

**Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Limited Grant Round Federal FY26**

Preliminary Local Application

To apply, please:

1. Read the LWCF Competitive Grant Announcement and the Open Project Selection Process Criteria for Local Government Projects documents, found on the [LWCF webpage](#), which provide information about the requirements and commitments of LWCF assistance and the selection criteria.
2. Complete the following form, the **Preliminary Local Application**.
3. For Development Projects: Gather the additional required documents listed below.
 - a. **Site development plan** indicating all anticipated improvements. This can be a marked-up version of aerial imagery for the location.
 - b. **SDAT record(s) or deed(s)** showing ownership by applicant. Consult the LWCF manual for guidance on projects situated on properties with less than fee simple ownership.
4. Email the application form and required documents to Molly Pickel (molly.pickel@maryland.gov) with the subject, "LWCF Grant Application: [Jurisdiction Name], [Name of Grant]."

Preliminary applications are due by 5 p.m. on June 25, 2025.

If you have questions, please contact Molly Pickel
molly.pickel@maryland.gov | 443-223-4302.



1. PROJECT INFORMATION:

Type of project	Acquisition _____ Development <u>X</u> Combination _____
Project Title	<u>RedGate Park</u>
Estimated Total Project Cost	<u>\$3 million</u>
Estimated Total LWCF Request	<u>\$1,500,000</u>

2. PROJECT SITE

Street Address or Coordinates 14500 Avery Road

City/Town Rockville County Montgomery Zip Code 20850

SDAT Account Identifier(s) 04-00151815

District-Subdivision-Account Number or Ward-Section-Block-Lot (as applicable). Please list all parcels included in the acquisition or park and attach separate sheet if necessary.

3. APPLICANT INFORMATION: Note that the Applicant is also the County or Municipality that will be receiving the funding at reimbursement.

Applicant Entity Mayor and Council of Rockville

Contact Name Elisabeth Deal

Street Address 111 Maryland Ave

City/Town Rockville County MD Zip Code 20850

Phone Number 240-314-8658 Email Address edeal@rockvillemd.gov

4. PROJECT DETAILS: The [LWCF Public Viewer](#) can help determine the answers to these questions.

Does the applicant have an open/active LWCF project? Yes XX No _____

Has the project site previously received LWCF assistance? Yes XX No _____

If yes, please list the LWCF Project Number(s) and Title(s):

Uncertain. Parcel ID no. 04-03707296

The sections below can be expanded as needed. You may also attach a separate sheet with this information, using the headers listed below.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Please explain the proposed project and be specific about what is included. Consider ways in which the project **meets recreational needs, preserves ecological value, and creates a unique experience for users.** Provide all the information that you feel is necessary to explain and justify the project. Attach a separate sheet, if necessary.

With a population of 67,100, the City of Rockville is the tenth largest city in Maryland. According to census data, the population has grown nearly 9% since 2010. This growth has led to increased pressures on open space and the desire to preserve park and recreational areas for the environmental health and wellness of future generations.

RedGate Park is an approximately 130-acre site located in the City of Rockville at the intersection of Norbeck and Avery Roads. Formerly a golf course, the site is currently enjoyed by the community for events and predominantly passive uses. In early 2021, the planning process began to convert the golf course into a public park and arboretum.

RedGate Park is envisioned to be a predominantly passive park that emphasizes natural habitat and pathway enhancements throughout. Passive areas of the park represent approximately 90% of the total park acreage. The central park area will include features and amenities interwoven with the natural habitat areas—including a community gardens, picnic area, playground, dog park, visitor center, and amphitheater with an associated deck overlook. Over time, the park will be established as an arboretum, which will include various botanical garden collections, specimen and tree collections and other focal plantings. Interpretive signage will be added as an

educational opportunity to highlight important landscape and natural features which will have access provided along the pathway network.

Environmental Site Design (ESD)—including an emphasis on native and adaptive vegetation, bioswales, rain gardens, pervious paving, and/or green roofs—will be utilized and integrated into the landscape design of park features. While some natural areas of the park may not be accessible to visitors with mobility concerns due to the existing steep terrain in certain locations, most park features, and all experiences will be accessible to all.

