

DCNR Peer Grant Program
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

Peer Consultant Training Manual

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Table of Contents

Purpose of the DCNR Peer Grant Program	3
Historical Development of the DCNR Peer Grant Program	4
Peer Grant Program Basic Requirements	5
Peer Grant Approval Process	6
DCNR and Grantee Roles and Responsibilities	7
Peer Consultant Responsibilities, Roles and Keys to Success	9
Peer Contractual Issues	12
Public Engagement Process	14
Appendix A: Peer Grant Guidelines	17
Appendix B: Partnership Grant Administrative Instructions	23
Appendix C: Peer Consultant Agreement and Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause	29
Appendix D: Sample Budget, Timeline and Scope of Work	33
Appendix E: Public Participation Guide	38

Purpose of the DCNR Peer Grant Program

The Peer Grant Program is a consulting technical assistance service coordinated by Bureau staff. The peer consultant, typically a park and recreation practitioner or conservation professional, is hired to help a municipality solve an existing problem or improve services in a specific area.

This service provides the grantee with the management-related technical services of an experienced professional who has extensive training, knowledge and experience in the issues related to the project. When the consultation is completed, the municipality will be provided with a course of action, a set of recommendations to help address the problem studied, and encouraged to consider and implement these recommendations. The final product will include a written report that must be approved by the Bureau and municipality.

Some benefits of the Peer Grant Program include:

1. This grant program provides an opportunity for DCNR to respond more quickly to helping communities solve complicated challenges and develop capacity for recreation, parks and conservation at the local level.
2. Since a community can apply for a Peer Grant any time of the year, technical assistance can be provided in a timely manner with more immediate results produced for the grantee.
3. The peer consultant is a professional with no connection to the community and thus is able to provide professional, unbiased assistance and direction.

Historical Development of the DCNR Peer Grant Program

The first peer project was conducted in Altoona City (Blair County) in 1992. The peer consultant was Susan E. Landis, executive director of the Lancaster Recreation Commission. The purpose of the project was to study the feasibility of forming a regional recreation commission. Within 18 months the 50+ year old Altoona Recreation Commission was disbanded (with considerable opposition) and Altoona City, Logan Township and the Altoona Area School District formed the Central Blair Recreation Commission.

Today the [Central Blair Recreation Commission](#) is going strong with seven full-time, two part-time and 45 seasonal staff. The Commission offers 30+ programs and has an annual budget of \$746,000.

Since then the Bureau has awarded 100 peer grants with projects ranging from the creation of regional agreements (the majority of projects) to specific projects such as creating a shared website and data base for recreation programs; the evaluation and management of swimming pools, recreation centers and trails; and the development of conceptual park plans.

With today's economic challenges support for traditional peer requests to explore the creation of regional recreation commissions is down. The Bureau has been examining the program's use and is exploring other peer application projects such as advancing river town activity, providing additional grant management support for small communities, and developing stronger health and public recreation connections.

Peer Grant Program Basic Requirements

Apply Anytime – The Bureau accepts and considers peer grant applications at any time. We budget for about 8-10 projects annually. Grant funds are still contingent upon the availability and submission of an acceptable and eligible application.

Only Municipalities Can Apply – Peer grant funding comes from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund. Townships, boroughs, cities, and counties are eligible applicants, along with entities officially created by a municipality such as a council of government or a conservation district. Non-profits are not eligible applicants but should be encouraged to be strong participants.

Available Funding - A maximum grant award of \$10,000 is available. The community must provide at least a 10% **cash** match (typically \$1,000). The total project cost can exceed \$11,000 but regardless of the total project cost the DCNR grant can only be up to \$10,000.

Scope Tailored to Meet Expressed Needs – The current focus of the Peer Grant Program is to provide technical assistance at the local level to meet the needs of the recreation, park and conservation community. Each project is designed specifically for the community by Bureau staff, the peer consultant and the grantee/community.

There is no one-size fits all approach. What works in some communities may not work with others; or some key steps require more time. A successful peer consultant needs to be creative and flexible – there may be an approved scope of work but a new, better opportunity may present itself during the public process.

Typical Length – While the grant agreement will be for three years, peer projects should be completed in 12-18 months.

Eligible Activities Cost and Match – Grant funds can be used to pay for Bureau approved peer consultant's time, travel expenses, subsistence costs, clerical support and printing. Payment of other professional services such as attorney fees will be considered on a case by case basis. Subsistence costs for meals, lodging and automobile mileage shall not exceed the rates allowed by the Commonwealth.

Peer Grant Approval Process

Below is an outline of the typical process that is followed when a municipality wants to apply for a peer grant. The process may be adapted depending upon the type of peer project, the needs of the applicant and the partnership that is being created for the project.

1. The community expresses a need for technical assistance to Bureau staff. Once the need has been identified the Bureau locates a peer consultant to lead and guide the project.
2. Bureau staff, typically our regional adviser, meets with community representatives to explain the peer grant program requirements and answer questions.
3. If the municipality appears interested in applying for a grant Bureau staff identifies a possible peer consultant to lead and guide the project.
4. A municipality connected with the future project submits the electronic grant application and identifies its representative who will serve as the local project coordinator.
5. Once the grant has been officially awarded there is an initial meeting with the community, the peer consultant and Bureau staff to begin the process of identifying the issues, needs and opportunities and developing a scope of work.
6. The peer consultant develops a draft contract, submits to both the municipality and DCNR for final approval. Once both parties approve the draft contract, the contract is executed between the peer consultant and municipality and a fully executed contract is sent to the assigned Bureau project manager.
7. Once the project is nearing conclusion the peer submits to the Bureau a draft of the final study report for review and approval. Following approval of the final report the Bureau provides the grantee instructions on how to close out the grant.

For more general information on the peer grant program please see the [Peer-to-Peer Grant General Information and Guidelines](#) in Appendix A.

For further information on administrative issues and please see the [Partnerships Administrative Guidelines](#) in Appendix B.

DCNR and Grantee Roles and Responsibilities

DCNR Bureau of Recreation & Conservation Regional Staff

1. Typically is the first point of contact with the potential grantee.
2. Provides guidance on the development of the future project.
3. Helps the municipality define the project needs and articulate what type of technical assistance will help them work toward a solution.
4. Notifies Central Office Staff that a municipality wishes to apply for a peer grant.
5. Assists the municipality with completing the grant application.

DCNR Bureau of Recreation & Conservation Central Office Staff

1. Matches the peer consultant to the project.
2. Schedules and conducts the initial meeting between the grantee and the peer.
3. Develops the contract between the peer and grantee.
4. Provides authorization to proceed when the project is ready to go.
5. Authorizes grant fund payments.
6. Manages the grant from the award through closeout.
7. Provides support and back-up for the peer consultant as needed.
8. Reviews the draft report and approves the final report.

