

DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

Charles Loehr, Director

GRANTS MANAGEMENT

Earlier this year, the Department launched a concerted effort to expand the funding base of external resources with the hiring of a Grants Manager to research and identify funding opportunities that match the Department's needs, facilitate the preparation and submission of applications, and assure proper grant stewardship. As part of this new initiative, the Department defined new guidelines for requesting and expending grant funds beyond CIP approved budgets.

Both private and public funding sources have been identified based upon Department program funding needs. Grant awarding private foundations generally require the applicant to have an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c) (3) status. The Department is working cooperatively with the Montgomery Parks Foundation on grants procedures for such applications. The grants program is also pursuing corporate gifts, working in collaboration with the Department's Enterprise Division where appropriate, to optimize partnering opportunities in the private sector.

So far this year the Department has received the following grant awards:

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Waterways Improvement Fund - Seneca Landing storm water damage repairs - \$25,000,
- National Center for Boundless Playgrounds – Martin Luther King Park playground accessibility - \$4,545.46,
- Capital Grants Projects, State of Maryland – Olney Skate Park construction - \$350,000,
- State Highway Administration - Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail - \$2,368,000.

Grant applications that have been submitted and are pending review are as follows:

- Maryland Department of Transportation, National Recreation Trails – Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail signage and kiosks - \$30,000,
- Maryland Department of Transportation, National Recreation Trails – Sligo Creek Hiker-Biker Trail signage and kiosks - \$30,000,
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Community Parks and Playgrounds – Cabin John Park playground renovation - \$50,000,
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Community Parks and Playgrounds – Parklawn Park playground construction - \$50,000,
- ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) and Trimble - Mobile Government Demonstration Project, Planning – Eastern Region pedestrian safety - \$8,500 - hardware, software, and training,
- ESRI and Trimble - Mobile Government Demonstration Project, Homeland Security – Smart Parks GPS - \$8,500 - hardware, software, and training,
- Bruner Foundation - Urban Excellence Award - \$50,000,
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Community Parks and Playgrounds – Olney Manor tennis facilities renovation - \$80,000.

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION INITIATIVE

The Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission has, over the course of our 75-year history, been recognized as a national leader and innovator in the park and recreation profession. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has recognized the Commission by awarding a fifth Gold Medal of Excellence, the highest number of gold medal awards received by any park and recreation organization in the nation.

The Commission has recently embarked on another new initiative with our application for national accreditation with the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). Our accreditation will certify that the organization meets national standards in areas such as park facility operations and maintenance, inclusive special events programming, community relations, administration, and fiscal management.

CAPRA is a national organization consisting of several park and recreation member agencies both nationally and around the world and is affiliated with NRPA. The comprehensive certification process requires at least 85% compliance with the 156-accreditation standards. In June, the Commission formally submitted the Self-Assessment Report and in August hosted a five-member CAPRA Visitation Team that assessed the Commission for a five-day period.

The Commission is pleased to report that the CAPRA Visitation Team unanimously approved our accreditation application as being in compliance with all 156 standards. The Commission's involvement in this endeavor is significant because it required the participation of both Montgomery and Prince George's County in the review process.

The next step in the accreditation process requires the formal review and approval of the Visitation Committee's report by the CAPRA Board in October 2004. Upon approval of CAPRA Accreditation, the Commission will be the second park and recreation agency in the State of Maryland to be nationally accredited.