



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-305

Proposal Title: Southside Trail Connection and Silver Lake Park Upgrade

Project Manager Information

Name: Britt See-Benes

Organization: City of Virginia

Office Telephone: (218) 748-7500

Email: britts@viriniamn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The City of Virginia is seeking funding to expand its multi-modal transportation network, improve access to recreation, and promote safer, more sustainable transportation and recreational options for all.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$1,341,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

Project Location

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

Region(s): NE

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

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

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

The City of Virginia has been working to improve non-motorized access and the walkability of Virginia, through a city-wide trail system developed over 12 years. With the completion of the Bailey Lake and Silver Lake Trails, the system is expanding southward. The focus is on the southern part of the city, where pedestrians and cyclists face safety risks from heavy traffic when traveling between parks. This area is poorly connected to key destinations, such as retail, government offices, healthcare facilities, parks, and schools, which are mostly motor vehicle-accessible. The new southside trail connection will link the City tennis facility, ballfields and playground to the Silver Lake Trail and the Mesabi Trail, enhancing safety and access for non-motorized users. A new splash pad park and open-air shelter will also be built on the west side of Silver Lake, ensuring easy access for families. This project aims to improve accessibility, enhance recreation, and promote safer, sustainable transportation.

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.

The proposed solution is to expand the City of Virginia's trail system to the southern part of the City, creating a safe, accessible route for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized traffic. This will address the current lack of safe access, where residents are forced to navigate busy streets with high levels of truck and car traffic. The new southside trail will connect the existing City tennis facility to the Silver Lake Trail, allowing residents to safely travel to key destinations, such as retail areas, healthcare facilities, parks, and schools, without relying on motorized vehicles.

Additionally, a new splashpad park and open-air shelter will be constructed on the west side of Silver Lake. The splashpad will serve as a recreational hub, providing families with a local, easily accessible space for outdoor enjoyment. The open-air shelter will offer shade for visitors, further enhancing the usability of the space for year-round activities. Together, these improvements will improve safety, accessibility, and recreational opportunities, contributing to the overall well-being and connectivity of the community.

Funding is sought to complete the design, construction, and installation of the trail, splashpad, and shelter, with the aim of providing a safer, more accessible, and vibrant public space for all.

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 will protect natural resources by reducing reliance on motorized vehicles, lowering emissions, and promoting non-motorized transportation. It will conserve green spaces by creating new trails and recreational areas that highlight local ecosystems. The new trail and splash pad park will create additional green spaces and recreational areas that encourage community members to connect with and appreciate nature. The splash pad park will incorporate sustainable water management practices, preserving water resources along Silver Lake. Additionally, the project will enhance public access to nature, encouraging outdoor recreation and fostering a deeper connection to the environment.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Project Design and Project Engineering

Activity Budget: \$210,000

Activity Description:

The City engineer of Record will be responsible for project design, project administration, creation of plans/specifications, preparing bidding documents for vendors and receiving solicited bids from qualified firms, conducting initial groundwork to include Certificate of Survey, project staking, and will be responsible for obtaining necessary permits from regulatory agencies. on behalf of they City.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Project Design Completed, Plans & Specs Submitted to City, Bidding Documents Prepared	January 31, 2026
Complete Project Bidding - Receive solicited bids	February 28, 2026
Project Award - Project Award Recommended to City and contracts for construction signed	April 30, 2026
Construction Administration	October 31, 2028

Activity 2: Project Construction - Splashpad, Multi Modal Trail, and Other Amenities

Activity Budget: \$1,131,000

Activity Description:

Once the City has selected a contractor using the mandatory State Bidding process, project construction will begin on the new 4500 linear foot multimodal trail and installation of the splash pad and amenities. Construction includes clearing, grubbing, project signage, light pole relocations, placement of concrete pavement, placement of bituminous pavement, curb/sidewalk/bituminous removal and replacement, installation of geotextile fabric, excavation of the existing aggregate base, usage of traffic control devices during construction, tools to allow for storm drainage protection, installation of new crosswalk striping at intersections and bicycle racks. Signage will be installed on the trail denoting that it is now a multi-modal trail and recognizing funding sources. The splash pad construction will be completed using specifications provided by design firm. City Engineer of Record will complete construction administration during this phase to ensure that the design and construction are actively monitored and managed. The Engineer will oversee the execution of the construction plans to ensure that the project is built according to the specifications, schedule, and budget.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Public Meetings Held, Public Informed of Project Construction, Input Received on Amenities	January 31, 2026
Construction of Splash Pad and Amenities	October 31, 2026
Splash Pad Open to Public	May 31, 2027
Construction of Approx 4500 LF of Multi Modal trail	December 31, 2028
Construction Complete on Trail and other Splash Pad Amenities	December 31, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Marlise Riffel	Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability	User of Park Area, Founder of Virginia Market Square	No
Brian Silber	Parks & Recreation Director	Trail & Park Maintenance	No
Mayor & City Council	City of Virginia	Project Administration	No
General Contractor	To Be Determined	Project Construction - Hired Through Competitive Bidding Process	Yes
Matt Reid	Short, Elliot, & Hendrickson (SEH)	City Engineer of Record, Consulting Engineer- Project Design/Construction Administration/Project Management	Yes
Park & Recreation Commission	City Commission	Project Visionary and Community Outreach	No

