

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2019 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 261-G

Lake Vermilion Trail Phase 1: Tower Connection

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,814,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2022 (3 yrs)

Summary:

Design and construct a 4.6 mile paved, non-motorized recreational trail between Tower and the Hwy 169/CR 77 Intersection as Phase 1 of the planned 40-mile Lake Vermilion Trail.

Name: Tom Lantry

Sponsoring Organization: Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board

Title: Chair

Department: _____

Address: 3026 White Eagle Drive

Cook MN 55722

Telephone Number: (218) 750-2071

Email tomlantry@gmail.com

Web Address https://lakevermilliontrail.org/

Location

Region: Northeast

County Name: St. Louis

City / Township: Tower

Alternate Text for Visual:

Four maps: an aerial photo with the trail alignment through forest; the 40 mile trail concept; a location map—20 miles NW of Virginia; and existing & future trail connections.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/>		TOTAL	<input type="checkbox"/> %
<input type="checkbox"/> If under \$200,000, waive presentation?							



PROJECT TITLE: Lake Vermilion Trail Phase I: Tower Connection

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board (LVT JBP) requests funds to design and construct a 4.6 mile paved, non-motorized trail as Phase I of the planned 40-mile Lake Vermilion Trail connecting Cook to Tower/Soudan south of Lake Vermilion in northern St. Louis County. Construction of this trail will provide recreational opportunities for area residents and visitors, protect the natural resources in the trail corridor from future commercial or residential development, and provide access to a unique, scenic natural area to expand knowledge and appreciation of natural resources through interpretive signs at trailheads and trail sides. This project will serve the 4500 residents in the south Lake Vermilion area, plus seasonal residents and the estimated 20,000 annual resort visitors to Lake Vermilion. The proposed trail will pass through County-managed tax forfeited lands, state DNR-managed parcels, City of Tower parcels and properties owned by the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa as well as some private, primarily vacant parcels. Most of the property owners have already agreed to provide trail easements. The trail corridor will also serve as a wildlife corridor.

While the City of Tower was recently connected to the Mesabi Trail, the Lake Vermilion area lacks safe places to walk and bike west of Tower. The few recreational trails existing in the area are limited to snowmobile facilities that pass through swamps and are wet in the summer, making them impassable for walkers or bicyclists. The proposed trail will connect directly to the City of Tower’s trail system. From the Phase 1 segment, trail users will be able to reach the Soudan Underground Mine State Park and the new Lake Vermilion State Park and campground within 2 miles. The trail will be within ½ mile of 2 resorts, a motel and a large campground. Within five miles, there are 7 resorts, 4 campgrounds, a motel and the 500 employee Fortune Bay Casino Resort. This trail is also expected to be a destination for the 42,000 residents of the Iron Range cities, all within an hour’s drive.

This trail was envisioned by local citizens almost 20 year ago, and a steering committee has been working diligently since 2011 to create the joint powers board and to plan the trail, with substantial support from the Lake Vermilion Resort Association. The joint powers board and the communities that it represents are committed and prepared to start building this trail.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Easement Acquisition

ENRTF BUDGET: \$82,000

Complete required application, review and approval processes for easements or leases across state tax forfeited land, DNR-managed lands and tribal land. Secure legal, long-term easements across privately owned parcels, including easement surveying and recording. Completion dates overlaps with design phase to allow for changes required during permitting.

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Easements acquired for state tax forfeit land and DNR-managed land</i>	<i>1/1/2020</i>
<i>2. Easement/lease acquired for tribal lands (Bois Forte)</i>	<i>1/1/2020</i>
<i>3. Easements acquired for privately owned parcels/surveying and recording completed</i>	<i>2/1/2021</i>

Activity 2: Trail Design and Permitting

ENRTF BUDGET: \$ 194,620

The LVT JPB will contract with a qualified contractor to provide preliminary design, engineering, permitting and construction management for the proposed trail segment. The trail alignment will avoid impacts to wetlands, habitat for species of special concern and other natural resources of concerns and will be aligned sustainability to minimize negative environmental impacts.

