

Form Name: 2019 TLCI Planning Study Application
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Project Sponsor / Agency Name	County Planning [Cuyahoga County Planning Commission]
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Preference for TLCI planning study development	Consultant-led TLCI Planning Study
Study Name	Community Confluence: Connecting the Cities of Lakewood and Rocky River and Cleveland Metroparks
Total Project Cost	100000
NOACA Funding Requested	60000
Local Funding Committed	40000
Describe local funding sources here, if applicable	In-kind professional planning services: County Planning-\$40,000
NOACA may consider partial funding for some projects. Please check the appropriate box below:	<input type="checkbox"/> My agency will not be able to implement the project if provided partial funding
Project Location (attach a location map at the end of the application)	Includes those portions of Lakewood and Rocky River connected by the Clifton Boulevard, Detroit Road, and Hilliard Boulevard bridges
Project Study Area (including geographic boundaries)	The Project Study Area includes portions of the Cities of Lakewood and Rocky River, and the Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation; it is roughly bounded on the north by the Clifton Avenue (SR 6) Bridge, on the east by West Clifton Boulevard and Riverside Drive, on the south by the Hilliard Boulevard Bridge, and on the west by Wooster Road (US 20) and Lake Road. Beneath the bridges in the Rocky River Reservation lies Valley Parkway, the Emerald Necklace Marina, and the all-purpose trail.

Detailed Project Description

The study will focus on improving access between the Cities of Lakewood and Rocky River utilizing local streets (Riverside Drive, Wooster Road) and three existing bridges (Clifton Boulevard, Detroit Road, Hilliard Boulevard). It will explore the most effective circulation into major entrances to Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation, the northern portion of which lies in the valley between the two communities at the intersection of Valley Parkway and Detroit Road. The topography of the reservation with its steep shale walls limits the feasibility of most new connections. The value of parkland and trails is well-recognized, as is the role that the Rocky River Reservation plays in improving the quality of life. Providing better access to this important asset will positively impact the lives of residents and provide the Cities with economic development opportunities. The study will conduct an audit of existing GCRTA and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, as well as existing traffic patterns and road and bridge traffic capacities. The study will also explore opportunities to improve safety and access for bicycle and pedestrian traffic by assessing the feasibility of infrastructure improvements such as road diets, buffered bicycle lanes, expanded all-purpose trails, improved crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands, signalization, and lighting. Wayfinding is another important component of this study, knowing that the Rocky River Reservation is one of Cleveland Metroparks most visited park areas. In 2017 there were millions of recreational visits and visitor occasions, which include drivers along Valley Parkway who use it as a commuter route through the area. Overall, Metroparks saw over 45M visitor occasions, including over 18M recreational visits in 2017. It is expected that the study will support goals of Lakewood's Community Vision, the 2014 Bike Lakewood Priorities Report, and the Active Living Task Force Recommendations Report, as well as the Rocky River Master Plan.

Proposed Study Components

Bicycle Transportation Planning
Pedestrian Transportation Planning
Traffic Analysis
Transit Planning
Other: Wayfinding

Proposed Study Components Description

The study will focus on active transportation access, circulation, and wayfinding between the two communities via bridges and local streets, with particular attention to how these patterns impact and can be maximized for better movement to and through the Rocky River Reservation. There are currently two reservation entrances in the study area that allow for vehicular access, along with bicycle and pedestrian access via an all purpose trail: Detroit/Sloan/Valley Parkway in Lakewood, and Rockcliff Drive in Rocky River. Several social trails exist for pedestrians through neighborhoods; however, these are unsanctioned and unmarked. As part of its Strategic Plan, Cleveland Metroparks is actively pursuing opportunities for bike and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods and collaborating on regional trails. This study will provide detailed information on how best to provide active transportation access, circulation, and wayfinding for residents of the two communities and the region.

1. How does the proposed study meet the first and sixth TLCI objectives to (1) Develop transportation projects that provide more travel options through complete streets and context sensitive solutions, increasing user safety and supporting positive public health impacts and to (6) Provide people with safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life while also advancing NOACA's regional goals to BUILD a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system and to ENHANCE the quality of life in Northeast Ohio? (30 points)

Trails and parkland improve human health and provide economic benefits. Access to active transportation modes and recreation space increases physical activity, an important issue as obesity rates rise nationally. The 2018 Trust for Public Land report The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks found that 114,000 Cuyahoga County adults have improved health by using Cleveland Metroparks facilities. This translates to \$160M in annual health benefits. Further, at least \$873M in annual benefits accrue to the area through increased property valuation, tax revenues, tourism spending, reductions in stormwater management costs, and air pollution removal value. With safe, continuous connections and enhanced crossings, more trips into and through the Park District and communities can be converted to walking and biking trips. Further, bicycling is zero emission transportation; trips made by bicycle as opposed to car decrease air pollution emissions, and positively impacting public health.

2. How does the proposed study meet the second TLCI objective to (2) Promote reinvestment in underutilized or vacant/abandoned properties through development concepts supported by multimodal transportation systems and advance NOACA's regional goal to ENHANCE the quality of life in Northeast Ohio? (15 points)

By increasing active transportation access, safety, and wayfinding throughout the study area, the study seeks to leverage proximity to the Rocky River Reservation and the surrounding commercial districts in downtown Rocky River and along Detroit Road and Lakewood's West End for economic development and redevelopment opportunities. The recently adopted Rocky River Master Plan included specific transportation and redevelopment recommendations for the Downtown and nearby focus areas. The study area includes dense residential neighborhoods in both Cities. Proximity and improved access to the Rocky River Reservation can result in commercial and residential investment and increases in real property valuation, and in income tax revenues from job creation. The study will evaluate and make recommendations for improved transit access and opportunities for site-specific Transit Waiting Environments and TOD, since the study area is currently served by GCRTA Bus Routes 25, 26, and 55.

