

Water Access Category

“Water access” means non-motorized boat or foot access to marine waters, lakes, river, or streams.¹³¹

Water Access Category Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Project Type	Points	Focus ¹³²
Unscored			
Project Introduction	All	0.0	State
Scored by the Advisory Committee			
1. Need—Local Priorities	All	20.0	State and Local
2. Project Scope	All	15.0	Local
3. Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition	20.0	Local
4. Site Suitability	Acquisition	15.0	Technical
	Combination	10.0	
	Development	5.0	
5. Project Design-Fit	Development	10	Technical
	Combination	5.0	
6. Project Design-Budget	Development	5.0	Technical
	Combination	2.5	
7. Project Engagement—Methods	All	5.0	State and Local
8. Project Engagement—Community	All	5.0	State and Local
9. Project Engagement—Partnerships	All	5.0	State and Local
10. Sustainability	Development	10.0	State
	Combination	5.0	
11. Diversity of Recreational Uses	Development	5.0	State
	Combination	2.5	

¹³¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010

¹³²Focus: 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).

Criteria	Project Type	Points	Focus ¹³²
12. Cost Efficiencies	All	5.0	State and Local
Scored by RCO			
13. Green Space Availability	All	3.0	State
14. Social Vulnerability	All	3.0	State
15. Health Outcomes	All	3.0	State
16. Proximity to People	All	0.5	State
17. County Population Density	All	0.5	State
18. Growth Management Act Preference	All	0.0	State
		Total	100.0

Detailed Evaluation Criteria¹³³

Project Introduction. In less than one minute, 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.¹³⁴
- Summarize the site’s condition; the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals; and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

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.

¹³³Criteria were revised by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27 unless otherwise noted.

¹³⁴The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

- 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.

▲ Point Range: 0-10 points, which are multiplied later by two

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: 0-10 points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

3. Immediacy of Threat.¹³⁵ Only acquisition and combination projects answer this question. To what extent will this project reduce a threat to the public availability of water access?

Consider the availability of alternatives. Where none exists, the significance of a threat may be higher.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by four for acquisition projects and two for combination projects

0 points No evidence presented.

1-2 points Minimal threat; water access opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next thirty-six months.

3 points Actions under consideration could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.

4-5 points Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.

Or

¹³⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(iii) and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28

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.

4. Site Suitability.¹³⁶ Is the site well suited for the intended recreational uses?

Compare the physical features of the site against the proposed use. In general, sites most compatible to the uses proposed score higher.

- **Acquisition projects.** Is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational uses?

Or

- **Development projects.** Will site resources be made available appropriately for recreation; will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development?

Or

- **Combination projects.** Is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational uses? Will site resources be made available appropriately for recreation; will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development?

- ▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by three for acquisition projects and two for combination projects

5. Project Design—Fit. Only development and combination projects answer this question. 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. The applicant 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.

¹³⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(v) and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by two for development projects

- 6. Project Design—Budget.** Only development and combination projects answer this question. 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: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.

- 7. Project Engagement—Methods.** RCO encourages the applicant 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: 0-5 points

- 8. Project Engagement—Community.** How has community input influenced the project design?¹³⁷

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

- 9. Project Engagement—Partnerships.** 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: 0-5 points

- 10. Sustainability.**¹³⁸ Only development and combination projects answer this question. 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

¹³⁷For acquisition projects, RCO staff suggests focusing on how community input influenced site selection.

¹³⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28

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. The applicant and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. The applicant is encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of the project, and evaluators should score the project based on the extent to which applicant has considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of the project whether the applicant discusses 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: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by two for development projects.

11. Diversity of Recreational Uses.¹³⁹ Only development and combination projects answer this question. To what extent does this project provide diversity of possible water-based recreational activities?

Water access can provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational uses including swimming, fishing, boating, picnicking, viewing, and shellfish gathering. In general, projects providing more *compatible* recreation uses will score better than projects providing just one type of water access opportunity.

- ▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects

12. Cost Efficiencies.¹⁴⁰ 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, does the applicant have a letter of commitment from the donors that specifies what is being donated and when?

¹³⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(iv) and Recreation and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b

¹⁴⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-05

- 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: 0-5 points

13. Green Space Availability. Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. 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.

▲ Point Range: 1-3 points

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| 1 point | High green space |
| 2 points | Medium green space |
| 3 points | Low green space |

14. Social Vulnerability. Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. Social vulnerability scores use a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. The scores are based on information from the Washington Tracking Network’s [Information by Location mapping tool](#).

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

0 points	Vulnerability rating one to two
1 point	Vulnerability rating three to five
2 points	Vulnerability rating six to seven
3 points	Vulnerability rating eight to ten

15. Health Outcomes. Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. This score is from the Washington Tracking Network’s [Information by Location mapping tool](#), which shows the Health Disparity Index scores and Poor Health Outcomes ranking.

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

0 points	Health outcome rating one to two
1 point	Health outcome rating three to five
2 points	Health outcome rating six to seven
3 points	Health outcome rating eight to ten

16. Proximity to People.¹⁴¹ Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. Is the project in the urban growth boundary of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more?¹⁴²

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.

¹⁴¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

¹⁴²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

▲ Point Range: 0 or ½ point

0 points No

½ point Yes

17. County Population Density.¹⁴³ Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. Is the project in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile?¹⁴⁴

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

▲ Point Range: 0 or ½ point

0 points No

½ point Yes

18. Growth Management Act Preference.¹⁴⁵ Applicant does not answer in evaluation session. Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?¹⁴⁶

State law requires that the following:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant¹⁴⁷ 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 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:

¹⁴³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28

¹⁴⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

¹⁴⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Resolution 99-15

¹⁴⁶Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

¹⁴⁷County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency or tribal government applicants.

- 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.

This question is scored by RCO staff based on information obtained 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: 0 to -1 point.

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|----------|---|
| 0 points | The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250. |
| 0 points | The applicant is a nonprofit organization or state or federal agency. |
| -1 point | The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250. |