Grantee

The municipality selected to be the grantee is responsible for submitting the grant application for the peer grant program through the [DCNR e-Grants system](#). As the grantee, the municipality will be required to:

1. Serve as the signatory on the contract with the peer consultant.
2. Receive DCNR grant funds and pay the peer consultant.
3. Adhere to the terms and conditions of the DCNR grant agreement.
4. Identify one person (typically the municipal manager, president, mayor or recreation board chair) as the local project coordinator, who will:
 - a. Represent the grantee
 - b. Administer the grant paperwork including completing the peer consultant evaluation form
 - c. Coordinates activities with the peer consultant and the Steering Committee
 - d. Report project progress back to Bureau staff

A Good Local Project Coordinator

- Serves as the local sounding board
- Knows his/her community well
- Distributes agendas and meeting materials in advance
- Takes meeting notes
- Schedules and coordinates meeting details
- Believes in the project goal
- Troubleshoots when necessary, works behind the scenes
- Keeps the peer consultant informed

Partnership Arrangements

On a case by case basis the Bureau may work with a lead organization to assist with specialized peer grant projects. The roles and responsibilities must be agreed to in writing. At a minimum, all peer consultant contracts and final reports must be approved by the Bureau. The approved partner organization should provide Bureau staff, both central and regional offices, quarterly updates.

Peer Consultant Responsibilities, Roles, and Keys to Success

The peer consultant is the person who actually does the bulk of the work for the grant project. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Creation of the scope of work, timeline and budget after listening to and consulting with the community and the project's steering committee.
2. Completes all of the tasks identified in the scope of work.
3. Writes a summary report of the project that includes agreed upon deliverables. Typically, the report describes existing conditions, the public participation process, findings, and provides detailed recommendations and an action plan for next steps.
4. Submits invoices to the grantee according to the terms established in the consultant agreement.
5. Provides a paid-in-full statement to the Bureau upon receipt of the final payment from the grantee.

Possible Roles

The peer consultant typically assumes the following roles when working on a peer project:

- Facilitator:
 - Municipalities can have difficulty making big decisions or changes without outside help
 - Citizens are less willing to accept decisions made without their input
 - The peer consultant serves as an independent body
 - The peer consultant can create an atmosphere of cooperation
 - The peer consultant gets parties to look at the issues and address them
- Mediator: Attempts to reconcile contending parties
- Educator: Provides the benefits of parks, recreation and conservation message
- Communicator: Talks to recreation boards, elected officials, community leaders, keeping all parties informed of the project's activities and recommendations
- Practitioner: Provides examples and personal experiences

Successful Peer Consultants

Typically, a peer consultant is an independent contractor. It is the peer consultant's responsibility to receive permission from his/her full-time employer (if applicable), complete and maintain complete and accurate records, report taxable income to the appropriate agency, and carry adequate insurance.

The average peer grant project takes 12-18 months to complete the scope of work and the peer consultant may spend as much as 220+ hours during that time span working on the project. The job could involve extensive traveling, public and steering meeting

attendance, conducting key person interviews and surveys, researching, gathering and analyzing information, and writing. The final report alone can take 40-50 hours to complete.

Organization, prioritization, scheduling, self-direction and task-focusing are important skills to have.

A successful peer consultant also needs to be an active listener - one who listens with undivided attention and can accurately give feedback which shows understanding of the meaning of what was said.

The peer consultant also needs to be able to guide groups of diverse people to work towards a common goal or direction.

The peer consultant must have good verbal and written communication skills.

Advice from Successful Peers

Three questions were asked of our “super peer consultants” (those who have successfully completed peer grant projects) and their responses are listed below.

1. What are the ingredients/components to a successful peer project?

- a. Make sure the right people and all affected parties are represented and engaged in the project from the very beginning.
- b. Elected officials and active decision makers must have an active role in the steering committee. If they don't come to the meetings go to them.
- c. Grantee and the community must really want to address the issues and are willing to share as much information as possible, accept input and assistance and take an active role in making needed changes.
- d. A very clear scope of work is important.
- e. It is vital for the peer consultant to listen carefully and determine early in the process what makes the best sense for a project.
- f. Be upfront and honest about the potential costs in the beginning.
- g. Be creative and flexible with the project as it proceeds. A peer consultant may have a plan of attack but it seldom works out the way it was initially scoped.

2. What were the major challenges you have dealt with as a DCNR peer consultant and how were they addressed?

- a. Often key members of the community leave political office, lose their jobs, become very ill, etc. during the project. It is critical to have two representatives from each entity and they should both be decision makers.
- b. Communities want help and have aspirations to make changes but want it without a price tag. Leaders have to realize that having a recreation department with a director is almost always going to cost money and

cannot be completely offset by programming/facility fees and charges. Implementation projects are going to cost money.

- c. There are often many underlying issues in the community which the peer consultant has no prior knowledge of. It is good to try and get all that out in the open with the key person interview process. For example, who does not get along with who is important to know, and there may be “bad blood” between interested municipalities from years ago.
- d. Sometimes an appointed steering committee wants the peer consultant to come in and help but the municipal staff does not want the input and does not wish to change.
- e. At times the communities may try and demand too much of a peer consultant’s time, especially with items unrelated to the project. Remind them of the scope of work and focus on what needs to be accomplished.
- f. It can be tough being a peer consultant because you don’t usually have your own “peer” or fellow professional with whom to discuss the project and solutions. It can be “lonely.”

3. What specific advice would you give to a first time peer consultant?

- a. A peer consultant must be self-motivated and self-driven. Many times the peer consultant needs to keep the project on a schedule and keep it moving.
- b. Don’t get bogged down in stuff you can’t control.
- c. Know when to change direction if you see the writing on the wall.
- d. Be flexible and positive at all times. Keep plugging away at the beginning.
- e. It’s important for steering committee members to develop trust in each other, and that may take some time if they don’t know each other well.
- f. Get the steering committee members to talk. The more they talk the better, because when they feel that they are being heard they are more likely to cooperate. If they don’t speak up you have no idea of what they think. Some peer consultants have had to force all voices to speak up, but found it was good to do so.
- g. Treat everyone the same way and don’t get involved in politics or gossip. You need to stay impartial at all times.
- h. It is helpful to write and provide regular status updates to the grantee as the project proceeds. It is easier to prepare the final report if you already have the background and findings written.
- i. You will likely have a mental battle between providing professional park/recreation advice for issues that the community doesn’t necessarily ask for but clearly needs direction, and sticking to exploring issues with which they want help. “Stay in your lane.”

Peer Contractual Issues

Peer Consultant Agreement

It is the responsibility of the peer to work with the Bureau Central Office Staff to develop the peer consultant agreement. The Bureau has a template to follow and it can be found in Appendix C. A complete agreement includes a Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause, budget, timeline and the detailed scope of work. The agreement is executed (signed) by the authorized representative of the grantee and the peer consultant.

Budget

The current billable rate for DCNR peer grant projects is \$50/hour. When the peer consultant develops the scope of work and budget all items need to show costs as a total of the hours spent by the peer consultant delivering each task. Appendix D, page 3 contains an example of a budget broken into separate tasks/work elements along with the total project cost.

Eligible costs for reimbursement include:

- Actual work on scope items
- Mileage at the current state rate
- Lodging & subsistence at the current state rate
- Clerical support
- Printing and postage
- Other direct costs approved by DCNR before they are incurred

Timeline

The timeline shows the month and year that major task will be completed by. Appendix D, page 3 contains an example of a timeline that was used in a past project. Note how it is realistic and achievable.

