



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2027-573

**Proposal Title:** 150 Thompson Park

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Eric Weiss

**Organization:** City of West St. Paul

**Office Telephone:** (651) 552-4138

**Email:** eweiss@wspmn.gov

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** 150 Thompson Park will transform an empty lot into a vibrant town square for all ages, featuring play areas, nature, learning, and community-building, completing a long-held community vision.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$327,000

**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.**

For decades, the WSP community has envisioned transforming its auto-centric commercial corridor into a vibrant space for people, nature, and connection. Although significant planning and investments over the years have dramatically improved the corridor—enhancing pedestrian safety, attracting new businesses, and enriching the overall experience—the city still lacks a dedicated town square.

The recently completed parks system plan, developed through countless community discussions, aims to reimagine the parks system to fulfill the needs of the 21st century. In essence, the community expressed a desire for a parks system that goes beyond mere playgrounds and ballfields. They want parks that feature all-ages, flexible play spaces accessible to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, they envision parks adorned with tree cover, beautified by gardens, designed for pollinators and water protection, and aesthetically pleasing landscaping. These parks should serve as gathering places for the community to learn, protect the environment, celebrate, and bolster our local economy.

Spurred by a redevelopment project, WSP is developing 150 Thompson Park as a new central green space designed to connect residents with nature, water, and each other. The park is intentionally designed to leverage the power of nature to encourage learning, gathering, recreation, and celebration.

### **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.**

150 Thompson Park represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for WSP to transform its community and change narratives. Frankly, WSP has long been a community that thinks it doesn't deserve nice things because of its working-class roots. 150 Thompson represents an ambitious dream and gift to the community - a nature-based town square that will provide spaces for respite, natural habitats, and, importantly, desperately needed spaces for programming and education. 150 Thompson adds a well-programmed 2.5 acres to an existing 20-acre preserve featuring a pond, trails, prairie restoration, and woods.

The park will feature:

Two-sided pavilion will accommodate both larger and more intimate events, with one side facing a spacious lawn and the other a cozy outdoor learning space.

Community building and desperately needed indoor educational space.

Dry creek, which serves to naturally treat the site's stormwater.

Significant trees and gardens

Boardwalk and trails

Smaller gathering spaces and seating for quiet moments and learning.

Pond overlook as an ideal spot to observe the local wildlife.

Demonstration garden to showcase native plants and a learning tool for programs

Beyond LCCMR funding requests, the park will feature an 'urban beach', public art, plaza, fire pits, playground, picnic shelter, splash feature, and hammock grove.

### **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?**

This project will enhance protection, conservation, and appreciation of Minnesota's natural resources by transforming a vacant site into a hands-on environmental learning place for all. The park will enable year-round education on stormwater systems, habitat restoration, and local ecology right in our community's backyard, which for some maybe one of their few accessible opportunities to access nature. Increased public understanding promotes stewardship, reduces environmental impacts, and supports long-term conservation.

By making environmental education accessible, infusing it with fun, in a centrally located park designed for gathering and connectivity, the project will expand access to nature-based learning while strengthening natural systems.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Park Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$317,000

**Activity Description:**

The objective of this activity is to construct the park. Tasks include site preparation, amenity installation, structural construction, utility connections, landscaping, and interior finishing. Work will be completed through a competitive public bidding process with qualified contractors. Outputs include a completed building, pavilion structure with outdoor learning and gathering space, environmental education features such as a demonstration garden, stormwater dry creek bed, and other landscaping elements. The finished structures will provide durable, accessible spaces for community events and outdoor educational programs. Success will be evaluated through construction inspections, compliance with accessibility standards, and final project acceptance.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete Predesign Review through the Dept. of Administration	July 31, 2027
Initial Site Preparation	July 31, 2028
Amenity and Structural	May 31, 2029
Landscaping and Final Construction	September 30, 2029
Grand Opening Celebration	June 30, 2030

### Activity 2: Educational Program Implementation

**Activity Budget:** \$10,000

**Activity Description:**

The objective of this activity is to expand our grow our fledging environmental educational offerings and, upon completion, activate the new park as an environmental learning space. Tasks include development and expansion of educational curriculum, partnerships with schools, community organizations, and the city’s Environmental Committee to build awareness of the program offerings within underserved communities, and the procurement of supplies to support interactive, hands-on, engaging activities. Outputs include educational materials, interpretive displays, and scheduled programming. These resources will help visitors understand stormwater systems, habitat, and local ecology while encouraging stewardship of natural resources. Outcomes will be evaluated through program participation, feedback from educators and partners, and ongoing use of the space for educational programming. Finally, we hope to build the “Learn, Live, & Give” program, a monthly environmental volunteer program that serves as a way to support local projects, improve environmental awareness, and build community.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Environmental Education Curriculum Framework Developed	July 31, 2027
New Educational Programming Launched	September 30, 2027
Environmental Education Events and Programs	June 30, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
John Mertens	Dakota County	Partner	No
Kurt Chatfield	Dakota County	Partner	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.**

150 Thompson promises to be the city's crown jewel. With heavy promotion, programming, and its central location, we can ensure the space and its learning opportunities will be well-known to the community and region. We'll work closely with our partners to constantly infuse vitality and energy into the space, welcoming educational groups from nonprofits, community organizations, the library, and other government entities.

Educational materials developed through the project, including curriculum guides, interpretive content, and learning activities tied to the park's stormwater systems, habitat restoration, and native landscapes, will be made publicly available through the City of West St. Paul's website and shared with local schools, environmental organizations, and regional partners. These resources will support ongoing environmental education programming and allow other communities to replicate similar learning approaches in parks and public spaces.

