



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services & Special Projects

DATE: March 30, 2022

SUBJECT: Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants – Authorization to Apply  
CIP #567 Canal Street Riverfront Park  
CIP #51: White Park Monkey Around Playground

### **Recommendation:**

1. Accept this report;
2. Approve the attached consent resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for up to \$500,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants to support development of the Canal Street Riverfront Park (CIP #567); and,
3. Approve the attached consent resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for up to \$400,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants to support replacement of the Monkey Around Playground at White Park (CIP #51).

### **Background:**

Authorized by Congress and signed into Law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 established a federally funded program to provide 50/50 matching grants to state and local governments for the purpose of acquiring and/or developing public recreational areas and facilities. The program is administered by the US Department of Interior National Parks Service, and managed by the States via block grants.

In New Hampshire, the LWCF program is managed by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources' Division of Parks and Recreation.

LWCF may fund up to 50% of a project. The minimum award is \$35,000. The maximum award is capped at \$500,000. Awards are typically made 12 months after the application deadline.

Unless otherwise approved by the US Secretary of the Interior, properties which are acquired or improved with LWCF grants must forever be used for public recreational purposes.

Since 1967, the City has received twenty-five (25) LWCF grants totaling more than \$2.2 million for a variety of City recreational facilities.

## **Discussion:**

The current LWCF grant round opens on April 29, 2022. City Administration recommends the City Council authorize the City Manager to apply for LWCF funds for the Canal Street Riverfront Park (CIP #567) and the White Park Monkey Around Playground (CIP #51). Both projects, which are included on the City Council's Priorities, as adopted on February 7, 2022, were selected due to programmatic goals of the LWCF program, as well as the likelihood of securing matching funds.

If successful, LWCF grants would become available in spring 2023. City Administration would seek City Council authorization to accept and appropriate grant funds at that time, as well as appropriation of matching funds if not otherwise addressed as part of the forthcoming FY2023 Budget.

An overview of each project is below:

- Canal Street Riverfront Park (CIP #567): First conceived as part of the 2004 Penacook Mill and Tannery Visioning Charrette, and carried forward in the City's 2015 Penacook Village Plan, this project entails redeveloping a 2+/- acre City owned former Brownfields property located at 11 Canal Street into a new riverfront park. The property, which has over 515' of frontage on the Contoocook River, was acquired and assembled by the City through multiple purchases undertaken during 2003-2012.

Development of the Park represents the final phase of redevelopment of the former Allied Leather Tannery Brownfields Redevelopment Project, which was initiated in 2002.

In June 2021, the City Council appropriated \$110,000 of impact fees to support design and construction of the facility. Using a Request for Qualifications and Experience ("RFQu&E"), the City engaged the landscape architecture and civil engineering firm Greenman-Pederson, Inc. ("GPI") for the project.

GPI was engaged in March 2022 and the project is moving forward. The design process includes a robust public participation process consisting of meetings with abutters, the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee ("RPAC"), as well as community forum / visioning charrette; all of which shall be undertaken this spring.

In addition to the new Park, the project scope also includes reconstruction of Canal Street Municipal Parking Lot, as well as streetscape improvements along Canal Street to be coordinated with General Services Department's anticipated reconstruction of Canal Street in summer 2023 per CIP #78.

Pending confirmation of desired amenities with the community during the upcoming public participation process, the estimated project cost is \$1.3-\$1.8 million. In addition to LWCF, the project would be funded by Penacook Tax Increment Finance District bonds, Parking Fund bonds (to support reconstruction of the Canal Street Parking Lot), and recreational impact fees. The project is tentatively scheduled for construction in spring / summer 2023.

- White Park Monkey Around Playground (CIP #51): The playground at White Park was built in 1994. The facility was designed by Playground by Leathers, a national playground company that specializes in community-built playgrounds. Financed by donations and

constructed by volunteers, the playground had an estimated useful life of 20 years. The facility is now 28 years old.

In May, 2015 the Parks and Recreation Department engaged Playground by Leathers to return to Concord to conduct a needs assessment of the facility. The cost was equally shared by the City and the Friends of White Park.

During 2018-2021 a variety of public meetings were held to discuss the condition of the facility, and replacement options associated therewith. During this time, several design concepts for a replacement facility were commissioned.

The current estimated cost to replace the Monkey Around Playground is \$800,000. If the City's LWCF application is successful, it is anticipated that the City's financing plan for the project would consist of \$400,000 in LWCF grants, \$200,000 in city funds, and \$200,000 in donations secured through a fundraising program led by the Friends of White Park.