Scope of Work

The scope of work includes all of the work tasks that need to be completed by the peer consultant. Although most scopes will contain common elements, especially when the overall project goals are similar to those of other project types, each scope needs to be tailored to the unique needs of each grantee.

Appendix D, pages 1-3 contains a scope of work used for a past recreation-related project.

Deliverables

The final, tangible product produced by the peer consultant is a summary report of the entire process that the grantee and peer consultant followed to develop the final recommendations and agreed upon deliverables.

A typical summary report should be concise, well-written and free of typographical, grammatical and formatting errors. The text should only contain a summary of the entire process that was followed along with the final recommendations and next steps for the grantee.

All supporting information, such as meeting minutes, survey results and detailed documentation should be placed in an appendix.

Here are the suggested final report contents and order:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction: Purpose of the Study and Process
3. Municipal Overview/Historical Analysis
4. Summary of the Public Engagement Process
5. Comparison/analysis of issues and opportunities
6. Recommendations: extensive discussion on the priority recommendations
7. Action Plan and Next Steps
8. Appendices

Typically DCNR will require three printed, bound copies of the final summary report and one electronic disk of the entire report not broken into separate files.

All deliverables must have the following citation on the acknowledgements page:

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

Public Engagement Process

The most important element in a DCNR planning or technical assistance grant is public participation in the project. There needs to be many opportunities to receive feedback from the community in order to insure that all constituents have an opportunity to provide input into the project.

[The Center for Rural Pennsylvania](http://www.rural.pa.gov/palegislature.us/documents/reports/Effective_Citizen_Engagement.pdf) has prepared an excellent publication that discusses citizen engagement and how community leaders (peer consultants) can develop a plan to ensure that the public is engaged in the project. The booklet [*Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-To Guide for Community Leaders*](http://www.rural.pa.gov/palegislature.us/documents/reports/Effective_Citizen_Engagement.pdf), can be found at http://www.rural.pa.gov/palegislature.us/documents/reports/Effective_Citizen_Engagement.pdf.

Another resource that could be applicable to river town advancement is [*America Walks'*](#) publication *Steps to a Walkable Community*. Page 17 includes excellent information on how to target “Decision-Makers and Create a Champion”. Successful peer projects all had a champion.

Types of Community Engagement Techniques

The type of community engagement techniques used will depend upon the specific needs of the grantee. DCNR's [Public Participation Guide](#), found in Appendix F, shows that a minimum of two public meetings, the development of an active steering committee, and the use of key person interviews or a community survey to gather public comment and ideas should be done for a peer grant project.

Typical community engagement techniques used for DCNR peer grants projects include:

- **Steering Committee.** The purpose of the steering committee is to provide a forum for stakeholders to initiate dialogue and actively participate in the project. They communicate progress back to their governing bodies or group and provide a source of volunteer support for the peer. They usually meet monthly until the conclusion of the project. The steering committee should be representative of all stakeholders and naysayers, needs to include at least one elected official from every community, and must be approved by DCNR.
- **Key Person Interviews.** Interviews (in person, by phone, or email) are discussions with identified individuals who have specific knowledge or expertise with the situation that is being explored. Less expensive and time consuming than formal survey methods, the interviews provide the peer consultant with an opportunity to gather credible data as well as inform others in the community of the project and hopefully expand the support base.
- **Surveys.** Both traditional and electronic surveys are especially valuable when one is trying to gather statistically valid information and data. Traditional surveys are labor intensive, take time, effort and a level of expertise to develop and implement, and involve expenses not associated with other engagement

techniques. The use of an electronic survey process such as Survey Monkey may be a more affordable option.

- **Public Meetings and Hearings.** These meetings are formal, structured public meetings held by municipalities, authorities, and other entities who want to make sure that the public has an opportunity to weigh in on the official statements and positions of those entities.
- **Work Groups, Charrettes, Forums, Neighborhood Meetings.** These are all less formal gatherings of the public, and are usually used to gather information from a specific demographic, geographical area or topic. Each has a slightly different purpose and function, and is an effective engagement process if used appropriately.

Good Partner Building and Change-Oriented Quotes

Time Spent in Green alleviates the Blues (regarding mental health benefits of parks.)
Unknown

I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure - which is: try to please everybody. **Herbert Bayard Swope**

Finding good players is easy. Getting' them to play together as a team is another story.
Casey Stengel

Three legged stool: 1. A plan; 2. A municipal/elected official champion for the plan; 3. A coalition of support. All three are need to bring about change in a community.
Unknown

Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success! **Henry Ford**

It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership. **Nelson Mandela**

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time. **Thomas A. Edison**

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence. **Helen Keller**

Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have. **Margaret Meade**

A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. **Margaret Meade**

Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts. **Arnold Bennett**

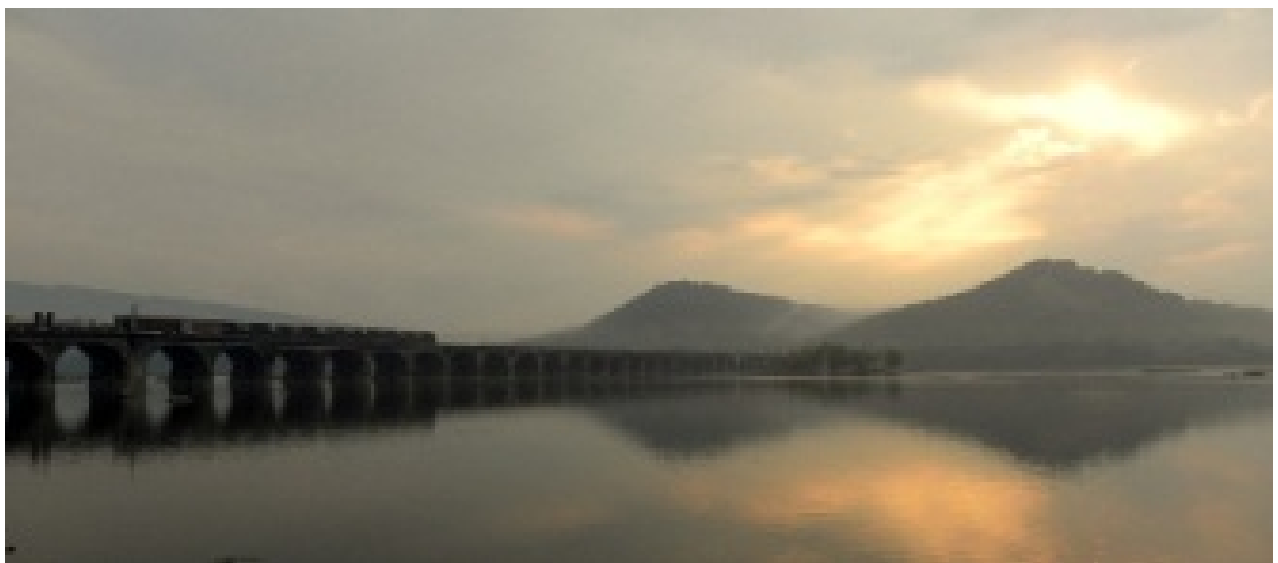


Photo credit: David Fraiser, 2013 Susquehanna Greenways Photo Contest Landscape Winner

Appendix A



Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Projects

General Information and Guidelines

PURPOSE: This document further explains DCNR's Peer to Peer Technical Assistance projects outlined in the Technical Assistance Section on the C2P2 grant website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants. The following general information and guidelines are provided to help determine if your community has a realistic and viable Peer-to-Peer (Peer) project. Please use this information to determine if a Peer project is the type of study needed or if your planning needs could be better met under another PITA project type. The Bureau will consider Peer applications at any time of the year.