The estimated cost to develop the entire park is \$20 million over the next ten years. The focus of this proposal to the LWCF is to develop several components: design, site work, paths, natural trails, pedestrian bridges, deck overlook, benches, environmental educational signage, and elements of an arboretum, and is estimated to cost \$3 million.

One of the primary features of RedGate Park is the trail and pathway network. This network is comprised of both existing and new trails and pathways that create a series of circuits of varying lengths (from less than ½-mile to about 3 miles). These paths provide park users opportunities for walking and hiking, general exercise, enjoyment of nature, and connectivity among park features, and will be marked with mile markers. Some segments of the existing pathway system (originally designed to support golf activities) will be removed while remaining segments are joined by connecting paths to provide logical circulation throughout the park. Some paths will have a slope less than 5% and be paved with an appropriate surface for accessibility. Some segments of existing paths that are greater than 5% will remain to provide connections between circuits and to provide more challenging experiences for those seeking them. These paths will be marked with signage advising park users of the steeper conditions. Two pedestrian bridges will be replaced to improve safety and access. Pathway materials will include asphalt, permeable paving, natural surface, boardwalks, and pedestrian bridges. In addition to the primary pathway network, rugged natural trails will provide access to woodland areas and will develop over time to accommodate park programming and usage. The entire pathway network will allow for programming of cross-country running events, nature walks of varying course lengths, and for the flexibility to establish different routes as needed. While the pathway network within RedGate Park is extensive, connections between RedGate Park, the surrounding community, and regional assets also need to be considered as the master plan is implemented, but is not included in this phase of park development.

The deck overlook will be installed around portions of the pond using boardwalk materials to enable visitors to observe the aquatic habitat and facilitate nature-based programming. Accessible benches will be placed throughout the park. Environmental education signs will be used to inform the public about the various species and thriving ecosystem that can be found at RedGate Park.

Portions of RedGate Park are envisioned to be an arboretum—implemented incrementally—with a majority of the park reserved for passive recreation and natural habitats. Arboretum elements, including tree identification labels, will be integrated into the landscape and park features. Most of the arboretum will be comprised of the natural habitat areas located throughout RedGate Park. These features include existing natural habitat areas (forests and meadows currently present in RedGate Park) and enhanced habitat areas (new forests and feature landscapes, or non-forest habitats, including meadows and limited-mow areas). The arboretum will utilize labeled native and naturalized plant collections to highlight these habitats and aquatic habitats along RedGate’s streams and pond edges. With all arboretum features, there is an emphasis on protecting and improving bird habitat. The design of various habitat types will create unique opportunities for a variety of nature-based programming. The pathway network will provide accessibility to most of the habitat areas and arboretum features. Where habitats and arboretum features are not accessible to those facing mobility challenges, duplicative landscapes and/or interpretive signage will be provided within nearby accessible areas in order to provide an enjoyable and equally informative experience.

6. ALIGNMENT WITH THE COUNTY LPPRP: Please briefly explain how the proposed project advances goals identified in your county’s Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

7. ALIGNMENT WITH STATE LPRP: Please briefly explain how the proposed project advances goals identified in the state of Maryland's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPRP). Those goals are included in the box below for your reference. Your project is not required to meet all these goals; you may delete any that are not applicable.

1. *Promote the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation of Natural Lands*
2. *Increase Access to Open Spaces and Waterfronts*
3. *Improve What's Already Available*
4. *Develop an Informed Stewardship Culture*

The Reimagining RedGate Park proposal aligns with several of Maryland's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan goals.

1. Promote the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation of Natural Lands

Having a 130-acre park in a city as densely populated as Rockville provides an opportunity to not only conserve natural lands, but to also incorporate recreational elements. RedGate Park is located adjacent to key habitat restoration areas within or next to Upland Corridor Restorable Gaps as identified by Maryland's Environmental Resource & Land Information Network (MERLIN) maps. The RedGate Park Master Plan includes the reestablishment of native habitat and will manage non-native invasive plant species. Tree planting for the arboretum and related work within RedGate Park will prioritize and emphasize the protection of trees and understory species supportive of local-regional ecosystem, and habitat appropriate for local and migratory animal and bird species. Where possible, plantings and habitat restoration will provide essential habitat to threatened or sensitive species. With the addition of picnic pavilions and access to water, the community can gather for celebrations, recreational programs, and other outdoor activities at RedGate Park that is currently not feasible. The Master Plan calls for preservation and enhancement of the natural qualities of the site, with close attention to protecting and supporting the ecosystem due to its proximity to state-recognized green corridors and zones of high ecological value at nearby Rock Creek Regional Park, Rock Creek, North Branch Creek, and Lake Frank. Mindful removal-replacement-upgrades of existing utility infrastructure in the future will protect watershed function.

