



DVRPC Regional Trails Program – Phase VII Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

Introduction

Greater Philadelphia is currently working to build the Circuit Trails, an 800-plus-mile network of multi-use trails spanning the metropolitan region. Currently, about 330 miles of this network are complete, 77 miles are in progress, and 408 miles are in some stage of planning.

To continue progress towards completion of the network as called for in *Connections 2045: Plan for Greater Philadelphia* and to meet the Circuit Trails Coalition's interim goal of completing 500 miles of trail by 2025, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Regional Trails Program (RTP) is releasing this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to advance all phases of trail development.

This funding opportunity will provide up to \$3 million for projects in the 10-county Regional Trails Program (RTP) territory (the 9-county DVRPC region plus Berks County). The program is capitalized with funding from the William Penn Foundation.

In addition, projects located in the 5-county southeastern Pennsylvania region that are awarded design and engineering funds through this program may be eligible for up to \$4 million in federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) funding.

Who is DVRPC?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a diverse nine-county region in two states: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC works to build a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable Greater Philadelphia by convening the widest array of partners to inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making. Through its programs, funding, analysis and coordination DVRPC strives to promote best practices in transportation and comprehensive planning across the region.

Who May Apply?

Phase VII RTP Grants are intended to support the efforts of local governments, state agencies, development corporations and nonprofit organizations to plan, design, and construct multi-use trails. Applicants may include state, county, municipal and city agencies and departments, nonprofit organizations and development corporations. Applicants who will not be the long-term owner, manager and maintainer of a trail must show support from the entity that will perform these functions and demonstrate that this entity has the capacity to perform these functions.



Eligible Activities

Eligible activities under Phase VII include trail planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction. Limited funding for right-of-way acquisition is also available, though these projects will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Geographic Areas of Eligibility

Projects that contribute to the completion of the Circuit Trails within the 10-county RTP territory (DVRPC 9-county region plus Berks County) are the priority focus of this grant program. A secondary priority is trails that connect to or provide access to the Circuit. Trails that do not link directly to the Circuit are a third-tier priority. To be considered for funding, applications for trails in this third category must demonstrate how they will eventually connect (via future trails or bike facilities) to larger trail networks. A detailed [interactive map](#) of the Circuit Trails can be found on the DVRPC website.

Available Funds

Up to \$3 million in private funding is available for Phase VII grants. Individual RTP awards may not exceed \$500,000.

Up to \$4 million in federal TA Set-Aside (TASA) funding may be available to construct projects that have been selected to receive a design and engineering award through the \$3 million RTP program. These funds are available for projects in southeastern Pennsylvania ONLY. Individual TASA awards may not exceed \$1 million.

Project Types and Match Requirements

Planning and Feasibility Studies

For planning and feasibility studies, a minimum match equivalent to 20 percent of the total project cost is required. In-kind services are an eligible form of match for planning and feasibility grants.

Design and Engineering

For design and engineering studies, the program will prioritize projects that provide a match, all other factors being equal. However, since applicants who pursue design and engineering funds from the RTP often subsequently seek and obtain other (non-RTP) funds for construction, a minimum match for design and engineering projects is not required. Accordingly, all applicants should indicate their proposed strategy for obtaining future construction dollars. The strategy for securing future construction dollars will be considered as a form of leverage and will be a factor in prioritizing grants.



Design and engineering applicants who successfully secure funding through this program should be aware that limited Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) funding, not to exceed \$1 million per project, may be available to construct projects in Pennsylvania. Projects that can be designed and engineered to federal standards and meet all applicable federal requirements by summer 2021 will be eligible to compete for this federal TASA funding. If selected, these projects will be added to the Pennsylvania TIP. Applicants who seek to access this funding should explain why they believe their projects can advance through the federal project development process within the allotted time frame. Factors to consider include sponsor capacity and experience, right-of-way control, and potential environmental, utility, and safety issues. Projects will be considered for this TASA funding through direct consultation between DVRPC and the applicant and advanced based on project readiness.

Construction

Construction awards from the \$3 million William Penn-funded RTP pool can only be used for projects that are NOT part of the federal process. For these construction projects, a minimum non-federal match equivalent to 20 percent of the total project cost (1 dollar in match for every four dollars of grant funding) is required. In-kind match is not eligible for construction projects. Greater consideration will be given to projects with higher match amounts all other factors being equal. Non-federal grants and local funding back-dated to October 1, 2017 qualify as acceptable match. Failure to secure match by December 31, 2019 may result in a forfeiture of the grant.

