



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-511

Proposal Title: Southwest Chaska Park - Phase 1 Improvements

Project Manager Information

Name: Ashley Cauley

Organization: City of Chaska

Office Telephone: (952) 227-7526

Email: acauley@chaskamn.gov

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Deliver phase 1 improvements at Southwest Chaska Park, including the nature play area, outdoor amphitheater, community/sensory garden, prairie sledding hill, stormwater features, trail nodes, and Big Woods nature trails.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$3,500,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2030

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): Metro

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

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

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

Southwest Chaska Park is a planned new community park on a 57.85-acre city-owned site in a rapidly growing area of Chaska, positioned next to a future District 112 elementary school site and the remnant Big Woods landscape. In 2025, Chaska was awarded ENRTF funding to acquire the remnant Big Woods property to protect Minnesota forests and increase community access to natural areas.

The opportunity is to build a nature-forward, universally accessible park that expands outdoor recreation while protecting and interpreting nearby natural resources, including wetlands, wooded slopes, and mature tree stands associated with the Big Woods. Community engagement has been extensive, with more than 1,200 survey responses identifying nature, play, and sport as leading themes, and later engagement again prioritizing nature play.

Without timely capital investment, the City risks missing a key window to shape a connected campus of park, school, and preserved open space that supports environmental education, passive recreation, and long-term stewardship as surrounding development occurs.

Phase 1 improvements address this need by implementing nature-based play and learning amenities, low-impact trails, habitat and prairie restoration elements, and stormwater features that improve access to nature while enhancing environmental function and resilience.

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 City of Chaska proposes to implement Phase 1 improvements at Southwest Chaska Park that create a nature-forward, accessible community destination while strengthening on-site natural resource function. The work seeks ENRTF funding to construct the west side Phase 1 package, including a nature play area, an outdoor amphitheater classroom, a sensory or community garden, stormwater management features, and a sledding hill paired with prairie restoration. Phase 1 also delivers trail nodes and a connected system of natural-surface trails, including routes that provide low-impact access within the Big Woods property and link passive recreation areas across the park.

This work advances the community's top priorities identified through extensive engagement, including strong interest in nature-based amenities and trails, and it establishes early, visible outcomes that build momentum for the full park buildout. The City has already committed local resources to begin Phase 1 design and permitting and will leverage ENRTF funds, along with local and other contributions, to move from planning to construction. Together, these improvements will deliver outdoor learning, recreation, and stewardship opportunities in a growing area adjacent to protected natural resources.

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?

Southwest Chaska Park Phase 1 will enhance natural resources, expand low-impact public access, and build natural-surface trails and trail nodes that connect visitors to the Big Woods property and its natural amenities. Prairie restoration on the sledding hill will increase native habitat biodiversity, reinforce soil health and resilience, and provide an outdoor winter amenity for visitors. Stormwater amenities will improve on-site hydrology by managing runoff and supporting water quality outcomes as surrounding development occurs. The outdoor amphitheater classroom, nature play area, food forest, and community garden will provide opportunities for environmental learning and stewardship, helping residents connect recreation with conservation.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Project Administration, Compliance, and Partner Coordination

Activity Budget: \$1,000

Activity Description:

The City of Chaska will manage overall project administration to deliver Phase 1 improvements in accordance with the approved LCCMR work plan, grant agreement conditions, and applicable laws, environmental requirements, and regulations. This activity includes project management oversight, coordination among City departments and consultants, scheduling and budget tracking, procurement and contract administration, and documentation needed to support reimbursement requests and required reporting. The City will maintain organized project records for expenditures, progress, and deliverables, and will coordinate internal reviews to keep design, permitting, and construction activities aligned with scope and timelines.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
ENRTF grant agreement and work plan	July 31, 2027
Project accounting, documentation, and reimbursement procedures	August 31, 2027
Selection of consultant and contract setup	August 31, 2027
Enrollment in the Minnesota B3 Guidelines Tracking Tool	August 31, 2027
Consultation with SHPO and THPO	August 31, 2027
Predesign review through the Department of Administration	September 30, 2027
Environment site assessment checklist and records check	November 30, 2027