1. **Technical Assistance.**

Before submitting a grant application and developing your scope of work, please contact the Bureau's regional representative for your area of the Commonwealth to discuss your project (*a map directory of regional representatives can be found in the Grant Program Requirements & Guidelines Section*). Assistance will be provided through the regional representative to help further develop your project and submit an appropriate grant application. DCNR prefers to meet with a community before a Peer grant application is submitted to confirm that a peer project is the best course of action. A Recreation and Park Adviser will work with you to make this determination and develop a scope of work that meets your project needs and the Bureau's requirements.

2. **Objective of a Peer-to-Peer Project.**

A Peer project is a consulting service coordinated by Bureau staff. The peer consultant is typically a park and recreation practitioner or conservation professional who helps a grantee solve an existing problem or improve services in a specific area.

This service provides the grantee with the management-related technical services of an experienced professional who has extensive training, knowledge and experience in the issues related to the project. When the consultation is completed, the grantee will be provided with a course of action, a set of recommendations to help address the problem studied, and encouraged to consider and implement these recommendations. The final product will include a written report that must be approved by the Bureau and grantee.

3. **Peer-to-Peer Project Scope of Work.**

Eligible Projects: We have not specifically defined all the types of Peer projects eligible for grant funding. Examples of eligible projects are provided below. If you have a pressing issue in your agency or municipality that does not fit into one of the noted categories, we encourage you to contact the Bureau to discuss your situation. Examples of potential projects include:

- a) Exploring the possibility of developing a regional recreation and park effort/department.
- b) Evaluating a recreation and park board's efforts and providing board training.
- c) Evaluating the management of a major facility like a community center, a sports complex, an ice rink, or a swimming pool.
- d) Undertaking conservation activities like establishing a conservancy or land trust.
- e) Developing a revenue sources management plan.
- f) Developing a regional trail maintenance and management plan.

Basic Requirements: For Peer projects, the Bureau does not have a required scope of work. We will expect, however, the planning process to include:

- substantial public participation using a variety of techniques;
- an examination and analysis of the issues under study; and
- a series of recommended actions to address studied issues.

Scope of Work and Cost Estimate: Your grant application must include a basic scope of work that generally covers what you would like the peer consultant to study (one or two pages in length). We have completed several Peer projects over the past few years and can provide sample reports and scopes upon request.

Regarding the cost estimate, we do not require a detailed breakdown of costs. When you contact the Bureau, we will help you determine the amount of grant funds that should be requested.

Project Selection and Eligible Costs.

- g) The Bureau accepts and considers Peer applications at any time. If grant funds are available, such applications are reviewed and may be selected for funding based upon the following process:
 - i) A municipal representative must contact the Bureau to schedule a meeting of all interested parties. If, after this meeting, the municipality and the Bureau determine that a Peer project is appropriate, the municipality must submit a written request for funding consideration.

- ii) If grant funds are available, the Bureau will respond in writing that funds are available and request the municipality to complete a Peer-to-Peer grant application package.
- iii) Following receipt of a completed grant application, a grant contract will be executed between the Bureau and the grantee. The Bureau's role from this point is outlined in section 5 below.
- h) A grant amount up to \$10,000 is available for Peer-to-Peer projects. The community **must** provide at least a 10% local cash match. The total project cost cannot exceed \$11,000. Applicants are encouraged to request the maximum amount and, if selected, funds will be used as needed. The Bureau reserves the right to decrease the grant amount.
- i) Grant funds can be used to pay only the Bureau-approved consultant's time, travel expenses, subsistence costs, clerical support and printing. The grantee is responsible for all other costs.
- j) The Bureau will work with the grantee to select the appropriate peer consultant(s). Following the grantee's approval of the proposed peer consultant(s), the grantee will be expected to enter into a contractual agreement with the consultant(s). Upon full execution of the grant contract with the Commonwealth and receipt of a written request, the Bureau can provide an initial payment of 25 percent of the approved grant amount. Subsequent payments will be on a reimbursement basis. Because of this reimbursement provision, the grant recipient will be required to provide the necessary interim financing to execute and complete the project. Final payment will be made after the Bureau approves the final written report and the peer consultant(s) is/are paid in full.

4. Role of Bureau Staff.

The Bureau will provide further technical assistance in the following manner:

- a) Upon selection as a Peer-to-Peer project, a Bureau Recreation and Park Adviser will contact potential peer consultants in the recreation and park profession, or other professions as needed, to find an individual who is both qualified and available to provide consulting services for the project.
- b) The Bureau will then arrange for a mutually agreeable meeting date between the municipality and the proposed consultant or consulting team. At that meeting, the problem solving approach, the proposed scope of work, expected products, and timetable will be reviewed and confirmed. This meeting will serve to reinforce and confirm the best course of action to address the problem and concerns of the grantee.
- c) The Bureau will review and approve the contractual agreement between the municipality and consultant.
- d) The Bureau reserves the right to request status reports from the consultant.
- e) The Bureau must be sent a draft of the proposed findings and recommendations for review; and, the Bureau must approve the final report in order for the grantee to receive a final payment for the consulting services.
- f) The Bureau will request the grantee to submit a 1-2 page “action plan”, following receipt of the final report.

Appendix B

Partnership Grant Administrative Instructions

Purpose: To provide an overview of and guidance on post-award administrative instructions that are common to Partnership project grants. **This information will help insure the successful processing of Partnership projects and to meet the DCNR grant agreement requirements.** The term “grantee” is used to refer to the grant applicant that has been awarded a grant.

1. DCNR – Grantee Contracting Stage

- DCNR sends a “notice-of-selection” letter to the grantee notifying them of approval and funding amount.
- The Bureau begins the process of executing the Grant Agreement. If grantees incur any project costs prior to receiving a fully executed Grant Agreement, they do so at their own risk. After the grantee receives a fully executed Grant Agreement from the Bureau, grantees are eligible for and strongly encouraged to accept an advance payment of 50% of the grant amount. Payment forms are available online at:
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/index.htm>

2. Local Project Coordinator

The grantee provides the name of the Local Project Coordinator on the grant application. The Bureau considers this coordinator to be the official contact person on all matters related to the administration of the grant project. All official correspondence will be sent to the Local Project Coordinator. If the grantee’s Local Project Coordinator changes during the course of the project the grantee should provide the assigned Bureau Project Manager with written notification on grantee’s letterhead of the change, including the name, title, address, email, and daytime telephone number of the new Local Project Coordinator.