Interpretive signage and educational features installed throughout the park will allow visitors to independently learn about natural systems such as stormwater filtration, pollinator habitat, and urban ecology. These on-site learning opportunities promote awareness of how everyday landscapes can protect water quality and support wildlife, encouraging stewardship behaviors among park users.

Project outcomes and lessons learned will also be shared through community presentations, partnerships with local educators, and regional government communication networks. All printed materials, interpretive signage, and digital communications developed through the project will acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund through required logo placement and attribution language in accordance with ENRTF guidelines.

By combining on-site learning, publicly accessible educational materials, and partnerships with schools and community organizations, this project will ensure long-term dissemination of environmental knowledge and demonstrate how urban parks can support natural resource stewardship in Minnesota.

## 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?**

Following construction, the park will be operated and maintained by WSP through its parks maintenance and programming budgets. The City will integrate the space into recreation, environmental education, and community event offerings, ensuring ongoing public use. Partnerships with local schools, nonprofits, environmental organizations, and the adjacent library will support continued educational programming at minimal cost. Interpretive materials and curriculum developed through the project will remain publicly accessible. Any future program expansion will be funded through city funds, partnerships, and sponsorships, ensuring long-term sustainability. Finally, 150 Thompson will be the new home-base of our popular nature-based summer youth camp – Camp Marthaler.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Eric Weiss

**Job Title:** Director of Parks and Recreation

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

Eric Weiss is the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of West St. Paul, where he leads the planning, development, and stewardship of the city's parks, recreation facilities, community events and programs, natural resources and sustainability initiatives, volunteer management, and arts and culture.

Weiss has been a key figure in shaping the city's park system and outdoor recreation opportunities. He has guided major initiatives, such as the citywide Parks and Recreation System Plan—"WSP Parks Rising"—which outlines long-term strategies to improve parks, trails, and recreational amenities while strengthening environmental stewardship and community engagement.

His work emphasizes collaboration with residents, regional partners, and community organizations to ensure public spaces meet the community's evolving needs. Under his leadership, projects have included park improvements, community engagement programs, and facility planning. Under his leadership, the city is pursuing capital projects with a stronger emphasis on making strategic, pragmatic investments that make the parks safer and more welcoming. Weiss has also helped advance sustainability and natural resource initiatives, including habitat management, environmental education, and energy-savings projects within the city.

Before joining the City of West St. Paul, Weiss has worked in various roles related to parks and the outdoors, public health, and community development. He holds a master's degree in urban planning from Mankato State.

Through his leadership in West St. Paul, Weiss continues to focus on building vibrant parks, expanding recreation opportunities, and ensuring that the city's natural and recreational resources remain accessible and sustainable for future generations.

**Organization:** City of West St. Paul

**Organization Description:**

The City of West St. Paul stands as a dynamic and welcoming governmental organization dedicated to serving its vibrant community. A small, working-class, inner-ring suburb within the larger Twin Cities metro, West St. Paul (WSP) faces challenges akin to urban areas, yet it thrives through resilience and resourcefulness.

WSP is characterized by its dedication to community engagement, actively listening to its residents through conversations and surveys to shape initiatives that reflect local desires. The city's leadership, a small but mighty team, champions collaboration, often relying on volunteers, residents, and businesses to bolster its efforts. With a strategic focus on supporting small businesses, enhancing community aesthetics, and investing in transformative projects, it aims to foster civic pride.

Through its commitment to strategic development, creative placemaking, and conservation, WSP seeks to elevate its competitive advantage and attract new investment. The city's dedication to improving quality of life, celebrating its people, and inspiring progress positions it as a forward-thinking and community-driven organization ready to tackle future challenges.

WSP is home to approximately 21,000 people. This population is a blend of various ethnicities, age groups, education levels, and socio-economic backgrounds, contributing to the city's dynamic character.



## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Service Contract	Construction				1.5		\$317,000
							Sub Total	\$317,000
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							Sub Total	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							Sub Total	-

<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Camp Marthaler and Educational Events	Program supplies, food, guest speakers, and scholarships to expand program	X				\$10,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$327,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Other Expenses		Camp Marthaler and Educational Events	Meals/food for youth participants

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
Cash	State Bonding	Capital Improvement	Potential	\$3,000,000
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	City Park Improvement Funds	Capital Improvement	Potential	\$2,000,000
Cash	Tax Increment Financing	Capital Improvement	Secured	\$3,100,000
Cash	General Operation	Capital Improvement	Pending	\$2,550,000
Cash	Park Improvement Fund	Pre-Design/Design	Secured	\$1,000,000
Cash	Grants and Sponsorships	Capital Improvements	Potential	\$2,500,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$11,150,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$14,150,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$14,477,000**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [ca40f7aa-9fc.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Location of 150 Thompson Park within city context, near existing park, library, River to River Greenway, shopping, housing, and future Bus Rapid Transit line....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
2024 Financial Report	<a href="#">879474d6-a12.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Letter of Authorization	<a href="#">45dea290-80c.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Capital Construction Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">4e427191-e15.pdf</a>
150 Thompson Park Renderings	<a href="#">22db2491-c50.pdf</a>
Site Plan	<a href="#">bfa0319e-763.pdf</a>
150 Thompson Project Location Context	<a href="#">6cc924ee-d18.pdf</a>
Budget Addendum	<a href="#">5b92491c-16d.pdf</a>

## 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?**

Yes

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

No

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF? If so, describe here (1) the source and estimated amounts of any revenue and (2) how you propose to use those revenues:**

Yes, General park operations and maintenance

**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:**

Jess Hall, City of West St. Paul, Sarah Haugen, City of West St. Paul

**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