Activity 2: Construct Site Foundations, Grading, and Stormwater Features

Activity Budget: \$441,000

Activity Description:

The City of Chaska will construct the site foundation work needed to support Phase 1 improvements on the west side of Southwest Chaska Park, including earthwork, grading, and stormwater features. Work will include establishing construction access and erosion and sediment controls, rough grading for the Phase 1 program areas, and shaping the sledding hill that will later receive prairie restoration. The City will install stormwater amenities that manage runoff and support water quality and resilient site function. It will coordinate grading with planned trail corridors and activity nodes to ensure subsequent amenity construction proceeds efficiently. Construction will be sequenced to minimize impacts to adjacent natural resources and to maintain low-impact access near the Big Woods edge, where natural surface trails are planned. Outcomes of this activity include a stable, build-ready site with completed stormwater infrastructure, established grades for Phase 1 amenities, and disturbed areas stabilized to support safe construction and successful restoration establishment in later activities.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Notice to proceed and install construction erosion control	July 31, 2027
Staking, mobilization, and site preparation	August 31, 2027
Major grading and stormwater infrastructure installation	October 31, 2027
Site civil work and stabilization of disturbed areas	November 30, 2027

Activity 3: Build Nature-Based Amenities and Trail Connections

Activity Budget: \$2,173,000

Activity Description:

This activity delivers the on-the-ground Phase 1 features that turn Southwest Chaska Park into a nature-forward destination for learning and low-impact recreation. Construction will include a nature play area, an outdoor amphitheater classroom, and food forest and community garden elements designed to support hands-on stewardship and outdoor programming. A connected system of park and natural-surface trails will be built, with trail nodes linking passive recreation areas and providing low-impact access near the Big Woods edge. Work will be coordinated with prior grading and stormwater improvements so paths, activity areas, and site amenities are placed on stable grades with durable surfaces and appropriate drainage. The outcome is a cohesive set of publicly usable Phase 1 amenities and trail connections that expand outdoor recreation while strengthening the community’s connection to nearby natural resources.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Natural surface and trail node construction	June 30, 2028
Nature play area installation	June 30, 2028
Outdoor amphitheater, classroom, and supporting site feature construction	July 31, 2028
Food forest and community garden installation	August 31, 2028
Substantial completion, oversight, and administrative ends	November 30, 2028

Activity 4: Prairie Restoration Establishment, Monitoring, and Project Closeout

Activity Budget: \$885,000

Activity Description:

This activity will establish and verify the prairie restoration associated with the Phase 1 sledding hill, ensuring the restored area is stable, functional, and positioned for long-term stewardship within Southwest Chaska Park. Work will include implementing prairie restoration measures identified in the Phase 1 scope, stabilizing soils following grading, and installing native vegetation to support habitat value and site resilience. The City will monitor establishment performance, address deficiencies through corrective actions as needed (for example, reseeding or targeted invasive species control), and document results to track and maintain restoration outcomes over time. This activity also includes final inspection and acceptance steps for restoration elements, as well as coordinating restoration documentation with overall project closeout. Closeout tasks will include compiling as-built information and restoration documentation, confirming completion of funded Phase 1 elements, and completing required reporting and financial reconciliation so the improvements can transition into routine City operations and maintenance.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Restoration plan and restoration specifications for sledding hill prairie	October 31, 2028
Prairie seeding and restoration installation	October 31, 2028
Establishment monitoring and corrective actions as needed	March 31, 2029
Punchlist items and as-built survey	April 30, 2030
Notice of funding restriction recorded	April 30, 2030
Certificate of occupancy obtained for shelters (if required)	April 30, 2030
Signage installed with ENRTF language and logo	May 31, 2030
Park opens for the public	June 30, 2030
Final report, financial reconciliation, and project closeout documentation	June 30, 2030