3. Bureau Project Manager

The Bureau assigns a staff member to serve as the Project Manager to work with the grantee to successfully complete the grant project. It is the Bureau Project Manager’s responsibility to provide information and assistance to the grantee to ensure that the grant program requirements are met and the project can be successfully closed out. All correspondence and communications regarding the project should be directed to the Bureau Project Manager.

4. Application Review and Next Step Instructions

Note: This stage can be concurrent with Grantee Contracting Stage.

- The grantee receives a letter from the Bureau Project Manager providing application review comments, instructions, progress report and payment forms and other helpful handouts.
- The grantee, either by one-on-one consultation or telephone discussion with the Bureau Project Manager, reviews the project details and the grant process.
- Listed below are the typical steps that must be accomplished to receive Bureau approval to proceed with the project.
 - All concerns regarding the grantee's grant application are addressed.
 - DCNR Grant Agreement is fully executed.
 - The grantee's budget and, if applicable, non-cash services plan has been reviewed and approved.
 - The project scope of work, time line, and deliverables have been reviewed and approved.
 - General details on expected sub-agreements and other planning and/or development requirements like certificate of title, bid documents, etc. (if appropriate) have been provided and approved.

5. Scope of Work, Budget, and Time Line

Considering the amount of time that can occur between grant submission and final contracting and DCNR funded activity, most Partnership grantees will need to update their project scope of work, budget, time line and deliverables after receipt of these instructions. Any modifications or changes to the project must be pre-approved by the Bureau. Requests for changes to the approved scope of work, time line, deliverables, grant agreement period, or grant funds should first be discussed with the Bureau Project Manager and then submitted in writing on the grantee's letterhead. In rare cases, it may be possible to request additional funding for cost overruns, but this is subject to the availability of funding. Grantees should consider the following when updating required documents.

- **DCNR Grant Agreement Appendix A** – This is the most critical document of the DCNR grant agreement. Organize the work by activity noted in Appendix A of the DCNR grant agreement.
 - Example 1: Facilitate the development of the Smith Trail. In the scope, include details on specific activities like clearing title, obtaining easements, holding public meetings, etc.
Deliverable: Provide a report outlining what specific activity occurred to further trail development.
 - Example 2 -- advance heritage area development in the region. In the scope, indicate how this will be done, how it will help implement agency's goals/objectives/management action plan and note expected measurable outcomes.
Deliverable: Summary report outlining achieved results, including copies of newspaper articles, minutes, flyers, etc.

- **Ongoing work** – for activity that is not expected to have a final product like a publication or a brochure, the grantee can provide a close out report that details activity benefits and achieved results. If there are several categories of work without specific products, these can be included in the same final close out report.
- **Serving on boards/local committees** – this type of work is eligible under a general work category like “advancing heritage area development;” however there should be purposeful activity. What is achieved by attending monthly meetings? What is agency’s role? What is the value-added activity?
- **Billable rate** – Since a large portion of Partnership Grant expenditures will be for In-House Professional Costs (Section VI of the Final Payment Form), personnel costs should be recorded as a “billable rate” which is equal to the employee’s established hourly wage rate as set by the grantee’s governing body or the employee’s hourly rate plus fringe benefits and *operational* overhead costs. Fringe benefits and overhead costs include but are not limited to employee insurance, retirement benefits, and paid time off. The “billable rate” must be preapproved by DCNR and occurs when DCNR provides approval to proceed for the project. See Section VI of the final payment form for additional details or contact project manager for specific questions on eligible costs.
- **Mini-grants** – If the grant includes funding for mini-grants, the Bureau Project Manager will include the Mini-Grant Management Procedures (1/1/2012) with these instructions. These grants require sub-agreements and should follow the requirements below.
- **Sub-agreements** – According to Article X of the DCNR grant agreement, DCNR must approve all sub-agreements to insure eligibility for the funding source and activity. We strongly recommend sub-agreements be submitted for approval PRIOR to execution. All sub-agreements must be submitted before DCNR will approve final payment and release the remaining 10% in eligible grant funds.
 - *Non-discrimination Clause* -- All sub-agreements/subcontracts for mini-grants, and contractor/consultant contracts should include Appendix C of your grant agreement: Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. For a copy of the clause to reference and attach to sub-agreements, go to: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/planningforms/index.htm>. It is under “Other Forms.”
 - *Consultant Selection Process* – The Bureau requires the competitive selection of consultants and the grantee to provide documentation that this requirement was met (bid tab, list of firms, justification for selection). If the grantee’s project includes the hiring of a consultant, refer to the Planning Project forms at: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/planningforms/index.htm>. This webpage includes guidelines and a template for request for proposals.

6. Grant Payments

Payment forms can be downloaded from this website:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/paymentforms/index.htm>. The final payment form automatically calculates the addition and prevents typical addition mistakes.

Partnership grantees will likely use three forms. Payment forms can be emailed to the Bureau Project Manager. An original signature is not needed.

- **Advance Payment:** Non-profit organizations should use this form and can request a 50% payment. Once the grant agreement is fully executed, the Bureau can process the reimbursement request.
- **Partial Payment:** This request is used to receive an additional 40% of the grant amount. The Project Manager will approve this payment request once all requested documents are submitted, the grantee has received approval to proceed, and is close to depleting the advance payment. If significant time has elapsed from the grant start date, the Project Manager has provided notice to proceed, and costs have been incurred, the Project Manager may approve a 90% partial payment.
- **Final Payment:** The final 10% of the grant amount will be withheld until the grantee submits the Final Payment Request with all the required documentation for final close out. Once all the documentation is reviewed and expenditures are approved the final 10% will be reimbursed. Submitting a final payment form that is completed correctly will help insure prompt payment. Requests:
 - Organize project expenses based on the categories identified in the approved project scope of work.
 - Expenses for mini-grants should be summarized under Section IX – Direct Costs.
 - Provide a separate accounting that summarizes the billing on each mini-grant awarded. A sample accounting form is available upon request.
 - Provide a complete submission. A complete submission includes:
 - ❖ All deliverables noted in the approved project scope of work.
 - ❖ A summary report.
 - ❖ A completed Final Payment Form.
 - ❖ Copies of any outstanding executed sub-agreement and requested documents (certificate of title, bid details, etc.).

At the end of the project all deliverables and a final project report must be submitted within 60 days.

- **Interest Income:** Upfront grant payments and any interest or other income or accumulations generated via this grant must be separately identifiable in the accounting of funds received under the Grant Agreement. Grantee should invest and reinvest grant funds and any interest on other income or accumulations earned on such funds to gain the maximum yield. Subject to written approval of the Bureau, the grantee may use the interest or other income or accumulations earned on grant funds for grant activities. Income earned and expended shall be recorded as part of the closeout documentation. Any unused interest or other income remaining at the completion of project activities shall be returned to the DCNR.

7. **Progress Reports** - During the project period the grantee will be required to provide six-month progress reports on the project. The Bureau Project Manager will provide an electronic copy of this form (see #4). The Bureau requests the submission of an electronic copy; do not also submit a paper copy. Reports are due November 15th and May 15th.
8. **DCNR Acknowledgement** - Any reports and/or outreach materials produced with funding from this grant shall include the statement: "This {*study/project/report/brochure*} was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, the Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation."

