

M-NCPPC


**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**

 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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May 27, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board  
 VIA: Don Cochran, Deputy Director of Park & Planning  
 FROM: Tin-Mala, Grants Manager  
 SUBJECT: Grants Program Process & Implementation Update

This information is provided in response to the Board's recent request for an update on the Department's grants program, including grant applications, awards, and grants in process in FY05; and the related implementation of the grant projects.

The goal of the grants program is to secure public and private grants for mission-aligned, approved projects and/or services and/or equipment. Implicit in this goal is the Department's commitment to compliance with grantors' terms of awards. To bring the Department to readiness for a grants program proportionate to our high potential, we are moving from an informal process to a centralized responsibility through which we actively seek grants and establish proper grants stewardship. To this end, several new processes and procedures have been developed.

**CENTRALIZING RESPONSIBILITY**

The Department's commitment to a grants program was initiated with the hire of a grants officer last year. Grants management has been accurately described as a "cradle-to-grave" oversight for each grant, and grants officers are specialized professionals who provide stewardship. In order to coordinate the process and to relieve field staff of the administrative burdens of grants, the Grants Manager serves as the single point of contact for all grants, both in the Department and for grantors.

The Grants Manager is responsible for notifying appropriate Divisions of funding opportunities and related guidelines and restrictions, guiding project staff through the application process, requesting project information, completing and submitting the application package. We must decide at this stage whether a potential grant is feasible. If not, we should not apply at all. When matching funds are required, we must determine upfront whether or not we can find the match. Often, "soft" matches are permitted, such as work already performed onsite within the previous two years, staff labor, oversight, design and equipment. The Grants Manager will negotiate these with the potential grantor. Additionally, for all upcoming large grant applications, a budget line item for Indirect Costs will be negotiated and added to the grant request.

**FUNDING AUTHORITY**

Under our new grants procedures, the Department's funding authority is determined in the application stage by the CIP Manager and/or the Operating Budget Manager, and the Grants Manager. A grant is a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) grant if it creates a

real asset that will last at least 15-20 years and costs at least \$20,000 for the total project. Earlier this fiscal year the Board and Council approved a new PDF to allow us to accept capital grants in the CIP that are generally less than \$100,000 and do not require more than 20% matching funds. This PDF provides upfront or advance authorization to receive and expend small grants and donations that are consistent with the Department's mission and programs; and to report these expenditures on the PDF with submission of each six-year CIP. Grants that do not fit within the guidelines of the new PDF require Council approval.

An Operating Budget grant is one that does not fit into the Capital Improvement grant criteria, and which involves reimbursement solely for personnel expenditures or other operating costs. According to the County Budget Resolution, the Council appropriates the following totals for future grants: \$150,000 in the Administration Fund, \$400,000 in the Park Fund, and \$25,000 in the Park Fund for Program Open Space Grants. If the actual amount received exceeds the limit in either fund, the Commission may use the total of \$575,000 as the limit for both funds after notifying the Council in writing of this intent, providing information on prospective grants. Additionally, the Council must be notified in writing of any grants over \$100,000.

#### **WORKING WITH NON-PROFITS**

As grant making foundations generally require a 501(c)(3) non-profit status, this external source of revenue is yet to be fully tapped by the Department. An exception is the planning award from a foundation that included government agencies as eligible applicants. Also, a few minigrants accepted by other non-profits have facilitated in-kind support to our parks.

The Deputy Director and the Enterprise Division Chief are in discussion with the Montgomery Parks Foundation to address outstanding issues, such as responsibilities of each agency in administration of funds, and responsibility for project implementation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being drafted for this purpose. In FY05, the Montgomery Parks Foundation has accepted a donation made through the grants program for a trailhead memorial project.

#### **RECORDING GRANT NEEDS**

An electronic Gift Registry Request Form is being developed to assist staff in listing projects that need funding, and to allow the Grants Manager to match grant needs to grantors' Requests for Applications, Bond Bills, donors, and sponsors. Similar in format and purpose to the familiar CIP Project Request form, the new electronic form will enable staff to readily send the project information and budget to the Grants Manager. These requests will be reflected in a master list to be presented periodically to the Board for approval. The Gifts Registry will include all requests approved by the Board. This Registry will serve, also, to identify private/public partnerships for Enterprise Division. Additionally, we will use the Gifts Registry to solicit and facilitate citizens, groups and corporate sponsors who wish to make donations. The Montgomery Parks Foundation will also use the Registry after the above-mentioned MOU is in place.

#### **ACCEPTING GRANTS**

To date, grant awards and related documents of any amount - even minigrants of \$5,000 and less - are subjected to the same routing process as for contracts with vendors. Because this process had been determined to be inappropriate for grant awards, we are developing a new grants acceptance form. This form and its necessary signatories, as well as procedures

appropriate to different levels of awards, will be developed through the collaboration of the Grants Manager and related staff in Finance and Accounting.

### **IMPLEMENTING GRANTS**

Receiving a grant award is not an end in itself – the responsibility for the grant officially begins with the award. Several procedures have been identified to proactively establish internal control systems to meet both the Commission’s policies and to comply with funding agencies’ terms of award to which we are legally obligated.

The Grants Manager receives the award letter, coordinates related documents, and notifies the project manager of the award and reporting requirements. The project manager and Division are then responsible for ensuring the project scope is implemented within budget and in accordance with the proposed schedule. Ideally, the grant project should be carried out within the proposed time frame, but there are often unforeseen and unavoidable reasons for delays. Additionally, projects require changes in the scope of work or type of deliverable. Grantors are sympathetic to these delays and adjustments, if we diligently report changes and request appropriate authorization.