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Corrin Bemis	Bolton and Menk, Inc	Transportation Project Manager with Bolton and Menk, a design/ engineering firm hired to assist with Chaska's Southwest Chaska Park application and proposal.	No
Matt Podhradsky	Rotary Club of Chaska	Financial Contributor	No
Marshall Grange	City of Chaska	Chaska Parks and Rec Director -- project manager	No
Brad Aldrich, PLA, LEED AP BD+C, ASLA	Confluence	Consultant Project Manager and Designer for Park Design	No

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

The SW Chaska Park is a 50+ acre site that will be designed as a vibrant and inclusive space for all ages and abilities. Additionally, the City is purchasing approximately 40 acres of remnant Big Woods adjacent to the park's southern border with ENRTF funding to preserve through parkland dedication and city ordinance. The new park will complement Chaska's other community parks – Firemen's Park, Veterans Park, Community Park, and McKnight Park – by offering recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

The park will be designed based on public feedback. IN 2025, Chaska met with several community focus groups, attended events, and encouraged people to take an on-line survey. In total, the city received over 1,200 responses. The goal of the initial engagement was to understand what types of big picture themes the community wants to see at the future park, and while many of the themes scored high, the top 3 were nature, play, and sport.

ENRTF funding will allow Chaska to invest in updates, including the nature play area, outdoor amphitheater, community/sensory garden, prairie sledding hill, stormwater features, trail nodes, and Big Woods nature surface trails. Improvements will increase accessibility, provide high-quality access to nature, and serve visitors' needs for generations.

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?

Using ENRTF funding, the City of Chaska will complete Phase 1 design, permitting, bidding, and construction, then open the improvements for public use and incorporate them into the park system. The City will implement the approved work plan and comply with all grant conditions, laws, and environmental requirements. Ongoing operations and maintenance will be funded through City resources, consistent with the City's commitment and financial capability to operate and maintain the project long term. Any follow-on phases or added amenities beyond Phase 1 would be advanced through future City budgeting and other public or private contributions leveraged alongside ENRTF funding.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
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Chaska Big Woods Property Acquisition	M.L. 2025, First Special Session, Chp. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09n	\$529,000
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Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Ashley Cauley

Job Title: City Planner

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

Ashley Cauley, City Planner, for the City of Chaska, is qualified to serve as Project Manager for the Southwest Chaska Park improvements based on her work in municipal park design and project management. As well as her demonstrated ability to coordinate complex projects that require cross-department alignment, community engagement, and accountable implementation.

In her current position, Cauley's responsibilities align closely with the core demands of an ENRTF-funded capital project, including managing multi-stakeholder decision-making, coordinating with City leadership, and ensuring projects are delivered in a transparent, operationally sustainable manner. Cauley also has a documented track record of leading community engagement and cross-department collaboration for projects that shape the public realm.

Organization: City of Chaska

Organization Description:

The City of Chaska is the county seat of Carver County, Minnesota, and an outer-ring suburb of the Twin Cities, with a population of 27,810 (2020 Census). The City provides a full range of municipal services and administers public infrastructure, planning, and community facilities to support residents, businesses, and visitors. Chaska maintains an established parks and trails system that supports community wellness and access to outdoor recreation. The City’s Parks and Recreation Department manages parks, recreation programming, and public facilities, and is positioned to deliver capital improvements and oversee long-term operations and maintenance. As a local government unit, the City has the administrative systems and financial capability needed to manage state grant agreements, comply with applicable requirements, and ensure long-term stewardship of public investments.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD - Stormwater	Service Contract	Construct stormwater pond				-		\$1,708,000
TBD - Natural Trails Contractor	Service Contract	Construction of 37,600 feet of natural surface trail				0		\$112,000
TBD - Natural Playground Contractor	Service Contract	Construct natural playground				-		\$200,000
TBD - Community/ Sensory Garden	Service Contract	Construction of a community/ sensory garden				-		\$100,000
TBD - Construction of an outdoor amphitheater and classroom	Service Contract	Construct outdoor amphitheater classroom				-		\$100,000
TBD - trail nodes	Service Contract	Construct three trail nodes and swings at each one				-		\$45,000
TBD - Restoration	Service Contract	Restoration activities including native seeding, overstory tree planting, wetland enhancement, and other existing site enhancements.				-		\$885,000
TBD - Construct Bouldering Wall	Service Contract	Construct a bouldering climbing wall				-		\$100,000
TBD - Food forest	Service Contract	Construct a food forest				-		\$50,000