Site Control

Proposed construction projects must show that a project area is under public control or that a clear plan and funding strategy is in place to obtain site control in a timely fashion. Proposed design and engineering projects should demonstrate a process and timeline for establishing site control in cases where the ROW is not yet under public control. If available and pertinent, documentation regarding site control should be provided. If ROW issues cannot be addressed, applicants are encouraged to resolve these issues and apply to future funding cycles and programs.

Evaluation of Applications

A Regional Trails Program evaluation committee consisting of representatives from each county in the DVRPC territory, DVRPC staff, Circuit Trails Coalition representatives, and state agencies will evaluate and prioritize the applications for funding based on the program evaluation criteria outlined below.

Evaluation Criteria

The following program criteria will be used to evaluate design and engineering, and construction projects for funding. The criteria for *planning and feasibility* projects are listed separately below.



Note: Criteria in **black** are applicable to both design and construction projects; criteria in **blue** are applicable to design and engineering projects; criteria in **red** are applicable to construction projects.

1. Project Readiness

- a. Is the ROW fully under public control or eased for trail use?
 - i. If not, how many additional acquisitions are necessary?
 - ii. Who does ROW need to be acquired from and what is the current status of the acquisition process?
- b. Are there potential obstacles and barriers such as bridges, road crossings, rail crossings, utility conflicts, retaining walls, tunnels, and sensitive environmental resources?
- c. *Construction only: Has the design been completed? If not completed, is design funded?*
- d. *Construction only: What is the schedule for completion of construction?*

2. Funding

- a. *Design only: Existence of a strategy for acquiring future construction funding and identification of the proposed source.*
- b. *Design only: If available, what is the amount and type of match funding?*
- c. *Construction only: Identification of required 20 percent non-federal match funding*
- d. *Construction only: What is the accuracy of construction cost estimate? Is it based on completed design work?*
- e. *Construction only: Ability and commitment of sponsor to cover cost overruns*

3. Political and Community Support

- a. *Design only: Demonstration of community support*
- b. *Design only: Existence (or lack) of public controversy, NIMBYism, or opposition*
- c. *Design only: Support of local elected officials and agency staff*
- d. *Design only: Existence of trail or trail corridor on local, county and state plans*

4. Trail Geography

- a. Is the trail on the Circuit?
- b. If not on the Circuit, does the trail connect to the Circuit?
- c. If the trail does not connect to the Circuit, how might it connect in the future?
- d. Ability of the project to close gaps in the Circuit or connect to existing Circuit trails
- e. Number of trail miles designed or constructed
- f. Connection to a park, town center, trail hub, transit node or other destination.
- g. Potential for project to connect to new constituencies, particularly in underserved, economically-challenged or racially diverse communities

5. Sponsor Capacity for Project Management

- a. *Design only: Sponsor experience managing trail design projects. Has the sponsor worked with qualified trail design consultants in the past?*
- b. *Construction only: Sponsor experience managing trail construction projects*
- c. Staff resources dedicated to project management



6. Sponsor Capacity for Stewardship

- a. Ability of sponsor/partner to manage and maintain trails
- b. Presence of a volunteer and/or “friends-of” group
- c. Sponsor willingness and enthusiasm for stewardship

7. Transportation and Use Characteristics

- a. Increased potential future use of the Circuit trail network
- b. Does the trail provide access to “new” users?
- c. Presence of origins and destinations (trip generators) – neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, employment hubs, natural areas, recreation destinations
- d. Estimated number of users
- e. Commuting/transportation potential

8. Economics

- a. Cost per mile of design or construction
- b. Economic benefits
 - i. Potential community revitalization
 - ii. Economic development potential/benefits – i.e., increased recreation, improvement of trail-adjacent businesses and/or residential and commercial development

9. Trail Typology and Specifications

- a. Paved or crushed stone surface designed to accommodate bicycles and/or wheeled mobility devices?
- b. Trail width – minimum preference of 10ft (with limited exceptions)
- c. Off-road and/or physically buffered from motorized traffic?
- d. Does the facility meet AASHTO and ADA requirements where applicable?

The following program criteria will be used to evaluate *planning and feasibility* projects for funding.

1. Right-of-Way

- a. Has right-of-way been secured for the proposed trail?
- b. If right of way has not been secured (likely the case for a planning project), what is the likelihood that future right-of-way can be secured and at what cost?

2. Political and Community Support

- a. Demonstration of community support
- b. Existence (or lack) of public controversy, NIMBYism, or opposition
- c. Support of local elected officials and agency staff
- d. Existence of trail or trail corridor on local, county and/or state plans

3. Trail Geography

- a. Is the trail on the Circuit?