Revising RedGate Park with new habitat restoration should be looked at as part of an important central-county greenspace corridor system. RedGate has approximately 1,425 linear feet (.27 mile) of shared boundary alongside the Rock Creek Regional Park – Rock Creek Stream Valley system, which stretches across 1,800 acres and includes recognized important wetland areas. Portions of RedGate Park along this boundary area are considered significant for bio-diversity conservation. There is a sub-portion along this boundary area that is targeted as an upland corridor restorable gap zone. Future habitat restoration efforts within RedGate Park will be responsive and sympathetic to those opportunities.

2. Increase Access to Open Spaces and Waterfronts

The proposed pathways and trails will provide access to large portions of the park. As previously noted, many paths will have a slope less than 5% and be paved with an appropriate surface for accessibility. Some segments of existing paths that are greater than 5% will remain to provide connections between circuits and to provide more challenging experiences for those seeking them. The Park also features various ponds and wetland habitats that provide a unique experience for visitors with connecting pathways and bridges. The deck overlook will add a unique opportunity to observe the aquatic habitat of the pond. Park paths will be marked with signage advising park users of the steeper conditions as well as directions to get to the various park amenities. Accessible paths will lead from parking lots to multiple amenities including picnic pavilions, playground equipment, and open space.

3. Improve What's Already Available

As noted, there are existing golf cart paths throughout RedGate Park. Many paths are currently in disrepair or are not ADA accessible. Support from the LWCF would enable the city to improve or replace pathways.

4. Develop an Informed Stewardship Culture

The arboretum will provide educational opportunities for the community to learn about trees as well as the local ecosystem. With improved trails and the deck overlook, it will be more feasible for Rockville's naturalists to

conduct educational workshops, camps, tours, and community clean up days on site. RedGate Park will provide the city with an opportunity to provide unique pond and wetland habitats to improve and utilize for educational events.

8. PROJECT TIMELINE AND READINESS: LWCF projects must be completed within three years of the start date assigned by the National Parks Service. Please provide an estimated timeline for the completion of your project. You can use the estimated start date of March 1, 2025 or provide estimates (e.g. 2-3 months) of how long each step of the project will take. Please be as specific as possible about the duration of different elements of the project. For acquisitions, please provide evidence that you are ready to acquire the property (e.g. have a current Yellow Book appraisal or there is a purchase agreement completed). For development, please indicate any work, such as design or master planning that is already complete, as well as any permits you anticipate needing.

February 2026: The Design Team selection process begins, RFP submittals reviewed. Committee recommendation forwarded to Council for approval and Design Notice to Proceed.
Spring 2026: Design process completed (12 months)
Summer 2027: Permitting, bidding, construction completed. (2 years)

9. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Please provide a description of prior public comment/engagement or an explanation of how public comments/engagement will be conducted prior to the start of the project

In 2021, the City of Rockville led a planning process for the development of the [Re-Imagining RedGate Park](#) Master Plan that will be implemented over time. The Master Plan process has been informed by extensive public input via public tours at RedGate, Community Forum at Mayor and Council meetings and surveys, as well as analysis of existing park conditions, guidance by the Rockville Recreation and Park Advisory Board, and the Mayor and Council. In addition, the RedGate Master Plan is consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) with the goal of meeting Maryland's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan to achieve a 50% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030. Specifically highlighted as a goal in CAP is managing open space to improve ecological health and services, contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change, support ecosystem resiliency, and enhance human health and recreation opportunities.

