

## Section 2

# Financial Resources

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The purpose of this section is to explore *optional* funding or revenue sources for implementing the projects and programs established in this Plan. In general, the County should use this section as a starting point for development of the overall financial management strategy and the pursuit of alternative financial resources.

### A. Potential Funding Sources

In general, there are numerous funding sources available to the County and its local partners to implement this Plan. The following is a non-inclusive list of financial resources available:

#### Federal

- TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) – FHWA/MN DOT – trails.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund – National Park Service – parks and recreation areas.
- Community Based Programs – US EPA programs to support open space protection (see [www.epa.gov.ecocommunity/matrix.htm](http://www.epa.gov.ecocommunity/matrix.htm))

#### State

- Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources – LCMR – recreation, water, and habitat grants.
- Outdoor Recreation Grants – MN DNR – park facilities, shelters, trails, beaches, land.
- Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program – MN DNR – land or conservation easements.
- Conservation Partners Grants – MN DNR – fish, plant and wildlife habitat improvement.
- Cooperative Trail Linkage Grant/Local Trail Connections Program - DNR
- Regional Trail Initiative Grant Program – MN DNR – trail development and land.
- Grants-In-Aid Program (Minnesota Trail Assistance Program) – MN DNR – snowmobile, skiing, ATV trails.
- Public Boat Access Grants – MN DNR – water access facilities and land.
- Fishing Pier Grants – MN DNR – fishing opportunities.
- State/county highway funding programs – MN DOT (see [www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us))

### **Foundations and Non-Profits**

- Blandin Foundation.
- Initiative Foundation.
- McKnight Foundation.
- Bush Foundation.
- Kodak Greenways Award program.
- Conservation and outdoor recreation organizations – Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, and others.

### **Local Units of Government**

- Property taxes – county, cities, and townships.
- User fees – facility improvements, maintenance.
- Bonds – local government financing tools to pay for capital improvements.
- Referendums.
- Annual operating budgets – maintenance, replacement funds.
- Annual capital budgets.
- Costs share programs – Todd County SWCD and NRCS programs.

### **Private Sector**

- Park dedication requirements – subdivision plat process.
- Voluntary donations – equipment, easements, land.
- Contributions – cash, securities.
- In kind matches – labor, knowledge, time, energy, political support.
- Fundraisers – bake sales, benefits dinners, door-to-door sales, etc.

The above list provides the County with an initial list of potential funding sources. Although the list is lengthy, it is not exhaustive. There are many sources available to fund recreation and open space projects. Since successful organizations tend to be more active in pursuing alternative funding sources, the County should actively explore and evaluate these and other potential funding sources over the life of this Plan to help pay for the cost of implementing the various projects and programs.

Some citizens and CAC members expressed concerns about the use of local public funds for recreation projects. One of their concerns is the limited amount of funds and the increasing property tax levels. It was noted in this planning process that public safety and health and more basic government services should typically be higher priorities for the County than recreation. In general, the CAC supported the pursuing of outside funding sources for recreation projects.

The following is a brief description of two of the programs that recreational groups in the County have already received funding from or are in the process of exploring the use of:

### Snowmobile Grants-in-Aid Program (MN DNR)

The Todd Area Trails Snowmobile Association receives funding support from the state through the Snowmobile Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Program. This program was created in 1973 by the state legislature. The current level of assistance available from the MN DNR provides up to 65 percent of the total eligible costs for trail administration, development, and maintenance costs with the local club or sponsor providing the remaining 35 percent. Winter trail grooming is cost shared up to 90 percent of the total eligible costs from the state and 10 percent from the local clubs. Funding for cross-country skiing is also available from the MN DNR through this program.

### MN DNR Outdoor Grant Recreation Program

Some highlights to consider for Battle Point Park (or any other recreation project)

- The due date for grant applications for this funding cycle (2 years) is typically in the spring of even numbered years. (see [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)).
- The minimum total project cost is \$10,000.
- A minimum 50 percent match of total costs is required.
- Local share matches can include cash or the value of materials, labor, and equipment usage.
- A public hearing by the local unit of government is required before the application is submitted.
- The application packet includes 20 information items that need to be incorporated into a submittal.
- Applicants are eligible to receive more than one grant.

## **B. Finance Recommendations**

1. Inventory and Assess Potential Funding Sources. Throughout the life of this Plan, the County and its local partners should continually seek new funding opportunities to implement the Plan. The County should periodically inventory and assess the status of potential funding sources. The list of potential funding sources should be regularly updated and distributed to the CAB, County Board, cities and townships, and recreation organizations in the County for their use and consideration.
2. Build Working Relationships. Seek to build good working relationships with regional, state and federal agencies that administer programs to support recreation and open space projects in the County.
3. Financial Collaborations. Work with and support efforts by the school districts, cities and townships as well as recreational organizations to implement projects recommended in this Plan.
4. Friends of Todd County. The County should consider creating a volunteer non-profit organization that focuses on private fundraising and volunteer development to help in the coordination and implementation of projects and programs outlined in this Plan. By establishing a 501 (c) 3 organization, interested citizens and businesses would be able to contribute tax deductible donations.

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