

Trails Category

Summary of Criteria

Trails means public ways constructed for, and open to, pedestrians, equestrians, or bicyclists, or any combination thereof, other than a sidewalk constructed as a part of a city street or county road for exclusive use of pedestrians.⁹²

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*	
Unscored				
0	Project Introduction	All Projects	0 points	State Focus
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
1	Need–Local Priorities	All Projects	15 points	State and Local Focus
2	Project Scope	All Projects	10 points	Local Focus
3	Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition Projects	15 points	Local Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
4	Project Design	Development Projects	10 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
5	Project Engagement	All Projects	10 points	State and Local Focus
6	Sustainability	Development Projects	5 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
7	Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat	All Projects	10 points	State Focus
8	Linkages Between Trails	All Projects	8 points	State and Local Focus
9	Linkages Between Communities	All Projects	8 points	State and Local Focus
10	Water Access or Views	All Projects	5 points	State Focus
11	Scenic Values	All Projects	5 points	State Focus
12	Cost Efficiencies	All Projects	3 points	State and Local Focus
Scored by RCO				
13	Need–Statewide Priorities	All Projects	9 points	State Focus
14	Proximity to People	All Projects	1 point	State Focus

⁹²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*
15 County Population Density	All Projects	1 point	State Focus
16 Growth Management Act Preference	All Projects	0 points	State Focus
Total Points Possible: 100			

*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan)
- Local—those that meet local needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

0. Project Introduction. In one to two minutes, introduce the project’s location and goals to set the stage for the project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context in the service area.⁹³
- Summarize the site’s condition; the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals; and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

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1. Need—Local Priorities. Describe the need for new or improved recreation facilities, how the need is known, and why existing amenities in the service area do not satisfy the need. A complete response should include the following:

- A simple inventory and condition of relevant outdoor recreation opportunities in the service area.
- Description of gaps in access, opportunity, or service delivery.
- Description of the current and/or anticipated use of the project site and any factors that contribute to fluctuations in use or demand for service.
- Description of how the need for this project has been identified and prioritized, including whether it is linked to local recreation or open space plans.

⁹³The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

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2. Project Scope. Describe the site’s existing natural and built features. Describe what is being proposed in the project, including land acquisition and/or elements to be built or renovated, and for what purpose.

- What recreation opportunities will this project provide?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two.

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3. Immediacy of Threat⁹⁴ (acquisition and combination projects only). Does a threat to the public availability of a part of the trail exist?

Consider the availability of alternatives. A project threatened with the loss of a critical link will merit more evaluation points than a proposal where other routes exist.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three for acquisition projects

Zero points	No evidence presented.
One to two points	Minimal threat; trail opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next thirty-six months.
Three points	Actions are under consideration that could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.
Four to five points	Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.
	or
	A threat situation has occurred or is imminent that has led an organization to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant agency.

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⁹⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ii)

4. Project Design.

- Describe how the design aligns with the need, location, and project scope. Describe how the design addresses any constraints and whether the design provides access for users of all abilities. Applicants may choose to describe design elements such as parking and site access, accessibility features, environmental considerations, green infrastructure, cultural or historic interpretation, mitigation of public use impacts, etc. If available, include design visuals.
- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.
- Provide an overview of the project budget and how the cost estimate was determined. If the proposal includes additional site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated schedule to be construction-ready?
- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.

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5. Project Engagement. RCO encourages applicants to use a variety of methods to gather input on the project. How were the people who will be most impacted by the project engaged?

- Describe what methods were used and the populations engaged, including underserved populations and/or Native American tribes. Describe the relevance of that participation for the population size, demographic, or socioeconomic conditions of the community or service area.
- ▲ Point Range: zero to three points
- How has community input influenced the project design?
- ▲ Point Range: zero to three points
- Describe any community partnerships that are providing support for the project whether through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the significance of the partnerships within the community or service area.
- ▲ Point Range: zero to three points

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- 6. Sustainability** (development and combination projects only). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's organization's sustainability plan or how the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

Social Factors

- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan, or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range zero to five points

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7. Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat.⁹⁵ How will this proposal enhance wildlife habitat beyond what may be required by a development or land-use authority such as statute, ordinance, permit, rule and regulation, mitigation requirement, etc.?

