



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-289

Proposal Title: Willow Creek Regional Trail & Safety Connection

Project Manager Information

Name: Michael Nigbur

Organization: City of Rochester

Office Telephone: (507) 328-2541

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Construction of approximately 2.5 miles of trail, wayfinding, rest areas, and trail head that connects the Rochester urban area under Trunk Highway 52 to Gamehaven Regional Park

Funds Requested: \$4,000,000

Proposed Project Completion: July 31, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): SE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): SE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

While most of the city is served by an interconnected network of off-road, multi-use pedestrian and bike paths, Willow Creek area (southern quadrant of Rochester) is cut off from the trail network. The same is true for state designated Gamehaven Regional Park. Trunk Highway 52 currently is a physical barrier to safe connections either side of this major highway. The project would also allow for a safe bicycle and pedestrian crossing under HWY 52 for visitors and residents to access Gamehaven Regional Park to the south, and economic opportunities of jobs, retail, and other services to the north. There are currently several thousand residents that lack this connectivity which hampers their ability to easily connect to others in the community unless you have motorized vehicles. Additionally, because of the highway barrier, those north of that area have difficulties specifically connecting to both necessary services such as the local food shelf but for broad recreational benefits that Gamehaven Regional Park provides. On top of being an important part of our recreation and transportation infrastructure, this trail will also be a valuable amenity to the more than 3 million people that visit Rochester annually

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

We are proposing the construction of a 2.5 mile trail segment of which a part will be constructed under Trunk Highway 52. The extension under the highway and the remaining trail connects 460 acre Gamehaven Regional Park to the broader community through our significant trail network. This project extends the City's trail network from approximately HWY 63 | 28th Street SE, proceeding under Highway 52, and to County Road 101 | 45th Street SE to Gamehaven Regional Park. The extension of the Willow Creek Trail meets key priorities outlined in the Rochester Park System-Wide Master Plan and connectivity goals of the city's Comprehensive Plan. This project has been anticipated and had various planning options since the late 1990's. The trail would help provide access to jobs, food, and recreation for at least 1,041 households within half a mile and 2,716 households within a mile of the project. US Highway 52 effectively isolates the City's Willow Creek neighborhood, which include many recent multi-family residential properties. This project also provides an opportunity to fulfill the broader trail concept of making a connection to the Bluestem Trail in the future.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The project provides an extension of the public trail network, this provides access to needed services, and it provides access to a 4 season outdoor active State Designated Regional Park. The State has already invested in Gamehaven Regional Park which provided restored natural vegetation along with access to untamed natural areas together with the ability to see created wetlands, a naturalized 40 acre flood reservoir, cross county ski trails, mountain bike trails, and hiking trail to be immersed in nature. Connectivity to this park is beneficial to the community. We would expect both trail users and park usage to increase.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Design Services

Activity Budget: \$700,000

Activity Description:

The City team would review the trail corridor and work with a design consultant team to survey the route and develop design and specification documents and prepare for bidding of the project which is anticipated to be a 10 foot wide trail and other trail amenities such as respite areas, way finding, and trail head at Gamehaven Regional Park. A portion of the trail would be along a roadway areas but the vast majority would be off roadway similar to what you may find in areas of a state trail.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Design Development of trail layout and preliminary details	September 30, 2023
Final Design, specification and layout	March 31, 2024

Activity 2: Easement/Fee acquisition of needed parcel areas (2 property owners)

Activity Budget: \$300,000

Activity Description:

Development of survey information, appraisals and review appraisals of needed corridor and acquisition of necessary fee/easement areas. Mr. Nigbur who has years of experience acquiring various types of real estate on behalf of the City including trails, parks, utility corridors, roadways, building sites, etc. would coordinate the needed appraisals and negotiations of the property needed. It is unknown if the owners would prefer the property to be acquired in fee or easement. There will be some additional land area acquired as a result of providing storm water mitigation or uneconomic remnant areas based on trail alignment. The details of the fee versus easement will be vetted in the negotiation process.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Initial preparation and appraisal development	February 28, 2024
Offers, negotiations, settlements, and land transfers	June 30, 2024

Activity 3: Bidding and construction

Activity Budget: \$3,000,000

Activity Description:

Upon securing the needed land rights for construction our City team will put the project out for bids and solicit a contractor for construction of the project. The City Council will review bids and award the contract pursuant to state law. After contract award City Teammates, including myself, will coordinate the schedule with the contractor and consultant team to perform necessary inspections and provide project management. We will hold the contractor accountable for proper construction of the trail and appurtenances to fulfill the grant requirements along with the details outlined in the specifications. The project would include 10 foot wide path along with wayfinding, respite stops and a trail head location at our Gamehaven Regional Park. We anticipate limited environmental impacts due to the current uses along the route. The work will include trail construction along existing low volume roadways, through

undeveloped agricultural lands, reconstruction of a small segment of existing degraded undersized trail and under a State Highway.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Bidding and project award	August 31, 2024
Construction	September 30, 2025
Post Construction and vegetation establishment review	June 30, 2026