3. How does the proposed study meet the third TLCI objective to (3) Support economic development through place-based transportation and land use recommendations, and connect these proposals with existing assets and investments and advance NOACA's regional goals to PRESERVE existing infrastructure and to SUPPORT economic development? (15 points)

A goal of this study is to preserve existing bridges and entrances into the Rocky River Reservation, while improving these assets for 21st century multimodal traffic. The three bridges between Rocky River and Lakewood were designed for car traffic to and from the western suburbs to downtown. They need of investment; rather than redesigning for car traffic, the goal is to include safe and comfortable passage for pedestrians and bicyclists. Though dense neighborhoods lie within a 5 minute walk or bike ride, most users of the Rocky River reservation drive to the park, and then walk or ride from there. Improving existing infrastructure will help reduce car traffic in the Reservation and improve home values in the surrounding area with easy access to the Rocky River Reservation. Planned street improvements include protected bike lanes on Clifton Extension and the future installation of bike facilities on Lake Avenue. Riverside Avenue in Lakewood is also scheduled to be repaved in 2019.

4. How does the proposed study meet the fourth TLCI objective to (4) Ensure that the benefits and burdens of growth, change and transportation projects are distributed equitably by integrating accessibility and environmental justice into projects and advance NOACA's regional goals to BUILD a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system and to PRESERVE existing infrastructure? (15 points)

The current configuration of infrastructure must be improved to promote equity in transportation access for all ages and abilities. Lakewood conducted a survey in 2017 for the Detroit/Sloane/Valley Parkway intersection, to assess respondents' comfort levels when accessing the Metroparks from this intersection. Comfort was rated on a scale from 1 (Would Not Attempt) to 5 (Confident) in two categories: driving, walking, and biking the intersection alone, and walking and biking the intersection with children. Survey results showed that while nearly every respondent felt confident driving through the intersection (average score 4.36/5), the average score for walking/running the intersection was significantly lower (2.85), and even lower for biking (2.56). These scores translated to "Scared but Willing," and "Cautious." When survey respondents assessed comfort levels while walking or biking with kids, the scores dropped sharply--biking with kids averaged 1.6, with a median score of 1.

5. How does the proposed study meet the fifth TLCI objective to (5) Enhance regional cohesion by supporting collaboration between regional and community partners and advance NOACA's regional goal to STRENGTHEN regional cohesion? (15 points)

This application re[represents regional collaboration in action. All entities are involved in the planning process and look forward to formulating alternatives for the region. The Clifton, Detroit, and Hilliard bridges and connections into the Rocky River Metroparks have high daily volumes of visitors from neighboring Cuyahoga County communities including Lakewood, Rocky River, Cleveland, Bay Village, Westlake, Fairview Park, and other suburbs who would also benefit from the alternatives proposed. Many of these intersections are shown with a bikeway demand on NOACA's Potential Bikeway Demand & Existing Bikeways map. In addition, the Detroit Bridge is highlighted as a "planned" bikeway on NOACA's Regional Priority Bikeway Network map. The connections that are proposed in this study are critical for anyone traveling from the western suburbs downtown or for those traveling to one of the Cleveland Metroparks Reservations by means other than a car (Rocky River, Edgewater, and Huntington).

6. How will the sponsor manage the study, and ultimately deliver the projects it recommends? Include any experience the sponsor has in managing a TLCI or TLCI-like public planning process. (10 Points)

County Planning will serve as the lead sponsor and fiscal agent for this project. With the partnering Cities and Cleveland Metroparks, we will develop the Scope of Work, execute the contract with NOACA, supervise the consultant selection process, develop the public involvement plan, provide project management, and facilitate the Project Team, Steering Committee and public meetings. Upon award, County Planning will issue a Request for Technical Proposals to selected, pre-qualified consultants. Since FY2014, County Planning, as sponsor and fiscal agent, has successfully managed four TLCI funded projects: Eastside Greenway Study; East 185th Street Corridor Plan; Northfield-Warrensville Center Corridor Multimodal Plan; and the ongoing Cuyahoga Greenways Plan. County Planning guided and managed the application process, scopes of work and contracts, consultant selection process, public involvement plan, project management, project team and steering committee meetings, and deliverables.

Attachment 1: Map of proposed study area

https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.formstack.com/uploads/3133969/66758226/446099229/66758226_community_confluence_attachment_1-map.pdf

Attachment 2: Council/Board Resolution to apply for TLCI Planning study and, if applicable, to fund local match

https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.formstack.com/uploads/3133969/66969818/446099229/66969818_community_confluence_attachment_2-board_resolution.pdf

Attachment 3: Letter of Support from head of community/organization (e.g. Mayor, City Manager, Executive Director, etc.), that is sponsoring the study.

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Attachment 4: Letter of Support from impacted political jurisdictions that are included in the study area, but are not the project sponsor (required if applicable).

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Attachment 5: Additional Letters of Support (from non-government organizations)

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Are you submitting more than one TLCI Planning Study application?

Yes

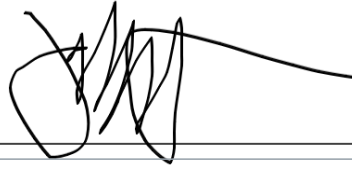
1.

Community Confluence: Connecting the Cities of Lakewood and Rocky River and Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation

2.

Lake to Lakes Trail Wayfinding and Connections Plan

Digital signature of person submitting application:

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