TBD - Boardwalk and dock	Service Contract	Construct a boardwalk and dock in the Big Woods				0		\$200,000
							Sub Total	\$3,500,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Equipment								
							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	\$3,500,000

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	DNR Outodor Recreation Grant	Construct the all inclusive destination playground	Pending	\$500,000
Cash	City of Chaska Tax Levy	Final design, project management, contingent, inflation, and additional construction costs	Secured	\$20,432,000
			State Sub Total	\$20,932,000
Non-State				
Cash	Rotary Club Of Chaska Donation	Miracle League Field	Secured	\$700,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$700,000
			Funds Total	\$21,632,000

Total Project Cost: \$25,132,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
300070121	Carver	Pollinator Habitat	Restoration	17.94	-	-	Public	City of Chaska	Has Not Begun
300070140	Carver	Trail nodes, pollinator habitat, reforestation,	Restoration	8.63	-	-	Public	City of Chaska	Has Not Begun
Totals				26.57	0	-			

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All restoration activities funded with ENRTF will occur on publicly owned land within Southwest Chaska Park, which is owned by the City of Chaska and will remain in public ownership for long-term stewardship.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

The City will prepare and maintain a site-specific ecological restoration and management plan for the sledding hill prairie restoration. The plan will document existing conditions, identify the target native prairie community, and provide an implementation timetable for site preparation, seeding/planting, establishment, and maintenance. It will also identify long-term management needs, responsible parties, and the financing of ongoing management and enhancement. The plan will be kept on file and made available upon request.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

Prairie restoration will follow BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines and will include a diverse native seed mix selected to provide pollinator habitat across the growing season, consistent with state requirements for pollinator support.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

Long-term maintenance will be completed by the City of Chaska through routine parks maintenance operations and, as needed, contracted services for activities such as invasive species management, spot reseeding, and adaptive management. Funding for long-term management will be provided through City resources allocated for park operations and maintenance.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

The City will consider contracting with Conservation Corps Minnesota for eligible restoration activities and will document that consideration as part of procurement and contracting.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

The City will complete an initial restoration evaluation at the end of the appropriation and a follow-up evaluation three years after completion of the expenditure, using the LCCMR restoration evaluation vegetation monitoring protocols. Evaluations will assess progress toward the restoration plan goals, identify implementation issues, and document findings to improve future restoration work.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [d99508ad-30e.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

This map depicts the overall park boundary and the phased improvements within it. Purple highlights the elements included in the LCCMR request: the nature play area, outdoor amphitheater, community and sensory garden, prairie sledding hill with restoration, stormwater features, trail nodes, and natural-surface trails....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2024 - Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	a72c451d-710.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Resolution 2026 - Authorizing and Supporting Chaska's Application to the LCCMR	d9484491-e14.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Budget Addendum	2c42e95a-e94.pdf
Park Cost Estimate	4e32a1a7-ec1.pdf
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	ca5681f9-37d.pdf
Carver County New Article	53923d31-17c.pdf
Inclusive Playground Concept Images	faf70324-9c2.pdf
Social Media Posts	6972771b-167.pdf
SW Chaska - Community Engagement Summary	0b1be90b-7ee.pdf
SW Chaska Park - Park Concept Plan, Conceptual Grading Plans, and Stormwater Exhibit	fbf362ce-55a.pdf
Letter of Support - Chaska Rotary Club	14407f04-504.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: Restoration,

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?

Yes, City of Chaska

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")?

No

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

Ashley Cauley, Marshall Grange (Chaska) , Brad Aldrich (Confluence), Corrin Bemis (Bolton and Menk)

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