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

The City has a suitable maintenance budget for Parks and Forestry. The City Council anticipates that some increases in funding for trail maintenance would occur as our park and trail system expands and also understands the offsetting health and community benefits provided by this limited maintenance cost is more than worth it. The City generally has implemented a 10 year revolving pavement maintenance cycle for trail activities across the city. The city also performs pavement ratings periodically for any areas that may be needed. Any interim improvements/maintenance that are necessary are managed on an as-needed basis by our teammates

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Michael Nigbur

Job Title: Parks and Forestry Division Head

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Mr. Nigbur has led a number of construction projects during his 27 year span with the City of Rochester. He also manages a team of approximately 40 staff related to parks and forestry maintenance and planning with annual operating and capital budgets exceeding 10 Million annually. This management and maintenance includes 140+ parks over 5,000 acres and over 50 miles of trails and sidewalks.

Mr. Nigbur's background includes 16 years in the Public Works department performing acquisitions, feasibility reports and project management. For the last 12 years he has been overseeing the Parks and Forestry Division which has included performing various project management activities. Specifically, he has managed significant projects for the community for additions to or creation of 3 regional parks spaces. His work also includes significant other park spaces in the community. Larger recent projects are including: Soldiers Memorial Field (utilities, aquatics, two trail segments, playgrounds, shelter space) \$22 Mill currently in design and construction planned 2023, Cascade Lake Regional Park Several Projects (playground, trail, amphitheater, pavilion, landscaping, parking and utilities) \$9.2 Mill 2018-2023 , Gamehaven Regional Park (utilities, parking, playground ski trails, board walk, disc golf natural prairie) \$4.1 Mill 2016 - 2022, Quarry Hill Park and Nature Center Regional Park (nature center renovation, prairie education building, exhibit space, tornado shelter, parking improvements) \$3.5 Mill 2016 - 2018, Multiple Master Planning efforts for several regional and community parks. Other projects include Plummer House historic water tower restoration - Bids pending Estimated \$900K 2023 construction. Also other non park projects which Mr. Nigbur has provided significant Project Management guidance include Heart of the City (high amenity public plaza, utilities, art and streetscaping) \$18.0 Mill 2018-2022, Discovery Walk (public realm improvements, utilities roadway streetscaping) \$18.0 Mill 2020-2023, still under construction.

Organization: City of Rochester

Organization Description:

Rochester Parks and Recreation provides various amenities and programs throughout the City. The department is segmented into 3 divisions including Golf, Facilities/recreation, Parks/Forestry. The department has over 60 staff with 41 within the Parks and Forestry Division. The Parks and Forestry Division provides the maintenance and management of our parks, trails and urban forest. Parks and Forestry division manages 140+ parks and openspace covering over 5000 acres include native spaces, urban parks, trails, playgrounds and various other amenities. The adopted park system plan along with various other planning documents (park master plans, Urban Forest Master Plan, Natural Area Management

Plan) along with broader community plans such as Comprehensive Plan and the Active transportation Plan, all help guide improvements in our park system or connections to our park system.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Appraisal, Surveying, design, and inspection services				3.5		\$700,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Construction services				30		\$3,000,000
							Sub Total	\$3,700,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 25 Parcels: 2						\$300,000
							Sub Total	\$300,000
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$4,000,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	City of Rochester local funding	City will provide \$1,000,000 as a contribution toward the project, if the project is funded from LCCMR. Additionally, city staff support will be provided for general coordination and project management.	Potential	\$1,000,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$1,000,000
			Funds Total	\$1,000,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Leitzen Property	Olmsted	A portion of the corridor is former rail cooridor and the remaining is agricultural on the edge of Willow Creek and steeper hill side	Easement - Other	15	0.72	\$190,000	Private	City of Rochester	Has Not Begun
Loomis Parcel	Olmsted	natural areas lying between an excavated pond and a portion of Willow Creek	Easement - Other	11	0.28	\$110,000	Private	City of Rochester	Has Not Begun
Totals				26	1	\$300,000			

Easement (Other) Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The crossing of Trunk Highway 52 really dictated the portion of the route directly north and south of the area. Both acquisition areas from private property are required.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Our park system Plan and the City's active transportation plan identify the trail needed but does not specifically identify the parcel to be secured.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

any parcels acquired would be at owners request as compared to an easement. all disturbed areas related to the project will be restored.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

NA

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

NA

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [683c4b30-c89.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The approximate route of the proposed trail corridor extending from 28th Street SE to the southerly end at our Gamehaven Regional Park along with the approximate location of the trail crossing under Trunk Highway 52 and an area of existing trail corridor we already own....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Park Board	f81dc2e9-928.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Minnesota Pollution Control	171d3426-362.pdf
Alternative Learning Center	c6939844-a43.pdf
Council Priority Resolution	c7bbe762-b90.pdf
Pedestrian Bike Committee	5aeb41eb-384.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Easement (Other) Acquisition,

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, City of Rochester

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

Yes

Is the purpose of the acquisition for construction of a building(s), trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more, either now or in the future?

Yes

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No