Outcome	Completion Date
<i>1. Final planning completed</i>	<i>1/1/2020</i>



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2. Preliminary engineering completed	3/1/2020
3. Environmental Assessments and other documentation for permitting obtained	2/1/2020
4. Final design completed and permits obtained	2/1/2021

Activity 3: Trail Construction

ENRTF BUDGET: \$1,537,380

The LVT JPB will contract with an experienced, qualified contractor to construct the 4.6 mile paved, non-motorized Tower Connection trail segment. Construction will include trail crossing improvements, trailhead kiosks, interpretive signs, directional signs, landscaping and seeding of native plants for the trail shoulders and construction zone restoration. Directional signs and maps will be added to existing Mesabi Trail trailheads.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Bid letting	2/15/2021
2. Construction contractor signs contract	5/1/2021
3. Construction started	6/1/2021
4. Construction completed	6/15/2022

III. PROJECT PARTNERS

A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Tom Lantry	Chair (no funding)	LVT Joint Powers Board	Chair and board will oversee project
Carol Booth	Chair (no funding)	LVT Work Group	Assist w/easement negotiations, planning
To be determined	Project manager	Contracted staff to LVT JPB	Manage project activities

B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Tower area & NE Regional Office staff		MnDNR	Land resource review, coordinate with JPB re: DNR managed lands
St. Louis County Lands and Minerals staff		St. Louis County	Land resource review, coordinate with JPB re: tax forfeit parcels
Sidra Starkovich	Planner	Boise Forte Tribal Council/Enterprise Board	Coordinate with Enterprise Board re: tribal parcels
Linda Keith	City Clerk	City of Tower	Current fiscal agent; JPB will manage finances prior to LCCMR award.

IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING: The Lake Vermilion Trail will be managed and maintained by the LVT JPB. The Board anticipates that the annual operations and maintenance cost for the trail will be \$1500 per mile or \$6900 per year for this segment. The JPB will pay for this through its annual membership dues from participating governments, and other fundraising, including private and corporate donations events. The LVT Master Plan includes a goal of completing the first 3 phases of development by 2023, and twenty miles by 2028. The JPB will follow standard maintenance practices for maintaining the trail, as specified in the Trail Master Plan, and will contract out for major maintenance tasks until completed trail miles warrant a staff maintenance position and equipment purchase. The JPB will also begin an “Adopt A Trail” volunteer program to complete minor maintenance tasks. The JPB will promote and market the trail, and provide programming including bicycle rides and hikes, including guided trips to inform trail users of the area’s natural resources, including flora and fauna, geology, ecological habitats, and sustainable forest management.

V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS: The proposed timeline is 3 years, beginning July 1, 2019 as soon as funds are committed and finishing June, 2022.

2019 Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

Project Title: Lake Vermilion Trail Phase 1: Tower Connection

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET -- 3 years

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses")	AMOUNT
Personnel: <i>Note: Project Manager will be hired as a contractor, not as an employee</i>	\$ -
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: (all contractors still to be determined) Professional Services Contract for Project Management (estimated @ 1560 hours): \$ 60,000 Professional Services Contract for Preliminary Engineering, Design, Surveying, Permitting and Construction Management: \$257,000 Construction contract awarded by competitive bid: \$1,425,000 Legal Services for easement preparation and recording: \$55,000 Professional design & fabrication of interpretive & kiosk maps and signs: \$10,000	\$ 1,807,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ -
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): Based on 6 private parcels, 4.061 total acres for 30 ft corridor trail easements. Total cost includes \$2000 application fees (\$1000 each for county and state) to apply for easements. Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board will hold title to the easements.	\$ 7,000
Travel:	\$ -
Additional Budget Items:	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 1,814,000