2011-2012 grant round 17

4/5/12

Appendix C

CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

This Contract is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 20[___], by and between the **[Municipality]**, County, Pennsylvania ("**[Municipality]**"), and _____ ("**Consulting Firm**").

WHEREAS, the **[Municipality]** desires to have certain one-time professional consulting work performed involving **[Insert here title or short description of work (same as used in RFP)]**;

WHEREAS, the **[Municipality]** desires to enter into a contract for this work pursuant to a Request for Proposals ("RFP") issued by **[Municipality]**;

WHEREAS, the Consulting Firm desires to perform the work in accordance with the proposal it submitted in response to the RFP;

WHEREAS, the Consulting Firm is equipped and staffed to perform the work;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

THE CONSULTING FIRM WILL:

1. Provide professional consulting services in accordance with the RFP, its proposal in response to the RFP, and the Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix A. **[[Municipality] may add other appendices as appropriate.]**
2. Obtain approval from the **[Municipality]** of any changes to the staffing stated in its proposal. However, approval will not be denied if the staff replacement is determined by the **[Municipality]** to be of equal ability or experience to the predecessor.

THE **[Municipality]** WILL:

1. Compensate the Consulting Firm based on the actual hours worked and actual reimbursable expenses for a total amount not to exceed \$_____.
2. Provide the Consulting Firm with reasonable access to **[Municipality]** personnel, facilities, and information necessary to properly perform the work required under this Contract.
3. Except as provided in item 4 below, make payment to the Consulting Firm within 30 days after receipt of a properly prepared invoice for work satisfactorily performed. **[Revise this provision to reflect actual payment arrangement agreed to.]**
4. Make final payment of 10% of the funds available to the Consulting Firm under this Contract within 30 days after final product approval by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED THAT:

1. All copyright interests in work created under this Contract are solely and exclusively the property of the **[Municipality]**. The work shall be considered work made for hire under copyright law; alternatively, if the work cannot be considered work made for hire, the Consulting Firm agrees to assign and, upon the creation of the work, expressly and automatically assigns, all copyright interests in the work to the **[Municipality]**.
2. In the performance of services under this Contract, there shall be no violation of the right of privacy or infringement upon the copyright or any other proprietary right of any person or entity.

In witness thereof, the parties hereto have executed this Contract on the day and date set forth above.

WITNESS:

WITNESS:

FOR THE **[Municipality]**:

TITLE: _____

FOR THE CONSULTING FIRM:

TITLE: _____

NONDISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAUSE

The GRANTEE agrees:

1. In the hiring of any employee(s) for the manufacture of supplies, performance of work, or any other activity required under the GRANT AGREEMENT or any subgrant agreement, contract, or subcontract, the GRANTEE, a subgrantee, a contractor, a subcontractor, or any person acting on behalf of the GRANTEE shall not, by reason of gender, race, creed, or color, discriminate against any citizen of this Commonwealth who is qualified and available to perform the work to which the employment relates.
2. The GRANTEE, any subgrantee, contractor or any subcontractor or any person on their behalf shall not in any manner discriminate against or intimidate any of its employees on account of gender, race, creed, or color.
3. The GRANTEE, any subgrantee, contractor or any subcontractor shall establish and maintain a written sexual harassment policy and shall inform their employees of the policy. The policy must contain a notice that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and employees who practice it will be disciplined.
4. The GRANTEE, any subgrantee, contractor or any subcontractor shall not discriminate by reason of gender, race, creed, or color against any subgrantee, contractor, subcontractor or supplier who is qualified to perform the work to which the grant relates.
5. The GRANTEE, any subgrantee, any contractor or any subcontractor shall, within the time periods requested by the Commonwealth, furnish all necessary employment documents and records and permit access to their books, records, and accounts by the DEPARTMENT and the Bureau of Minority and Women Business Opportunities (BMWBO), for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. Within 15 days after award of the grant, the GRANTEE shall be required to complete, sign and submit Form STD-21, the "Initial Contract Compliance Data" form. If the GRANTEE has fewer than five employees, or if all its employees are from the same family, or if it has completed the STD-21 form within the past 12 months, it may, within 15 days after award of the grant, request an exemption from the STD-21 form from the DEPARTMENT.
6. The GRANTEE, any subgrantee, contractor or any subcontractor shall include this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause in every subgrant agreement, contract or subcontract so that those provisions applicable to subgrantees, contractors or subcontractors will be binding upon each subgrantee, contractor or subcontractor.
7. The Commonwealth may cancel or terminate the GRANT AGREEMENT and all money due or to become due under the GRANT AGREEMENT may be forfeited for a violation of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. In addition, the DEPARTMENT may proceed with debarment or suspension and may place the GRANTEE, subgrantee, contractor, or subcontractor in the Contractor Responsibility File.

Based on Management Directive 215.16 amended (9/1/10)

DCNR-2012-Gen

Gen-GPM – 1 Rev. 2-12

Appendix D

Greater Pottstown Regional Recreation and Parks Coordination Project

Project Purpose: To create a regional recreation and parks staff position, who will encourage active, healthy lifestyles for residents of the greater Pottstown area through support and coordination of municipal and school district recreation and parks facilities, services, activities and events.

Project Goals:

1. Determine the regional recreation and parks cooperation and coordination priorities among the members of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee Ad Hoc Recreation Subcommittee.
2. Build upon the existing spirit of municipal cooperation and identify opportunities for collaborative efforts and sharing of resources to make the best use of existing park areas, recreation facilities and recreation programs.
3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of a regional recreation and parks staff position and develop a formula for funding the position.
4. Determine a managing agency to supervise the work of the regional recreation and parks position.
5. Meet the present and future recreation and parks needs of citizens by operating the region's recreation and parks system effectively and efficiently through partnerships among the municipalities and school districts designed to minimize duplication of effort and maximize cost effectiveness.

To achieve the project purpose and goals, the Peer Consultant will perform the following scope of work:

Public Input

Identify the needs of each municipality and explore the region's readiness to hire a staff person to strengthen recreation and parks services through regional efforts.

1. Seek out public input to identify municipal needs and priorities for recreation and parks by:
 - a. Conducting up to 4 project committee meetings.
 - b. Conducting in-person or written survey interviews with 15 to 20 key individuals.
2. Prepare a written summary of key person interviews and review it with the project committee.

3. Review the regional comprehensive plan and other municipal planning documents related to recreation and parks, including the Penn State Hamer Study from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation (PAHWF).

Cooperation and Coordination Priorities

Determine the region's priorities for recreation and parks cooperation and coordination.

1. Determine the most viable functional areas to consider for the work of the regional recreation and parks position, to include support of existing and development of new recreation programs and special events, grant writing and grants management, development of regional facilities, prioritization of capital improvements, standardized maintenance management, coordinated promotion, website and technology support, and joint scheduling and permitting of recreation facilities.
2. Set priorities by the opportunities for regional coordination that will best promote active living and provide the most benefit to the municipalities and school districts and their residents.
3. Obtain agreement among the municipalities on priorities.

