future. Otter Tail County is in a beautiful part of Minnesota with an abundance of lakes, wetlands, rolling hills and agricultural areas. Outdoor recreation is an important part of the quality of life and the tourism economy in Otter Tail County.

Section C (i.e. Environmental Education) – This proposal significantly improves access to outdoor recreational opportunities to diverse and changing populations. Racial and ethnic minority populations tend to participate less in most nature-based outdoor recreation activities, including visiting state parks and trails. In fact, according to a DNR report, only 2.8 percent of state park visitors identified themselves as non-white. Pelican Rapids is the most diverse community in Otter Tail County and one of the most diverse rural communities in Minnesota. Over 46% of the residents of Pelican Rapids identify as persons of color and 62% of the population are non-native English speakers. This project will afford outdoor recreational opportunities to members of racially and ethnically diverse cultures who have not traditionally benefited from the park’s facilities and resources.

Regional Significance

The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail has been designated “regionally significant” by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. The trail will fill a critical gap in the state and regional trail system by eventually connecting the Central Lakes Trail to the Heartland Trail. Both existing state trails are located within or adjacent to Otter Tail County. Their connection will create one of the most impressive trail systems in the country, incorporating some of Minnesota’s most popular recreational communities and parks.

Local Investment

There is currently considerable momentum for the Perham to Pelican Rapids Trail. The East Segment has been funded and construction will begin this year. The planning, detailed engineering and property acquisition for the Silent Lakes and McDonald Segments of the trail is also underway. Furthermore, the City of Pelican Rapids recently completed an expansion of their city-wide trail system. This newly constructed trail will connect directly to the 6.83-mile West Segment of the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail.

Prompted by the momentum and support for the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail, Otter Tail County developed a County-Wide Trail Master Plan, of which the Perham to Pelican Regional Trail is an integral component. The master trail plan (<https://ottertailcountymn.us/project/trail-master-plan>) provides a long-term vision for the establishment of various trail types within Otter Tail

County.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1 Title:** Perham to Pelican Rapids (West Segment) Trail Development

**Description:**LCCMR funding will be used to construct a 10-foot wide multi-use trail from the south end of the City of Pelican Rapids south along Trunk Highway (TH) 59 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 3, and then east on CSAH 3 to the west boundary of Maplewood State Park (see Attachment B). The proposed project will run parallel along TH 59 and CSAH 3 and link to the newly constructed Pelican Rapids Trail in Pelican Rapids. The LCCMR funding will be used for planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, paving, rest stops, signage, a trail head with parking, benches, bicycle racks and trash receptacles.

**ENRTF BUDGET: $2,836,000**

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| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1. Planning and detailed engineering to finalize exact trail routing and develop detailed construction plans for 6.83 miles of trail from Pelican Rapids to Maplewood State Park* | *1/1/2022* |
| *2. Acquisition of permanent easements from approximately 38 parcels of land along the trail route.* | *7/1/2022* |
| *3. Competitively bid and construct a 10-foot-wide, 6.83-mile bituminous trail and associated amenities from Pelican Rapids to Maplewood State Park* | *6/30/2023* |

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:**

Otter Tail County, the Cities of Perham and Pelican Rapids, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the West Central Initiative and the PartnerSHIP4Health worked together to develop the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan. The Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail master planning process evoked rousing support for the trail among residents and businesses, and unanimous support from the County Board and both City Councils. The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners adopted the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail Master Plan on September 9, 2014.

**IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

The ability to complete and maintain the project long-term is of upmost importance. Per the attached resolution, the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners have approved this grant application for the West Segment and the local match of $950,000.

Once the project is completed, Otter Tail County will assume financial responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the trail. The trail will be maintained for biking, walking and other non-motorized uses during spring, summer and fall. In the winter, the trail will be open for winter activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

**V. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:**

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| 1. **Proposal Budget Spreadsheet** 2. **Visual Component or Map** 3. **Parcel List Spreadsheet** 4. **Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements** | 1. **Research Addendum** 2. **Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description** 3. **Letter or Resolution** 4. **Financial Capacity** |