V. OTHER FUNDS *(This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)*

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period	\$ -	
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: In Kind Project and Grant Administration by the Joint Powers Board: \$10,000; In Kind Trail Alignment Planning & Collaboration with Landowners: \$25,000; Tower Historical Society In Kind Interpretive Signage Research and Preparation \$25,000.	\$ 60,000	<i>Secured</i>
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:	\$ -	
Other Funding History: For regional trail planning & organizational development: Regional Transportation Advisory Committee \$26,000; Lake Vermilion Resort Association \$21,000; IRRRB \$10,000; Regional Sustainable Development Partnership \$10,000; Economic Development Administration \$8,000; Legal review by JPB member governments \$6,000; Lake Country Power Round Up Program \$500; Bois Forte Tribal Council \$400; Private donations \$2,600; In Kind staff assistance (NPS) & volunteer time \$115,000	\$ 199,500	<i>Secured</i>

Attachment C:
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2019 Acquisition/Restoration Parcel List Spreadsheet
 Project Title: Lake Vermilion Trail Phase 1: Tower Connection
 Legal Citation:
 Project Manager: to be determined by Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board
 Organization: Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board
 College/Department/Division:
 M.L. 2019 ENRTF Appropriation:
 Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, anticipated completion in 2022
 Today's Date: April 11, 2018



#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates (preferably from the center of the parcel) Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance (please include what ecosystem (e.g., prairie, forest, wetland, savanna) is represented as well as the ecological significance, site importance, conservation value, and public benefits)	Activity Description (e.g. fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, site preparation, restoration)	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner (private individual or trust, non-profit organization, for-profit entity)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status of work (e.g. engaged in landowner negotiations, no longer in consideration, restoration activities underway)
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	410-0010-00920	47.79601	-92.3014	\$ 1,150		St. Louis	forest & old road right of way	trail easement	0.909	0	pvt. business	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
2	410-0010-00893	47.79701	-92.30353	\$ 250		St. Louis	disturbed land/old road right of way,	trail easement	0.031	0	pvt. Trust	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
3	410-0010-00900	47.79667	-92.30559	\$ 800		St. Louis	disturbed land adjacent to W. Two Rd & forest	trail easement	0.727	0	pvt.individual	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
4	560-0010-00040	47.79564	-92.3114	\$ 1,450		St. Louis	disturbed land adjacent to W. Two Rd & forest	trail easement	1.35	0	pvt.individual	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
5	560-0010-00141	47.79341	-92.31392	\$ 100		St. Louis	forest	trail easement	0.056	0	pvt.individual	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
6	560-0010-00320	47.78771	-92.34843	\$ 1,250		St. Louis	forest	trail easement	0.909	0	pvt.individual	JPB	engaged in landowner negotiations
7	DNR managed 410-0010-00710 080-0020-00197 080-0022-00830			\$1000 application fee		St. Louis	Lands & Minerals Division; property includes Tower DNR office & mtce facility Primarily forest land	lease		0	DNR managed	JPB	submitted documents to initiate DNR review
8	County managed 410-0010-00860 560-0010-00150 560-0010-00100 560-0010-00360 560-0010-00330 410-0010-00905			\$1000 application fee		St. Louis	Primarily tax forfeit land with the exception of 410-0010-00905 Primarily forest land	trail easement		0	County managed	JPB	in discussions with County
9	Bois Forte/USA Trust 560-0010-01510 560-0010-01545 560-0010-01500					St. Louis	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Forest and old road	trail easement		0	Tribal	JPB	Bois Forte Tribal Council and Enterprise Board support the trail crossing their land and provided a letter of support.
10	City of Tower 410-0010-00711 080-0022-00850					St. Louis	Primarily forest land	trail easement		0	City	JPB	City Council approved this trail crossing the City owned parcels.