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 of Virginia will allocate an annual budget for the maintenance and repair of the connector trail, similar to other City infrastructure. Additional funding will be pursued for any future expansions of the City's trails, parks, or related activities that complement this project.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Silver Lake Trail Improvement Project	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09r	\$1,071,000
Silver Lake Trail Connection	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 09l	\$727,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Britt See-Benes

Job Title: City Administrator

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

The City of Virginia will manage the Southside Trail Connection and Silver Lake Park Upgrade project under the leadership of the Mayor, City Council, and City Staff, with additional oversight provided by the consulting engineer. The project team consists of highly qualified individuals with extensive experience in managing large city construction projects.

Britt See-Benes, the City Administrator, has a strong background in municipal governance and project management, successfully overseeing various city initiatives. Her leadership ensures the smooth execution of complex projects, balancing the needs of the community with budget and timeline constraints. Jenny Bourbonais, the Community

Development Coordinator, brings expertise in community engagement, project coordination, and securing funding for public works. Her role will ensure that the project aligns with the community's needs and supports long-term development goals. Brian Silber, the Park and Recreation Director, has a wealth of experience in managing park development and recreational projects. His expertise ensures that the park upgrade will enhance public spaces and meet recreational needs.

Additionally, the City Park Committee has been actively involved in the project's development from the outset, providing invaluable insight and ensuring that the project reflects community priorities. This collective experience and expertise equip the project team with the skills and knowledge to successfully manage all phases of the Southside Trail Connection and Silver Lake Park Upgrade project, ensuring its completion on time, within budget, and in alignment with community goals.

Organization: City of Virginia

Organization Description:

The City of Virginia, Minnesota, is a local government organization dedicated to serving and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. The City operates under a Mayor-Council form of government, with the Mayor and City Council overseeing policy and decision-making, while the City Administrator and staff manage day-to-day operations. The City is committed to providing essential public services, fostering community development, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens. Its mission is to create a vibrant, sustainable community that promotes economic growth, recreational opportunities, and environmental stewardship, while ensuring that all residents have access to essential services and a high quality of life. The landscape of Virginia is dominated by the mining history of Minnesota's Iron Range. The City of Virginia is surrounded by several active taconite mining operations. The land was originally covered by Mixed Hardwoods and Pines, along with Aspens. The area is also dotted with conifer bogs and swamps. The landscape in Virginia is rural in nature and most development is adjacent to Highways 169 and 53.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Short Elliott and Hendrickson (S.E.H.) Engineering	Service Contract	Design, Engineering, and Construction Administration Services				3		\$210,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction of Splash Pad and Necessary Sitework/Utility Extension				3		\$115,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction of Splash Pad Amenities including 30' x 80" Open Air Market Building, 30'x40' shaded seating area, (2) 15'x15' shade canopies, Limestone Block seating, a play mound for kids, new seating area for the Farmers Market, and new signage.				2		\$220,000
TBD	Service Contract	Construction of a 4500 LF new trail from the south side of Virginia on former railroad grades will connect to the existing Silver Lake Trail. Construction will include new curb and gutter systems, updated signage, crosswalk striping, ADA-compliant ramps, and a 10' trail surface.				4		\$796,000
							Sub Total	\$1,341,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-

Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,341,000

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				
Cash	FY2025 MPCA Implementation Grants for Community Resilience	Construction of a community splash pad project and sitework	Pending	\$500,000
			State Sub Total	\$500,000
Non-State				
Cash	City Levy Funds	Funds to be used for Construction of Splash Pad Amenities including 30' x 80" Open Air Market Building, 30'x40' shaded seating area, (2) 15'x15' shade canopies, Limestone Block seating, a play mound for kids, new seating area for the Farmers Market, and new signage.	Pending	\$315,000
Cash	Department of Iron Range Resources	Funds will be requested to assist with Utility and Infrastructure for the Splashpad, structures and amenities.	Potential	\$300,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$615,000
			Funds Total	\$1,115,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,456,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [bc7c52fa-349.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Page 1 is a map showing existing trail system and new proposed Southside Trail which is located along an old railroad grade. Page 2 is the layout of the splash pad area and amenities such as the shade areas, benches, and open air market adjacent to Silver Lake....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
City of Virginia Audit 2023	1cb5f1ad-842.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
City of Virginia Letter from governing board	f9081494-28b.pdf
Virginia City Council Resolution	e65d57c5-a0e.docx

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Letters of Support - City of Virginia	5755f82b-eb9.pdf
Capital Budget Addendum - City of Virginia	1f8a33c9-df1.xlsx
3D Rendering of Splash Pad Area	929131d3-61e.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

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

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?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

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 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Britt See-Benes

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand

