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## COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ PLANNING ~ CSU EXTENSION ~ COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ VETERANS SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES

### EL PASO COUNTY PARKS

#### URBAN PARK GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES UPDATED 2021

##### Introduction

El Paso County has established an Urban Park Grant Program designed to promote the development of urban park opportunities throughout El Paso County. Urban parks promote health and wellness, stimulate community and economic development, help preserve the environment, provide opportunities for neighbors to meet and connect, and provide areas for wildlife. Urban parks are parks normally 25 acres or less and are designed to serve the surrounding neighborhood or subdivision.

Eligible grantees include cities, towns, school districts, metropolitan districts, and special districts in El Paso County. In addition, nonprofit organizations are also eligible through a contractual arrangement.

Urban park opportunities may include, but are not limited to; athletic facilities, playgrounds, gardens, parking areas, trails, aquatic facilities, and dog parks. Urban Park Grant funds can also be used for the purchase of real property to establish an urban park.

The funding for the Urban Park Grant Program is provided through development fees. These fees are also used to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of the El Paso County Parks system, so the Urban Park Grant Program's funding is subject to availability.

Developers or recreational facilities tied to new land development are typically not considered under this program. El Paso County considers these opportunities through a Park Lands Agreement which provides credits against required development fees at time of a subdivision action.



## **Guidelines**

El Paso County Parks will administer the Urban Park Grant Program under the following guidelines:

- Grantees will be required to demonstrate the existence of equal matching funds (1:1 cash match) when submitting an Urban Park Grant Proposal. Typically, Urban Park Grants will not exceed \$25,000.
- Urban Park Grant funds will be distributed as a reimbursement to grantees after the real estate acquisition has been finalized or the urban park opportunity has been constructed.
- Urban Park Grants must be utilized in the respective Urban Park Fee District where the fees were collected or otherwise approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- To be eligible for an Urban Park Grant, unlimited public access must be provided to the respective facility during public use, operational hours.
- The grantee must demonstrate its ability to perpetually maintain the site.
- El Paso County will accept Urban Park Grant proposals on a rolling basis as program funding allows. The application process will normally take approximately three months.
- The Board of County Commissioners will approve all Urban Park Grants.

## **Application / Award Process**

1. To initiate the application process, the following information should be submitted to:

Todd Marts, Director  
El Paso County Community Services Department  
2002 Creek Crossing  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80905  
toddmarts@elpasoco.com  
719-520-6399

- Project summary including a brief history of the organization, project need, project goal(s), site map(s), accessibility objectives, public input process, population to be served, project partnerships, methods to meet public access requirements, photo of the site, and detailed description of matching funds
- Purchase and / or development timetable
- Project budget including funding sources and detailed estimated expenses
- Ongoing maintenance responsibility commitment

- Explanation of the public input process
  - Applicant's most recent annual operations budget
  - List of governing body members
  - Copy of current Internal Revenue Service determination letter indicating tax exempt status (if appropriate)
  - Statement of grant request approval by the applicant's governing body
  - Statement of how the County will be recognized if the Grantee is awarded an Urban Park Grant
2. The Director of the Community Services Department (Director), or his designee, will review the grant proposal to ensure all grant requirements have been met.
  3. The Director, or his designee, will present the Urban Park Grant Proposal to the Park Advisory Board for potential endorsement.
  4. The Director, or his designee, will present Urban Park Grant Proposal to the Board of County Commissioners for review and/or approval. If approved by the Board of County Commissioners, the Director will notify the applicant of the grant award.
  5. Upon successful purchase of the real property or project completion, the grantee will request reimbursement from El Paso County.
  6. The Director, or his designee, will review the project to ensure it meets all project objectives.
  7. If acceptable, the County will release the Urban Park Grant funds to the grantee.
  8. The Board of County Commissioners must approve all exceptions to the Urban Park Grant Program policies.