Development of Regional Recreation and Parks Position

Identify the roles and responsibilities of a regional recreation and parks staff position and develop a formula for finding the position.

1. Develop a job description and salary level for the regional recreation and parks position.
2. Determine the level of funding needed to support the regional recreation and parks position over the first six years. Develop a formula that outlines the funding needed each year, with DCNR funds decreasing each year and Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) and municipalities' funds increasing, and obtain approval from PAHWF and municipalities to provide this funding.
3. Determine how benefits will be provided for the regional recreation and parks position.
4. Determine the office location for the regional recreation and parks position.
5. Determine a managing agency to supervise the work of the regional recreation and parks position.
6. Develop the structure of a regional recreation and parks committee of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee to oversee the managing agency's contract.
7. Identify areas and obtain agreement on any needed in-kind contributions of each municipality and school district. In-kind contributions may include office location,

park area and recreation facility use, clerical support, computer/office equipment use and so on.

8. Obtain formal approval from the municipalities and the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee to apply to DCNR for the Circuit Rider grant.
9. Submit application for Circuit Rider Grant.

Final Report

Write a final report consisting of an executive summary of recommendations and a collection of the products from each section in an appendix.

1. Provide the following report copies: 1 hard copy and 1 CD of the draft final report to the project committee and 1 copy to DCNR for review and comment. The project committee will be responsible for making copies of the report or posting it on the Internet as desired. Upon completion of the review, provide 1 copy of the final report and 1 CD to the project committee and 3 copies and 1 CD to DCNR.

Time Line

- ✓ July - September 2012: Public input
- ✓ September – November 2012: Development of regional recreation and parks position
- ✓ November 2012 – February 2013: Obtaining approval of funding amounts/Circuit Rider grant application
- ✓ March 2013: Final Report

Budget		
<u>Work Elements</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1. Develop Scope and Contract /Project Administration	18	\$ 720
2. Public Input	96	\$3,840
Project Committee Meetings		
Key Interviews and Meeting s		
Review of Planning Documents		
3. Set Regional Cooperation and Coordination Priorities	56	\$2,240
4. Development of Regional Recreation and Parks Position	76	\$3,040
5. Project Report Preparation	24	\$960
6. Expenses (clerical help, copying, mileage @ \$.48/ mile)		\$200
Total	\$11,000	

Appendix E

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (Bureau)

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM



Planning Project

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDE

Purpose: This guide explains the types of, and requirements for, public participation in planning projects. It should be used to determine the public participation techniques that will work best for your community and project. These techniques you use for your project will affect your project budget.

Purpose of the Public Participation Process

A critical element of any planning project is to determine the public's recreational needs and interests. Through a well-designed public participation process; the attributes, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of community residents are identified. Also, involving residents in the beginning of a project assists with decreasing opposition and increasing volunteer participation. After years of funding planning projects, The Bureau has found that substantial public involvement at the planning stage increases the likelihood that recreation projects will go beyond the planning stage to implementation. These experiences have prompted the Bureau to require significant public participation throughout the planning process.

Through previously funded projects, we have found that public participation is important because it:

- Provides the community residents and community leaders an opportunity to voice their opinions;
- Informs the elected officials of citizen attitudes and needs;
- Helps to express broad-based public support for the planning process and the plan proposals; and,
- Provides the general public and community leaders with an opportunity to support and be involved with the execution of the plan.

Public Participation Techniques

There are many techniques that communities have used to involve their residents in a planning project. The Bureau encourages communities to be creative and try new approaches. Feel free to propose new approaches that you feel will work in your community. The Bureau requires that several means of public participation be used in the planning process; the most commonly used techniques include the following:

- A Study Committee
- Advertised or promoted general public meetings
- Key person interviews
- A citizen survey
- Provide an electronic copy of the draft plan on the grantee's website (if available) for public review and comment.

For most planning projects, the Bureau requires the creation of a study committee. Additional public participation requirements are detailed in the project specific General Information and Scope of Work Guidelines that are available from the Bureau.

Below is a discussion on the techniques outlined above:

1. **Study Committee**

The Bureau requires the creation of a Study Committee for the following reasons:

- a. The Committee provides a structured decision-making resource for the planning process.
- b. A variety of opinions from different interests reveal the most options and after a leader is selected the structure encourages open discussion.
- c. Committee members often serve in a volunteer capacity.

In order to build a strong and successful Committee the grantee needs to consider the following recommendations:

- a. Rarely should this committee include just current board members and/or grantee staff. Whether a local board is active or not, it is best to reach out to the community to find dedicated people who are willing to work on a separate, short-term project.
- b. Seek out residents who believe in the project and are willing to make the time for it.
- c. It is important to have sufficient representation of the community's park and recreation needs and to build broad based support for the planning process, plan proposals and implementation. Consider including on the Study Committee, members who represent the following positions in the community:
 - A few members from the park and recreation board, environmental council, etc.
 - At least one local elected official
 - At least one member from school district board or administration or faculty

- A religious leader
- One member from grantee's staff (municipal manager, park and rec. dept., etc.)
- One member of local or regional planning commission
- Consider representation from the county/regional parks and recreation department or other applicable county/regional agency
- Representatives of the business community, i.e. chamber of commerce, real estate developers, bankers etc.
- Others to consider: students, youth sports groups, senior citizen groups, apartment complex owners/operators, etc.

It is also important to have all major neighborhoods and areas in the community represented. The goal should be to provide a diverse base of individuals to assist in developing the plan so that all aspects and interests are taken into consideration in developing the plan.

d. To build a strong committee and achieve results:

- Appoint a leader with good organizational and communication skills. Ordinarily, the person is the local project coordinator.
- Prepare and distribute agendas, along with any handouts, prior to the meeting.
- Initiate clear, factual and direct communications.
- Hold "workshop meetings" where there is no need for motions, votes, etc. (the object is to build consensus and support for final recommendations)
- Encourage teamwork – Ask the question, "What can we do to solve this problem together?"
- Designate responsibilities based on individual strengths and weaknesses -- everyone should feel like they are contributing to the effort.
- Stay focused - don't dwell on the past but encourage viable solutions and "think out of the box".

2. **Advertised or Promoted General Public Meetings**

The purpose of these meetings is to gather information from residents about their attitudes and interests as well as getting their reactions to the project's findings and recommendations. For projects that impact the entire community, both community-wide and neighborhood meetings are often held. For park master site plans and feasibility studies that directly affect specific neighborhoods, meetings on proposed plans should be held close to affected neighborhoods. An effort should be made to alert adjacent property owners of the meetings and encourage their attendance.

Neighborhood meetings can be more convenient for the residents to attend and provide opportunity to focus on some issues that directly affect the neighborhood as well as addressing municipal-wide concerns. If you conduct a series of neighborhood meetings, results must be integrated so that the final plan is a strategy for the entire municipality, not separate and fragmented blueprints for individual neighborhoods.

Attendance at public meetings is usually small and, therefore, results should be kept in perspective with regard to the overall planning process. To increase your meeting attendance requires considerable organizational effort. Following are guidelines to increase attendance and conduct effective public meetings.

