



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0440-2023, **Version:** 1

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**Background:** This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program. The Clean Ohio Conservation Fund is accepting applications for funding to preserve natural areas and greenway corridors. If awarded, the funding will be used to acquire properties for preservation of the city's natural resources.

OPWC administers statewide grant funding to preserve natural areas and greenway corridors and this ordinance authorizes an application for 2023 Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program grant funds only. OPWC requires that a resolution, ordinance, or other written documentation to obligate funds for the project as part of the application. This ordinance is a commitment to provide the necessary match funds at a later date to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the grant. If the grant funding is awarded, future legislation will follow to authorize acceptance, appropriation, and expenditure of City funds.

These two grant applications, if awarded, would provide funding towards fee simple acquisition of two separate sites, including a seven mile long abandoned rail corridor in the Linden and Northland Communities as well as a nine acre greenspace on Brown Road in the Southwest Community. Additional information about these sites is below.

### The Linden GreenLine:

The Linden and Northland Communities of Columbus are one of the region's most underserved areas for parks, open spaces, and natural areas. The purpose of the Linden GreenLine Project is to provide a new approximately 58 acre linear park stretching along seven miles of an abandoned rail corridor, from Windsor Park near 17th Avenue to Cooper Park in the Northland Community. The rail corridor is privately owned, for sale, and acquiring the property provides a generational opportunity for over 131,000 residents living nearby in an effort to create a unique large-scale linear park through a dense inner city community. The Linden GreenLine will utilize the longest abandoned corridor in Columbus, with an average width of 80 feet. This grant application is for acquisition funding only.

The project is intended to construct the first ever linear park in Central Ohio. Components would include seven miles of 10 foot wide pathway with the remaining 70 feet of the corridor devoted to restoration of a natural area, including forest plantings, native shrubs, wildflowers, and selective open greenspaces. Where appropriate, and designed with input from the community, some small scale amenities such as play spaces, gathering areas, seating, and exercise equipment are planned to be included. Over 40 access points to the linear park can be made available. Once the corridor is acquired, future preservation projects stretching east and west along the line will be planned and acquired as the linear park advances, enhancing and widening the natural open spaces and connector corridors. For example, the rail corridor crosses several small tributaries to Alum Creek. Several substantial tracts of woodland and greenspace are adjacent to the corridor. The GreenLine also passes through the center of what will become one of the region's premier sports parks. Kilbourne Run Sports Park, now under development by Recreation and Parks, is projected to open in 2025.

### Hope Central Greenspace Preservation:

The Hope Central Greenspace Project will acquire a nine acre parcel in Southwest Columbus, an area significantly underserved by parks and natural areas. Located along Brown Road, near the center of the community, this project is rated by local residents as one of the top priorities for the long term resilience of the surrounding neighborhoods. Approximately 2,400 residents live within the 10 minute walkshed of the property.

The Hope Central Church is in the process of selling their property. The site is level terrain, surrounded by residential housing, and is very close to a large Southwest School District campus. The proposed property is approximately 50% wooded and 50% open fields. The existing church, outbuildings, and parking lot is located in the northern five acres of the site. The church is interested in splitting the property and selling the remaining nine acres for a potential public greenspace.

**Principal Parties:**

Ohio Public Works Commission  
Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program, Clean Ohio Conservation Fun - District 3  
65 East State Street, Suite 312  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Emergency Justification:** Emergency action is requested in order to obtain approval to apply for this grant as it is required to be submitted in March of 2023.

**Benefits to the Public:** Protection of the City's high quality waterways, greenway corridors, ravines, and urban forests is of great benefit to current and future generations. These sites are within rapidly urbanizing areas of the city and preservation of key natural sites is one of the main missions of Recreation and Parks. Conservation of the sites proposed relies heavily upon outside funding assistance to achieve these benefits.

**Community Input/Issues:** Community meetings have been held with the Southwest Area Commission and the church. The community has expressed strong priority for more greenspaces, protected stream corridors, access to nature, walking paths, and urban forest conservation.

**Area(s) Affected:** Linden GreenLine: South Linden (45), North Linden (40), Northland (35), Hope Central Greenspace Preservation: Southwest (59)

**Master Plan Relation:** This project will support the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by protecting the environmental health and resilience of the city's waterways. It will provide long term protected corridors for walking, biking, and outdoor experiences while improving the equitable access to trails and greenways.

**Fiscal Impact:** No fiscal action is required at this time in relation to the new grant application. Future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded. Ordinance 0918-2020 authorized the Director of Recreation and Parks to accept a grant and enter into a grant agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the amount of \$1,826,063.89. This ordinance will authorize the acceptance and appropriation of an additional \$57,760.01 in order to correct the previously authorized amount to the correct grant total of \$1,883,823.90 in order to close out the grant.

To authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the 2023 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire various properties for preservation of the city's natural resources; to authorize the appropriation of \$57,760.01 in the Recreation and Parks Grant Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$57,760.01)

**WHEREAS,** it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the 2023 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire various properties for preservation of the city's natural resources; and

**WHEREAS,** this ordinance shows the City of Columbus's support for all application requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to authorize the appropriation of \$57,760.01 to the Recreation and Parks Grant Fund; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to apply for this grant funding so the grant application can be submitted by March of 2023, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Director of Recreation and Parks be and is hereby authorized and directed to apply for grant funding from the 2023 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire various properties for the preservation of the city's natural resources. This Council hereby supports this action.

**SECTION 2.** That this ordinance authorizes an application for the grant funds only and is not a commitment to expend City funds.

**SECTION 3.** That future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

**SECTION 4.** That the City of Columbus does agree to obligate the funds required to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program.

**SECTION 5.** That Ordinance 0918-2020 authorized the Director of Recreation and Parks to accept a grant and enter into a grant agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the amount of \$1,826,063.89. This ordinance will authorize the acceptance and appropriation of an additional \$57,760.01 in order to correct the previously authorized amount to the correct grant total of \$1,883,823.90 in order to close out the grant.

**SECTION 6.** That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.