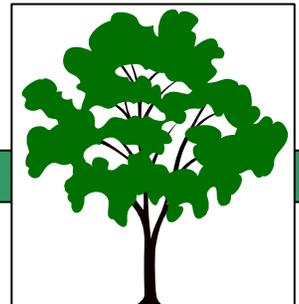


Monroe County Green Space Initiative



Maggie Brooks
County Executive

December, 2008



INTRODUCTION



County Executive
Maggie Brooks

I am extremely pleased to announce the third round of funding for Monroe County's Green Space Initiative. The first two rounds of this program were extremely successful. Thanks to the cooperative efforts of landowners, local officials and land trusts, we approved \$7.7 million in projects to protect 948 acres of prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive properties across Monroe County.

In this third round, we hope to build on the success of the first two rounds to protect more of our most valuable open space resources. By working together, we can preserve our quality of life and leave a legacy of stewardship for the benefit of future generations.

INITIATIVE

In the third round of this program, Monroe County will fund up to 50% of the total cost of a project or one-half of the local matching portion of a federal or state grant, whichever is less. A maximum of \$250,000 will be funded per applicant. All municipalities and area land trusts are eligible for Green Space Initiative funding, regardless of the amount of funding they received in the first two rounds of the program.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Towns and Villages in Monroe County, the City of Rochester, Monroe County, and not-for-profit land trusts working in cooperation with a municipal sponsor can apply for Green Space Initiative funding.

Property Along Lake Ontario in the
Town of Parma Acquired by the
Trust for Public Land in Round 1



ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following projects are eligible for funding through the Monroe County Green Space Initiative:

- Lands identified in the Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (PESA) report prepared by the Monroe County Environmental Management Council (1996).
- Lands identified for preservation or trail development in a municipal master plan, recreation plan, open space inventory or other assessment of environmentally or agriculturally sensitive areas. 
- Farmland containing USDA prime soils or soils of statewide significance, or agricultural lands identified by the Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan as vulnerable to conversion (field crop land, vacant agricultural land or truck crop land). 
- Improvements to existing parkland limited to low-intensity, passive recreational activities including nature trails, hiking trails, and trailhead parking.

Temporary or term easements will not be eligible for the Green Space Initiative.

Properties intended for active recreational use, such as athletic fields, will not be eligible. However, open space acquisitions and limited trail development that complement or buffer existing parks and active recreational areas will be eligible. Low intensity recreational trails intended for nature walks, hiking and associated trailhead parking development will be eligible for funding.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Applicants must meet the following criteria for land acquisition:

- Applicants must provide a valid appraisal, summary appraisal or market analysis of the property.
- Applicants must submit a letter of support from the landowner of the property.
- Land trusts applying for funding must submit a certificate of incorporation or certificate of legal formation, as well as a letter of support from the municipality.
- All applicants must submit a budget for the project that details the cost of acquisition, administrative costs and legal fees.
- The property closing must be completed within one year of the grant award. Applicants can request additional time from the County Executive, who can choose to extend this deadline for applicants who can demonstrate their project is near completion.

Applicants must meet the following criteria for low intensity trail development:

- Applicants must provide a budget for trail construction that details the cost of design and construction, construction materials, and associated improvements such as trailheads and parking.
- The trail construction must be completed within eighteen months of the grant award. Applicants can request additional time from the County Executive, who can choose to extend this deadline for applicants who can demonstrate their project is near completion.

The awarding of a grant will require the project sponsor to enter into a contractual agreement with Monroe County and submit a management plan for the property. Project sponsors are responsible for all permits, licenses and environmental reviews associated with the project. Project

sponsors are responsible for compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and should include Monroe County as an “involved agency” on the appropriate Environmental Assessment Forms.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Monroe County Department of Planning and Development will coordinate applications for the Green Space Initiative. Applications for property acquisition must include information about the property, its value as open space, its consistency with community plans, and the reasons why acquisition of that property is necessary for preservation. Trail development applications must include information that demonstrates the low intensity nature of the trail, how it complements the existing open space or park environment, and consistency with community recreation and open space plans.

Applications for the Green Space Initiative will be due on or before *February 13, 2009*. The order in which applications are received may be a consideration if the applications exceed available funds.

Applications will be reviewed and rated by a committee appointed by the County Executive. The County Executive will consider the committee’s review and make a final recommendation for funding to the County Legislature.

Subsequent application rounds may occur if funding is not depleted by this round of applications or if funded projects are not successfully completed. In that event, grant limits and selection criteria may be revised to reflect the changing needs of the program.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Protect important environmental resources that enhance air, water or soil quality; or, safeguard important fish or wildlife habitats or serve as a buffer for important habitats.
- Preserve viable agricultural land.
- Provide low intensity trail accessibility to existing parkland or open space areas.
- Are located near or adjacent to existing public or private open spaces, including nature preserves, parks, cemeteries, golf courses, campuses, farmland or forests.
- Ensure geographical balance in the distribution of County Green Space Initiative funding; consideration will be given to municipalities that did not receive funding in the first two rounds of the Green Space Initiative.
- Have broad community support as expressed in municipal plans and thorough letters of support from officials and community organizations.

FUNDING SOURCES

The Monroe County Green Space Initiative is intended to assist municipalities in open space acquisition techniques and strategies. Total County funding will not exceed \$632,000.

Sponsors may find additional funding through the New York State Environmental Bond Act, Federal Land Legacy Initiative, not-for-profit land trusts, or other state and federal open space acquisition, farmland protection, or trail development programs that may become available.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Application forms will be available on the internet in Word and PDF format at the Monroe County web site (www.monroecounty.gov) Copies can also be obtained by contacting the Monroe County Department of Planning and Development at 753-2037.

BENEFITS

The types of open land that are likely to be preserved under this initiative include wetlands, wood lots, stream corridors, important wildlife habitats and prime and unique agricultural soils. Limited trail development in parks and open spaces will increase recreational opportunities for residents as well as enhance community attractiveness and livability.

Benefits include:



Town of Greece Acquisition
Round 2

- Preserving open spaces and agricultural lands for the benefit of future generations;
- Protecting important ecological resources that enhance air and water quality;
- Providing additional areas and facilities for passive recreational activities such as hiking, picnicking and nature study;
- Retaining the character of our community and enhancing the quality of life for Monroe County residents.