- b. If not on the Circuit, does the trail connect to the Circuit?
 - c. If the trail does not connect to the Circuit, how might it connect in the future?
 - d. Ability of the project to close gaps in the Circuit or connect to existing Circuit trails
 - e. Potential connection to a park, town center, trail hub, transit node or other destination.
 - f. Potential for project to connect to new constituencies, particularly in underserved, economically-challenged or racially diverse communities
4. **Sponsor Capacity for Project Management**
 - a. Does the sponsor have experience managing trail planning and feasibility projects?
 5. **Transportation and Use Characteristics**
 - a. Does the proposed trail provide access to “new” users?
 - b. Presence of origins and destinations (trip generators) – neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, employment hubs, natural areas, recreation destinations
 - c. Does the project have commuting/transportation potential?
 6. **Economics**
 - a. Potential for community revitalization, increased recreation, and improvement of trail-adjacent businesses and/or residential and commercial development
 7. **Trail Typology and Specifications**
 - a. Is it reasonable to expect that the project can meet minimum Circuit standards?

Response Requirements

Responses to this FOA should be in the form of a letter no more than four (4) pages in length (single spaced 12 point type). In addition, applicants should complete and include the 1-page application form included on page 9 of this FOA. Responses should include the following information:

- A description of the proposed project area and extent (supported by a project map).
- A description of the proposed project, including how it helps to complete a segment of the Circuit or connect to a Circuit trail.
- A brief description of how the proposed project responds to the evaluation criteria relevant to your project.
- Projects seeking both design/engineering funding and TASA construction funding should explain how/why their projects can move through the federal process in two years or less.
- A rough narrative of the budget and timeline, including the amount and source of match (as applicable).

Applicants are also required to submit a project map(s). The map(s) should indicate general project location and connectivity to the Circuit Trails. Map(s) should be clear and easy to read. Relevant documentation regarding site control/ownership, if available and pertinent, may also be



attached to the submission. Map(s) and site control documentation do not count against the 4-page limit.

Non-profits or community development corporations submitting an application should include a letter(s) demonstrating support from the entity that will ultimately own, manage, and/or maintain the trail. Other letters of support and ancillary materials are optional and should only be included if they are directly relevant to the project under consideration.

Applicants are invited to contact Chris Linn at clinn@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2873 to discuss projects or go over any questions they may have prior to submitting their application.

Schedule

All submissions pursuant to this FOA must be delivered to DVRPC no later than 5:00 PM on Friday December 14, 2018 via electronic means (see submission instructions below). Applications received after the due date and time will not be considered. Projects will be evaluated in December and January and selected projects will be submitted to the DVRPC Board for approval in winter 2019. Individual applicants may be contacted during the evaluation period to provide additional information and clarifications.

Successful applicants will be notified following DVRPC Board approval, after which time contracting procedures will be initiated. All project tasks must be completed no later than 36 months after the start of the contract. Failure to meet this schedule could result in a forfeiture of grant funds.

Grant Terms and Administration

RTP Grants may not be used for general operating costs, acquisition of buildings, staff positions, litigation, lobbying, or scholarships. If selected, project costs will be reimbursed based on submittal of invoices documenting costs, including documentation of in-kind contributions where applicable. If selected, the applicant will work with DVRPC to execute a contract agreement. The applicant will be required to work with DVRPC staff to develop a scope of work (based on the information provided in the funding request) and a detailed budget describing what the grant funds will be used for.

Project Delivery and the Use of Consultants

Proposed project activities may be undertaken by organization staff, a design or engineering consultant, a construction contractor or some combination of the above as appropriate. If an outside consultant is sought, the selection process must comply with all local requirements and must also adhere to the standards of any applicable matching funding source. The project sponsor or their hired forces are responsible for ensuring that all standards and regulations are followed for any matching funding source or future construction funding source (in the case of design projects).



Submission

Responses are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, December 14, 2018. All responses must be submitted by email to RegionalTrails_FOA@dvrpc.org or uploaded to this [DVRPC Google drive folder](#). Please note that DVRPC cannot receive documents via Dropbox.

Please direct all questions to Chris Linn at clinn@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2873.

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website, www.dvrpc.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. DVRPC public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities, and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a public meeting. Requests will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by DVRPC under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint may be in writing and filed with DVRPC's Title VI Compliance Manager and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on DVRPC's Title VI program or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please visit: www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI, call (215) 592-1800, or email public_affairs@dvrpc.org.



Regional Trails Program – Phase VII Grants – Application Form

General Information

Proposed Project Title: _____

Applicant Organization: _____

Applicant Contact Name: _____

Applicant Contact Address: _____

Applicant Contact Phone: _____

Applicant Contact Email: _____

Location of Project

Municipality(ies): _____

County(ies): _____

Please list any connecting or adjacent trails: _____

RTP Application Request

Request Amount: _____

Match Amount: _____

Transportation Alternative Set-Aside (TASA) Request (if applicable)

Request Amount: _____