Lake Vermilion Trail Concept: 40 Miles



Location Map



Phase 1 Trail

Existing & Future Trail Connections

Legend

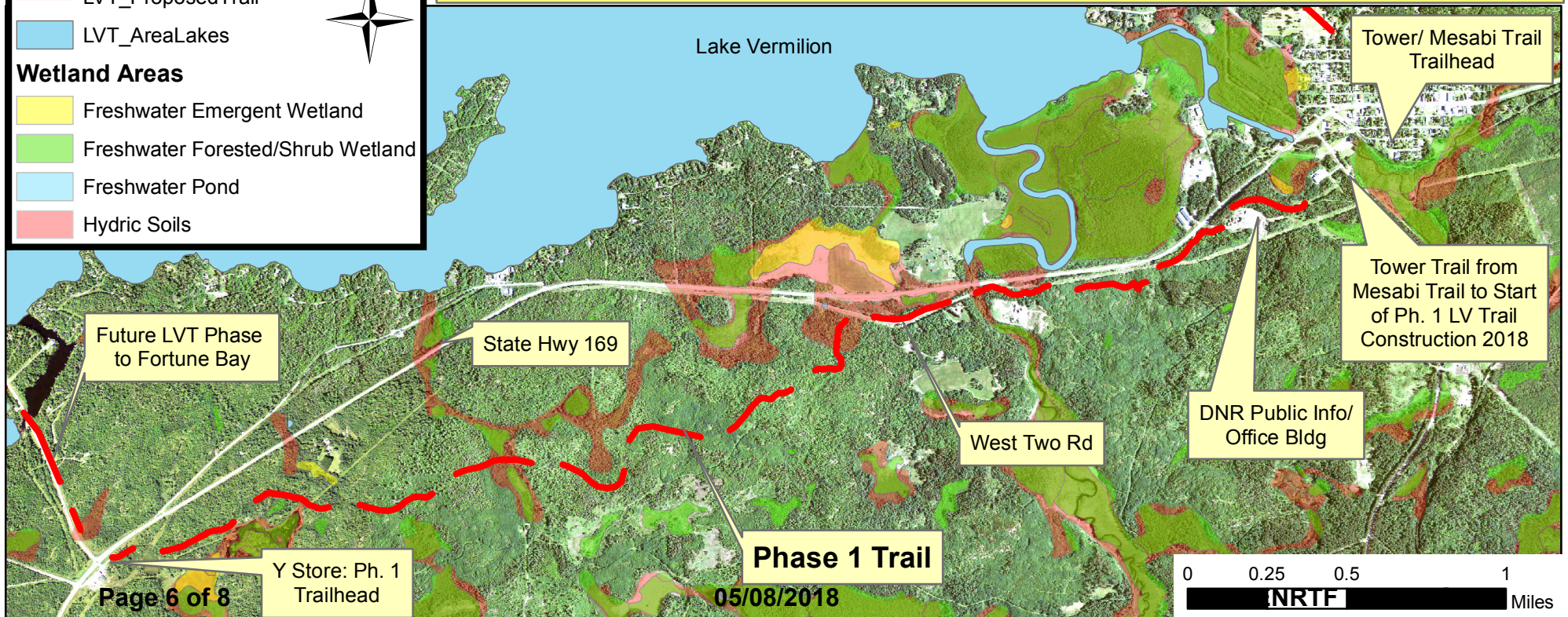
- LVT_ProposedTrail
- LVT_AreaLakes

Wetland Areas

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Hydric Soils



Lake Vermilion Trail Ph. 1: Tower Trails to Hwy 169/CR 77 Intersection



Future LVT Phase to Fortune Bay

State Hwy 169

West Two Rd

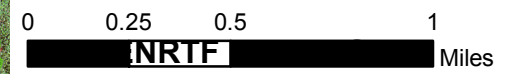
DNR Public Info/ Office Bldg

Tower Trail from Mesabi Trail to Start of Ph. 1 LV Trail Construction 2018

Y Store: Ph. 1 Trailhead

Phase 1 Trail

05/08/2018



Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Lake Vermilion Trail Phase 1: Tower Connection

Acquisition/Restoration Information:

The information to be included in this section is to help fulfill specific requirements pertaining to fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, and restoration efforts completed using Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars. More detailed information explaining these requirements is available in separate documents that are available on the "Project Manager Info" page of the LCCMR website under "Requirements for ENRTF Land Acquisitions and Restorations": http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/pm_info/manager_info_index.html. Please fill out the relevant portions below. Please delete any sections that do not apply to your project. For example, if your project only involves fee title acquisition, answer all five items under fee title acquisition and then delete all of the text for the portions relating to conservation easement acquisition and restoration.

