



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

To: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Robert L. Tetens, Director
Date: March 11, 2014
Re: 2014 Connecting Communities Awards

Background

At the February Commission meeting staff presented the 2014 **Connecting Communities** project proposals. The Connecting Communities program was initiated in 2009, WCPARC pledged to make available up to \$600,000 each year during the 2010 – 2014 period (\$3 million in total) toward the cost of eligible projects. The following applications were received representing six projects in five communities and requesting a total of \$1,350,000 in funding:

<u>Community</u>	<u>Requested</u>
Ann Arbor Twp.	\$300k
Manchester Village	\$150k
Northfield Twp.	\$260k
Pittsfield Twp.	\$400k
Ypsilanti Twp.	\$240k (2 projects \$165k + \$75k)

Staff presented an overview of the applications and distributed a packet of information to Commission members that included the project applications, project summary sheets, and the Connecting Communities Program Description and Review Criteria.

Discussion

In January staff met with the Greenway Advisory Committee (GAC) to discuss the project applications and score the projects against the adopted Connecting Communities criteria. Based on input from GAC, staff developed a final ranking of projects and suggests that the following four projects receive Connecting Communities funding:

Ann Arbor Twp. Dixboro Road (Fleming Creek)

This is the first request from Ann Arbor Township for Connecting Communities funds. The proposal is to construct a trail along Dixboro Road that would link Parker Mill and the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens, a project that WCPARC has been promoting for more than 10 years. The Township is requesting \$300,000 and also intends to apply for a grant

of \$300,000 from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). Staff recommends awarding \$250,000 to the Twp. as a contribution to the local match for the MNRTF grant.

Manchester Village Abandoned railroad

This is a project for which the Village first applied for a Connecting Communities grant in 2011. The proposed 2.0 mile trail would link the downtown core of Manchester to the Leonard Preserve. WCPARC pledged to provide \$150k as part of the local match for an MNRTF grant in 2011. But the Village decided that the timing was not right and did not submit an application in 2011. They do intend to apply this year, however. Staff recommends a renewed commitment to the match of \$150,000. Since this is a renewal of a previous award it will not be taken out of the 2014 funds.

Northfield Township Barker Road

This application is to assist the Township to complete the last phase of a three phase project. The 5,650 foot trail will connect downtown Whitmore Lake to residential development, a school and the Township Library. WCPARC has provided assistance to the construction of the first two phases. Staff recommends continued support and an award of \$250,000

Pittsfield Township Textile Road

In 2010 and 2011 the Commission awarded \$590,000 to Pittsfield Township for the construction of the Lohr-Textile Greenway (LTG). In 2013 WCPARC awarded \$150k to serve as the local match for a MNRTF grant application to help the Township construct phase II of the LTG. This proposal is to extend the trail 1.76 miles east, along the north side of Textile Road, from the intersection of Lohr and Textile to State Street. Due to extensive wetlands along Textile Road, construction of the trail will be difficult and costly. Although the Township was not able to secure the MNRTF grant, they were awarded a Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to help fund the \$1.8 million dollar project. Staff recommends awarding \$100,000 to the Township to contribute towards the local match for the TAP grant. In addition, staff recommends renewing the previous commitment of \$150,000 to contribute towards this important project.

Ypsilanti Township Tuttle Hill and Whitaker Roads

WCPARC has helped to fund Township trail projects in 2010, 2011 and 2013. While these projects are worthwhile they were rated the lowest by staff. Further, the Township has yet to complete the project that was awarded in 2013. Staff recommends no funding this round.

Recommendation

After careful analysis of each project considering the adopted Connecting Communities criteria, it is my recommendation that WCPARC resolve to grant a total of \$600,000 for project funding to the following communities:

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| • Ann Arbor Twp. | \$250,000 local match for MNRTF grant |
| • Manchester Village | \$150,000 (renewal of 2011 award) |
| • Pittsfield Twp. | \$100,000 (plus \$150,000 renewal) |
| • Northfield Twp. | \$250,000 |

TOTAL	\$600,000 (plus \$300k renewal of previous awards)
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Each community must commit to long-term maintenance of their respective trail segments. Project funding will be made available to each community when a contract for project construction has been executed. The funding will expire if a contract has not been executed within two years of the approval date