- a. Plan your meeting in advance.
 - Determine purpose
 - Select target group
 - Set date
 - Get meeting place
 - Send out "eye-catching" invitations, announcements, flyers -- place add in newspaper -- write press releases, make phone calls, send emails.
 - Make personal phone calls to key community and neighborhood leaders
 - Prepare agenda and decide in advance meeting leadership roles (local committee, consultant, and elected officials)
- b. Holding the meeting.
 - Serve refreshments
 - Arrive early to set up and provide a sign-up sheet with addresses noted
 - Arrange seating
 - Welcome people
 - Begin on time, end on time
 - Explain the meeting format

3. **Key Person Interviews**

The purpose of key person interviews is to give community leaders (beyond the elected officials) an opportunity to voice their concerns and respond to a standard set of questions. This engages these individuals, with substantial influence in the community, in the planning process. Depending on the project the Bureau recommends a minimum number of individual interviews to be conducted, typically between 15 and 25.

- a. Key individuals, **not** part of your Steering Committee, who should be interviewed include:
 - Elected officials
 - School district administrators
 - Police chiefs
 - Service club leaders
 - Religious leaders

- Chamber of commerce/business leaders
- Non-profit administrators (scouts, Y's)
- Key recreation personnel
- For-profit recreation facility owners
- Business leaders such as major employers, bank presidents, real estate developers, etc.
- User group administrators

b. Commonly asked questions include:

- What age groups appear to be least/best served in your area?
- Are there any additions or changes that you feel could improve recreation opportunities?
- Are there any additions or changes that you feel could improve park facilities?
- What key issues are facing the provision of recreation opportunities in your community?
- How do you feel about the possibilities of cooperation with the school district to provide more recreation opportunities?
- What economic benefit do you feel this opportunity will create?

4. **Citizen Survey**

A random sample survey of a community's citizens is an effective way to gather valid input and opinions from all segments of the community if conducted in a statistically valid manner. Conducting a survey can be expensive and time consuming but well worth the cost for these reasons:

- This is the only means of collecting data and opinions representing all residents.
- Even with a low response rate, you hear from more residents than any other method; particularly public meetings where typically less than 50 people attend.
- Results can be more accurate and powerful than other methods.

Communities interested in this option should seek out consulting firms that have considerable expertise in this area.

The Bureau can provide additional information and sample surveys upon request. Below is an overview of issues to consider before conducting a citizen survey.

- Conduct a random sample of your community rather than mailing to all households for these reasons:
 - It is more cost-effective to devise a good questionnaire that will generate a high response rate from a smaller group of people, rather than on a massive printing and mailing of a poorly-designed survey to a larger group of people that few may complete and return.

- Mailing to everyone through a newsletter or utility bill lacks a scientific and mathematical method. Response rates are usually less than 10% and there is no way of knowing if those who choose to respond are representative of the entire population. There is also a strong possibility of bias in the survey results.
- b. Sample size:
- The general rule is that the accuracy of the survey increases as the size of the sample approximates the size of the general population. However, once the sample size gets beyond 500, increasing the sample size usually adds little to the accuracy of the survey results.
 - It is typically recommended that 10% of the households are sampled and follow-ups are made to obtain at least 500 survey responses, especially if you require information at the neighborhood level. For subgroups being surveyed, such as neighborhoods, you should seek to receive at least 100 survey responses from each.
 - The larger the targeted population, the less cost-effective it is to produce a survey.
- c. Obtaining a random sample:
- Tax billing lists can be obtained from your municipality, school district, tax collector, or perhaps the county real estate assessment office. If you have access to a computer spreadsheet program that has a random number selection function then each household can be assigned a number (1, 2, 3, etc.) that can be used to select numbers at random.
- d. Ensuring an adequate response rate:
- For mail questionnaire, a response rate of 25% would be considered high. You can usually increase this number by:
 - Developing an attractive/professionally prepared questionnaire;
 - Conducting several follow-up (postcard, second mailing, calls);
 - Providing return postage; and/or
 - Giving respondents an incentive to respond like coupons or a raffle.
 - Hand deliver surveys with scheduled pick-up. If possible, wait while they complete the survey.
 - Consider using telephone interviews. One data center gains access to phone numbers, including unlisted numbers, and its' computer randomly selects numbers based on zip codes. The challenge is that if a community has a lot of zip codes, it probably is not cost-effective. For example, in one community, 423 eligible calls were made and 360 interviews conducted. This represented an 85% response with a 5.2% sampling error. Note: This method excludes residents who have cell phones rather than land lines.
- e. Designing your questionnaire:
- During your consultant selection process, request perspective consultants to provide samples of past surveys along with the response rates received.
 - Suggestions for survey questionnaire design:
 - Make it attractive and easy to read with lots of white space.

- Start with the easy questions first; more difficult ones later.
 - Include a question that gauges willingness to pay.
 - Clearly explain the importance and purpose of the survey and express appreciation for completing at both the beginning and end of the questionnaire.
 - Provide space for a respondent to sign up for volunteering.
 - Place demographic questions at the beginning or end.
 - For questions with long checklists, require only the top three choices.
 - Include "agree/disagree" type questions for issues that don't fit into categories.
- f. Survey costs:
- Are determined by the sample size and methods(s) chosen to follow.
 - Printing of questionnaires, envelopes, return postcards, and follow-up postcards, postage, tabulation, analysis and report of a survey for 2,000 persons can cost between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

Special Note on Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan Adoption

A comprehensive recreation, open space, and greenway plan is an official document that, in part, dictates municipal policy and decisions regarding land use. For that reason, the Bureau encourages municipalities to follow adoption procedures listed in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, section 302, "Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan." These procedures require a formal public hearing as part of the plan adoption process with a 45-day review period. A copy of the plan must be sent to all adjacent municipalities and the school district.

Attached is a chart that shows the desired outcomes for various citizen participation techniques.

10/2009

Citizen Participation

Public Participation Mechanisms/Techniques

Desired Outcomes ↓↓↓↓↓	Public Meeting*	Work Forum	Press Release	Target Newsletter	Steering Committee	Adopt** Program	Special Events	Partnerships
Inform the public about watershed planning · Increase awareness of Dept. efforts	■	■	■	■				
Planning: Design stream protection programs people want · Assess needs · Meet special needs · Prioritize needs	■	■	■	■	■			
Build support for initiatives · Lobbying · Consensus building	■		■	■		■	■	■
Fund-raising			■	■	■	■	■	■
Improve Service Delivery through volunteers · Stream Maintenance · Stream Patrols · Program Leaders	■		■	■		■	■	■

Squares (■) represent the most appropriate techniques to achieve desired outcomes.

*Public Meetings: We recommend an "open" meeting structure; **"public" hearings are not an effective way to obtain public input.** Hearings are simply the formal, and often legal, means of ratifying an agreement. The purpose of an "open meeting is to focus on an agenda of work to be accomplished. Residents are given the ability, possibility, and opportunity to participate rather than being told the results.

**Adopt Programs: This category consists of Stream Bank Fencing and Adopt-a-Stream Programs, or Friends of the Trail initiatives.

10/2009