Fee Title Acquisition (Trail easement acquisition)

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

To select an alignment for the trail, the trail committee first identified several alternatives to connect the origin (Tower trail endpoint) to the destination (Hwys 169 and CR 77 intersection and the Y Store retail complex) based on vacant land availability. We then analyzed the alternatives for: the number of private property owners impacted, the amount of public land in the corridor, topography, wetlands, hydric soils, the presence of old roads, utility corridors or existing trails, and the locations of buildings. We also consulted with MnDOT to determine the best location within this corridor to cross Hwy 169 (the crossing is will be constructed in a future development phase.) We consulted private and public landowners to determine who are willing to have a trail cross their land, and obtained their preferences for the trail location on their land. The alignment has been selected to limit the crossings of private land; avoid steep slopes, wetlands & hydric soils; take advantage of existing disturbed corridors (old roads, etc.); and to allow for future development of a Hwy 169 crossing at the southwest end of Pike Bay Drive. The alignment will be refined after further environmental reviews are completed.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.

This trail segment is identified as Segment 7 in the Lake Vermilion Trail Plan (2011) and the Lake Vermilion Trail Draft Master Plan (2018). Both are available on the Trail's website: <https://lakevermiliontrail.org/> The new Master Plan is expected to be complete and adopted by the Joint Powers Board by April 30, 2018.

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future. **(N/A)**
4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained. **(N/A)**
5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. **(N/A)**

Lake Vermilion Trail – Organization Description

The idea of the Lake Vermilion Trail was conceived in the late 1980s, when Lake Vermilion resort owners saw great value in the prospect of a paved trail making connections throughout the area. But work toward implementing this vision didn't begin until more than 20 years later.

In 2010, the Lake Vermilion Resort Association (LVRA) in association with the Arrowhead Regional Planning Commission (ARDC) initiated trail planning with a local steering committee. This process brought together area stakeholders to outline a conceptual vision of the proposed Lake Vermilion Trail:

“The Lake Vermilion Trail will be a premier, paved, scenic route providing an opportunity for healthy, safe, non-motorized, year-round transportation and recreation connecting Cook and Tower/Soudan in the beautiful natural landscape south of Lake Vermilion for residents and visitors”

The proposed trail is set in the year-round tourist destinations of the Lake Vermilion area, partially adjacent to the Superior National Forest. The trail would traverse state, county, and private land. The trail area would directly serve about 3,800 permanent residents, 20,000 annual resort visitors, as well as seasonal residents and other area tourists.

In 2015, the Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee, with technical assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program and ARDC reconvened to launch implementation efforts for the Lake Vermilion Trail. Major accomplishments to date include a conceptual plan, preliminary route research in three locations, application to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) resulting in a tentative high ranking and fund-raising.

A significant accomplishment has been the creation of the Lake Vermilion Joint Powers Board, a new, legal government entity formed with the sole purpose of developing, owning and managing the Lake Vermilion Trail. The Joint Powers Board is comprised of five townships, two cities, and the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. All eight governmental entities involved have representatives on the Board and are highly committed to this project

Project Manager Qualifications

Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers board was initiated in Feb. 2018". The Joint Powers Board is preparing to become their own fiscal agent, and will have a financial system in place to administer grant funding by 2019. The City of Tower is currently serving as the fiscal agent. If 2019 LCCMR funding is awarded, the Joint Powers Board will contract with a project manager to oversee all project activities. The Joint Powers Board will consult with local and regional organizations to establish the qualifications for this position, including other organizations engaged in non-motorized, paved trail development. Funding to support a .25FTE contracted position (1560 hours) for 3 years has been included in the proposed budget.