- What are the potential outcomes of the applicant’s efforts? Why and how will they benefit wildlife?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two.

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8. Linkage Between Trails.⁹⁶ Does the trail project connect existing trails?

- Describe to what extent the proposed trail or trailhead links and serves existing trails and trail networks or will provide potential linkages?
- Does a coordinated plan identify the proposed linkages?
- Does the project enhance a statewide, regional, or community trails network?

▲ Point Range: zero to eight points

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9. Linkage Between Communities.⁹⁷ Does the trail project connect communities?

Applicant should show how the project will create linkages between communities.

Broadly interpret the term “Community” to include, but not be limited to, the following linkages:

- Neighborhoods, subdivisions, business districts
- Urban and rural areas
- Destinations, such as parks, landscapes, scenic overlooks, schools, churches, libraries, cultural sites, or trail systems
- Disparate groups of people

⁹⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(viii)

⁹⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a) (iv)

⁹⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(iii)

▲ Point Range: zero to eight points

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10. Water Access or Views.⁹⁸ Does the project provide direct access to water (physical access by person or boat) or views?

Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How long does it take to reach the water access?
- What quality is the access (for example, are there obstructions—vegetation, mud, inclines, etc.)?
- What percentage of visitors likely will use the access?
- Does the project provide views?
- How long does it take to reach the view area?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

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11. Scenic Values.⁹⁹ Does the project provide scenic values?

Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How long does it take to reach an area of scenic value?
- What percentage of visitors likely will access these?
- Are there scenic values of high quantity and quality?
- How does distance and perspective affect the scenic value?
- How much scenic variety is provided?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

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⁹⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(vii) and 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ix)

⁹⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ix)

12. Cost Efficiencies. To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations—cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donations?
- What are the values of the donations and how were the values determined?
- Are the donations in hand?
- If the donations are not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donors that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Are the donations necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

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13. Need–Statewide Priorities (applicant does not answer). Social vulnerability and health scores are based on information from the Washington Tracking Network’s [Information by Location mapping tool](#). Social vulnerability scores use a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. Health scores are from the network’s Poor Health Outcomes ranking. Green space availability scores are determined using spatial data analysis from RCO’s equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (more than eight acres per one thousand residents), Medium (three to eight acres per one thousand residents), and Low (less than three acres per one thousand residents) green space per capita.

- **Green Space Availability**

One point	High green space
Two points	Medium green space
Three points	Low green space

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

- **Health Disparity Index–Poor Health Outcomes**

Zero points	Health outcome rating one to two
One point	Health outcome rating three to five
Two points	Health outcome rating six to seven
Three points	Health outcome rating eight to ten

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

- **Social Vulnerability Index**

Zero points for vulnerability rating one to two
One point for vulnerability rating three to five
Two points for vulnerability rating six to seven
Three points for vulnerability rating eight to ten

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

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14. Proximity to People(applicant does not answer). Is the project in the urban growth boundary of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more?¹⁰⁰

RCO uses a map provided by the applicant to help score this question. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: zero or half a point

Yes	Half a point
No	Zero points

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15. County Population Density(applicant does not answer). Is the project in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile?¹⁰¹

RCO uses county population data from the Office of Financial Management to score this question.

▲ Point Range zero or half a point

Yes	Half a point
No	Zero points

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16. Growth Management Act Preference(applicant does not answer). Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?¹⁰²

State law requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant¹⁰³ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and

¹⁰⁰Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

¹⁰¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

¹⁰²Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

¹⁰³County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency or tribal government applicants.

development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it does any of the following:

- Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law.
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan.
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection "B" over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

RCO staff score this question using information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff subtracts a maximum of one point.

Minus one point	The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant is a nonprofit organization or state or federal agency.

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