10. PUBLIC ACCESS AND ADA-ACCESSIBILITY: Please briefly describe the public access that will be available on the property and note any restrictions or limitations, both prior and subsequent to development. Please note that acquisitions will need to have public access within three years of acquisition. Please indicate any ways in which ADA-accessibility is being incorporated.

Park is closed Sunset to Sunrise. Design process to make featured amenities accessible.

11. ITEMIZED DETAILED COST ESTIMATE: Please provide estimates of the project budget with as much detail as possible. At least 50% of the project must be funded by matching funds. If your project is split 50/50 between LWCF and Match funds and it is allowable by your matching funds, it is recommended that each budget item be split 50/50. Please see the LWCF manual for a detailed description of allowable and non-allowable costs. Use the narrative section to add detail (e.g. if the budget item is picnic tables, detail how many tables will be included and whether they will be under a pavilion or scattered throughout the park).

	Total Cost	LWCF Share	Match Share	Narrative
Administrative and legal expenses				
Item				
Land, structures, rights-of-way, appraisals, etc.				
Item				
Relocation Expenses and Payments				
Item				
Architectural and Engineering Fees				
Design	350,000	175,000	175,000	
Project Inspection Fees				
Item				
Site Work				
Item				
Demolition and Removal				
Item				
Construction				
Paths	1,300,000	650,000	650,000	Asphalt, Flexipave (pervious), natural trails, - approx. 1-2 miles
Pedestrian Bridges (2)	850,000	425,000	425,000	Site work, abutments, bridge structure, connections, etc.
Deck overlook	400,000	200,000	200,000	Raised boardwalk and deck overlook of the stormwater facility (pond), abutments, land connections, site work, etc.
Equipment				
Benches with companion pads, interpretive educational signs, etc.	100,000	50,000	50,000	12 benches with concrete pad for companion, 8 educational signs.
Miscellaneous				
Total	\$3,000,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	

Are there any pre-award design/engineering costs anticipated? Yes, the City will award the design and engineering contract by March 2026. If approved costs for design, borings, testing, engineering, etc. will be incurred pre-award

How was this budget developed? Estimates based on RedGate Master Plan order of magnitude cost estimates. Prices include a 20 percent contingency and 3 percent escalation each year.

Are there any items not included in this budget that contribute to the project (e.g. previous planning, design, outreach efforts)? Other funding that contributes to the project includes but is not limited to, design/engineering costs for amenities and site work outside of this LWCF grant application, \$100,000 for Re-Imagining RedGate Park process that included community engagement/outreach and planning efforts and approximately \$100,000 for a natural resource inventory and forest stand delineation plan. In addition, Program Open Space funding for construction of other amenities in the RedGate Park Master Plan will be used for the park build out (\$2 million). Chesapeake Bay Trust grant funding for afforestation was received in 2023 (\$199,000) and 2024 (\$181,720). LWCF application 2024 (request of \$1.5 million with City match of \$1.5 million)

What are the sources and amounts of your matching funds?

City of Rockville Capital Improvement Program project funding (\$1,500,000 million)

Additional Notes:

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZATION

As the authorized representative of this local jurisdiction, I read the LWCF Manual and the Federal FY26 LWCF Grant Application Information document and I agree to perform all work in accordance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and Manual. If this project is selected to be submitted to the National Park Service, then the applicant will be required to sign an agreement with the MD DNR, which acknowledges responsibility for compliance with the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965; signing this agreement is a condition for DNR to submit the application to the National Park Service. Some of these agreed to terms include items such as:

1. Understanding that land assisted with LWCF, either through acquisition or development, is to be protected and maintained in public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.
2. No agricultural leases or profit from agriculture of any kind may exist on the 6(f) property.
3. Structures not in direct support of public outdoor recreation are not allowed on the 6(f) property.
4. All development and acquisition projects must be completed within three years from the provided start date. Only expenditures incurred within the approved LWCF project period are eligible for reimbursement. Grantees do not receive funds at the time of approval. The applicant must incur 100 percent of the total project cost; submit evidence of eligible expenditures throughout project implementation and payment thereof; and request reimbursement from MD DNR after the project has been completed and National Park Service has officially closed the grant.

Signature of Authorized Contact

Date

Print Name

Print Title