About the Policy Manual

This document provides the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) and the District One NRAC policies. Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program Funding Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements, terms, and conditions set down by the OPWC and the NRAC.
OPWC POLICIES

The OPWC policies and guidelines should be carefully reviewed before the application materials are submitted to ensure project eligibility and to prevent delays in project evaluation and selection due to non-compliance with program requirements.

To learn more about OPWC policy and guidelines, visit the OPWC Advisories - Infrastructure Programs on the OPWC website. [http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/GSCAdvisories.html](http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/GSCAdvisories.html)

This website describes select statutory provisions in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and administrative rules in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC). If applicable, topics include ORC and/or OAC linked references as well as linked websites.

DISTRICT ONE NRAC POLICIES

In accordance with OPWC policies, the District One NRAC has established the following policies for the evaluation and scoring methodology of project applications.

Agricultural Easements
Agricultural easements are not eligible because they fail to satisfy ORC 164.22 (A) or (B).

Appraisals
Certified appraisals are required and must be done by an ODOT Prequalified Appraiser who is credentialed in value analysis. Applications for open space acquisition that do not include a summary appraisal report by an ODOT prequalified appraiser will not be considered by the District One NRAC. The list of ODOT appraisers and the OPWC appraisal standards can be found at [www.pwc.state.oh.us/gscapplication.html](http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/gscapplication.html).

- Applications with Restricted Appraisal Reports will not be evaluated by the NRAC
- Projects with Purchase Contracts exceeding the appraised value will be returned to the Natural Resources Assistance Councils for validation. These projects will not be issued a Notice to Proceed until this validation has occurred.
- Projects that consist of leveraging the difference between the appraised value and purchase contract will also be required to have an appraisal review performed by an ODOT Prequalified Appraisal Reviewer to ensure that the purchase price history, comparables, adjustments, and disclaimers are accurate.
- Applicants that have an appraisal review rejected will not be issued a Notice to Proceed until these discrepancies are resolved.
- Properties above appraised value are eligible, but it is important for the NRAC to be cognitive of this difference and must validate the value of properties that are using the difference between the Purchase Contract and appraised value as scored.
- Appraisal expenses are considered an eligible expense under planning and implementation and an Applicant will be reimbursed based on the project's participation ratio.

More Information: Standards & Procedures for Appraisal Reporting {http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/Documents/GSCAppraisalStandards.pdf}

Land Acquisition
Projects not scheduled for acquisition within twelve (12) months from the date of the Project Agreement will be rejected by OPWC and are not eligible. The District One NRAC requires documentation of impending land transactions be included in the application, in one of the following forms:

- A Fully executed contract with the owner (signed purchase agreement);
- A contract (purchase agreement that does not have all the signatures) or a letter/memorandum of understanding; or
- Any application that utilizes confidentiality agreements in lieu of purchase agreements will not be evaluated.

Mineral Rights / Oil & Gas Leasing
In accordance with OPWC policy, existing oil and gas leases, at the time the District One NRAC approves a project, will be treated as pre-existing easements which the applicant has no or little control over and will be approved as submitted. District One projects that acquire and maintain available mineral, oil, gas and/or extraction rights, on properties, with no active gas and oil wells, as part of the property acquisition will be awarded the full 10 points.

- Requests to engage in oil and gas leasing on Clean Ohio Properties that have been acquired along with the mineral rights will be denied as this is not an activity defined in ORC 164.22 (A) or (B).
- Requests to engage in these activities on Clean Ohio Properties acquired with a third party holding the mineral rights will be dealt with on a case by case basis in conjunction with the OPWC's legal counsel.

Minimum Score Requirement
District One NRAC requires a minimum score of 156 points, 60% of total points available, to be recommended for funding.
Permanent Protection:
Requests for open space acquisition must include acquisition by land securement. Examples of types of land securements are listed below and defined in the Glossary. Applications for open space acquisition that do not include land securement documentation will not be considered by the District One NRAC.

- Fee Simple Purchase
- Easement Purchase
- Transfer of Conservation Value

Open Space Development projects include construction, restoration or enhancement of site or facilities that are necessary to make the acquired open space area accessible and useable by the general public on properties previously acquired through Clean Ohio. Applications for Open Space Development projects should include one of the following forms of documentation from the Clean Ohio Award: the executed settlement statement, recorded deed and deed restrictions or conservation easements.

Riparian Corridor projects (ORC Sec. 164.22B) must protect or enhance riparian corridors or watersheds including the protection and enhancement of streams, rivers and other waters of the state. Applications for riparian corridor projects that do not include land acquisition must include a draft of OPWC restrictions and the recorded deed or conservation easement in order to be recommended for funding.

Post-Acquisition/In-Kind Activity
All post acquisition activities must be concluded within a two-year period from the date of acquisition unless a formal extension has been approved by OPWC.

Resolutions of Support
In accordance with ORC Sections 164.23(B) and 164.23(C), District One NRAC requires that applicants must include a resolution(s) of support with the project application unless the applicant is a park district. In that case, the park district is responsible for consulting with the legislative authority of each subdivision in which the proposed project is located.

Except as noted above a resolution of support is required from the county in which the project is located and whichever of the following applies:

- If the proposed project is within the boundaries of a single township or municipal corporation, then a resolution of support is required from that township or municipal corporation;
• If the proposed project is within the boundaries in more than one, but fewer than five townships or municipal corporations, then a resolution of support is required from at least half of the total number of affected communities;

• If the proposed project is within the boundaries of five or more townships or municipal corporations, then a resolution of support is required from at least three-fifths of the total number of affected communities.

Restoration
It is critical to District One NRAC that the open space selected for funding initiates or hastens the recovery of the ecosystem present on the land. To be eligible for points, restoration work must comprise a portion of the project scope, budget, or local match and supporting documentation must be included. Restoration projects should be designed to provide the following benefits:

• Enhancing or rehabilitating an open space to an appropriate ecological state or to what it would have become without societal interference;
• Ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the species (flora and fauna) introduced are both native and resilient (can resist disturbance);
• Integrating a community's cultural heritage;
• Providing opportunities for people to appreciate and understand cultural and ecological relationships; and
• Promoting a common vision for greenspace for Cuyahoga County.

Site Improvements – District One NRAC projects using Clean Ohio funds for restoration or site improvements must include an itemized estimate of probable costs for all improvements by an architect, landscape architect, or other qualified professional.

Structures
If there are existing structures on the property being acquired, applicants must provide the appraised value of the structure, proportion of value to the overall value, and the intended actions for the structures (e.g. demolition, re-use).