Project managers are responsible for notifying the Grants Manager to request authorization from the grantors for changes; providing necessary data for reports to the grantor, submitting all invoices timely to Finance, informing the Grants Manager when the project is completed and ready for the grantor’s site visit.

### **TRACKING GRANTS**

Two spreadsheets are attached to this document: Attachment A lists grant projects outstanding from FY04, and Attachment B lists applications pending, grant awards, and “soft money” from in-kind donations through non-profits and events sponsorship. In our internal reporting structures, a correlation is not apparent in the accounting of awards received in a given fiscal year (FY), and the spreadsheets showing open grants of current or upcoming projects. The reason can be as simple as the award letter arriving in one FY, and the funding authority from the grantor arriving toward the end of that the FY or crossing over to the next. Some awards are for CIP projects. In some cases, however, the records are difficult to track, particularly with awards from the 1990s.

In collaboration with Finance and Accounting, we have begun to work on closing out grants in both our accounts and the grantors’. We are also streamlining our reporting, accounting and reimbursement processes for grants, so that any given stage the progress of a grant is transparent and accountable. This streamlining will also facilitate audit requirements of large Federal and State grants and donations as our external sources of funding increase.

### **OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Attached to the Grant Program are three tangential responsibilities: Bond Bill funding, donations, events sponsorships, and fundraising for the Montgomery Parks Foundation. Among the procedures documents currently drafted by the Grants Manager is a Donations Guidelines, in consultation with the Operations Budget Manager. These guidelines will be used in tandem with the Gift Registry.

**ATTACHMENT A**

<b>FY04 GRANT PROJECTS UNDERWAY</b> Montgomery County Dept. of Park and Planning, M-NCPPC					
<b>Grantor</b>	<b>Grant Title</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Award Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Fund</b>
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Upgrade tennis and multi-use courts in older areas of county	December 2003	\$300,000	CIP
State Highway Administration	Transportation Enhancement Program Fund	Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail Bridge	June 2004	\$2,368,000	CIP
State of Maryland	Bond Bill	Partial funding to construct Olney Manor Skateboard Park	May 2004	\$350,000	CIP
Federal Highway Admin.	Transportation Enhancement Program Fund	Rehab. Little Falls Parkway Bridge	March 2004	\$537,123	CIP
<b>Total Grant Awards FY04</b>				<b>\$3,555,123</b>	

FY05 GRANT AWARDS & PROJECTS					
Montgomery County Dept. of Park & Planning, M-NCPPC					
COMPETITIVE GRANT AWARDS					
Grantor	Grant Title	Purpose	Award Date	Amount	Fund
State Highway Administration	Transportation Enhancement Program Fund	Sligo Creek Trail signs and kiosks	Jan 2005	\$30,000	Park
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Olney Square Park playground renovation	Jan 2005	\$64,000	CIP
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Stewartown Park playground renovation	Jan 2005	\$64,000	CIP
Montgomery Tennis Association	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	April 2005	\$5,000	Park
Historical Preservation Commission	HPC Study Grant	Historical Preservation	May 2005	\$19,741	Park
DNR, Waterway Improvement Fund	Little Seneca Lake ADA access	Little Seneca Lake ADA access	April 2005	\$3,000	CIP
Friends of Brookside Gardens	Salary assistance for interns	Brookside Gardens	May 2005	\$14,065	Park
Homeland Security Commission, MEMA	Generators and emergency equipment	Park Police	May 2005	\$30,405	Admin
Rudy Bruner Foundation	Urban Excellence Award	Community Based Planning	May 2005	\$10,000	Admin
<b>Total Competitive Grant Awards</b>				<b>\$240,211</b>	

IN-KIND AWARDS VIA NON-PROFITS, & EVENT SPONSORSHIP					
Grantor	Grant Title	Purpose	Award Date	Amount	Fund
Community Donations	Linda Weiner Memorial Fund	Capital Crescent Trailhead Enhancement	Oct. 04- Apr 05	\$ 30,100	Foundation
Points of Lights Foundation, via Mont.Co. Volunteer Dept.	MLK Day	Picnic tables for Martin Luther King Park	Mar 05	\$ 2,000	MC Volunteer Dept.
Kmart Community Makeover Grant	Kmart PAL Place	Shelter, benches and table for Good Hope Community Center	Apr 05	\$ 8,600	MC PAL
ESRI & Trimble	Mobile Government	Coupon toward Software purchase	Dec. 05	\$ 1,500	Research & Technology
Miscellaneous donors including PEPCO, Renewal by Andersen	(Event-specific donations)	Going Green at Home Fair	May 05	\$ 3,100	Admin
<b>Total Other Grants and Sponsorships</b>				<b>\$ 45,300</b>	

PENDING APPLICATIONS					
Grantor	Grant Title	Purpose	Amount	Fund	
State Highway Administration	Transportation Enhancement Program Fund	Sligo Creek Trail signs and kiosks	\$30,000	Park	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Olney Manor Recreation Park tennis court lights renovation	\$148,600	CIP	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Quebec Terrace playground renovation	\$40,000	CIP	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Flower Avenue playground renovation	\$55,000	CIP	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Randolph Hills playground renovation	\$64,000	CIP	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Stewartown playground renovation	\$64,000	CIP	
Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Comm. Parks and Playgrounds	Ellsworth playground renovation	\$67,000	CIP	
USTA	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	\$148,000	CIP	
Montgomery Tennis Assoc.	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	\$5,000	CIP	
Olney Manor Tennis Patrons	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	\$5,000	CIP	
Fish & Wildlife Foundation	Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants	Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Unit I, Erosion & Non-Native Invasive Plant control	\$13,000	Park	
USTA /NRPA	Tennis in the Parks Program	Olney Manor Park - replacement tennis lights	\$153,000	CIP	
<b>Total Pending Grant Applications</b>				<b>\$792,600</b>	