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FUNDING SOURCES

The following discussion identifies some of the more relevant potential funding sources for Greenway activities.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

This agency has several programs to fund potential Greenway projects. OPRHP administers grants funded through the State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), and also manages grants funded through federal sources, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and “Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU/Recreation Trails Program), among others. Program priorities and specific requirements vary by fund. Generally, EPF grants are available on an annual basis, and are available to fund up to a maximum of 50% of the project cost, although non-cash matches, such as labor force, materials, technical services or value of property are often eligible as a match. Grants through the EPF program are available for Parks Development, Acquisition, Historic Preservation and Heritage Areas. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) also provides funds for the development of parks and recreational facilities or acquisition of open space and parkland. The LWCF only funds outdoor facilities, and the value of municipally-owned land is not eligible for use as matching funds.

The State sets specific priorities for these various funds on an annual basis. All of these programs would be relevant to Greenway purposes, for the improvement of specific parks, acquisition of additional land for conservation or public access, improvement of heritage sites or historic buildings, or other recreational, open space or conservation purposes.

OPRHP also administers the Recreational Trails program, an element of the “Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU). The Recreational Trails program funds trail development, maintenance or other trail-related activities (e.g. trailheads, other enhancements). Established through an act of Congress, only the currently appropriated funds are guaranteed: future allocations will depend upon Congressional reauthorization of the program. The program funds both motorized and non-motorized trails, and single-use or “diverse” (multi-use) trails, with certain mandated distribution of funds by trail type. There are clear applications for the Greenway, although the amount of funds allocated per project are generally limited.

Boating Infrastructure Grants are also funded through SAFETEA-LU. This program provides funds for transient facilities targeted to larger recreational vessels (non-trailerable, or vessels that are 26 feet in length or longer). The types of eligible projects include construction, renovation or maintenance of boating infrastructure (including but not limited to mooring facilities, pump-out stations and dockside utilities); installation of navigational aids, and educational materials. Preliminary costs for planning, survey, environmental review and other associated costs are also eligible. Projects funded under program must be open to the public. Although very applicable to the Greenway, this program is likely to be highly competitive, with only \$12 million available nationwide. Again, as a SAFETEA-LU program, future funds are dependent upon continued Congressional authorization.

Other funding programs that are administered through OPRHP include the Historic Barns program, which can be used for repairs or improvements to older agricultural buildings; Certified Local Government Program, which provides funds for historic preservation-related activities in communities that have been certified under the program, and a program to fund Zoos, Botanical

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Gardens and Aquariums. Each of these funding sources may be relevant for specific projects within the Greenway.

The following table summarizes these State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Funding sources, and provides some additional information about the program requirements.

Funding Sources	
New York State Office of Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation	
Parks Program (EPF or LWCF)	Acquisition or development of parks and recreational facilities for the preservation or rehabilitation of lands, waters or structures for park, recreation or conservation purposes. EPF funds both indoor and outdoor projects; LWCF for outdoor projects only. Priorities set in Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Facilities must be open to general public. Minimum 50% local match required.
Historic Preservation Program (EPF)	Rehabilitation, preservation, protection of properties listed on National or State Register of Historic Places. Minimum 50% local match required.
Heritage Areas Program (EPF)	WNY eligible through City of Buffalo Heritage Area and Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. Projects to preserve, restore or rehabilitate lands, waters or structures as identified in approved management plan for the Heritage Area. Minimum 50% local match required.
Acquisition (EPF or LWCF)	Acquisition of lands, waters of structures through permanent easement or fee simple title. Must be for public use, for park, conservation or recreational purposes. Minimum 50% local match required.
Zoos, Botanical Gardens, Aquariums	Collections care and special projects for eligible institutions. Funded through Natural Heritage Trust.
Barns Restoration and Preservation Program (EPF)	Restoration and preservation of agricultural buildings (barns, silos, sheds, etc.) at least 50 years old and in need of repair. Minimum 50% local match required.
Recreational Trails (SAFETEA-LU)	Acquisition, rehabilitation or maintenance of trails, trail related projects. Non-motorized and motorized trails eligible (pedestrian; bicyclist; equestrian; snowmobile; motorcycle) Minimum 20% local match required.
Certified Local Government Program (National Park Service)	Must be a Certified Local Government (Cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Village of Lewiston). OPRHP is pass-through for historic preservation funds for preservation activities (inventory, public education, training, nominations). Local match of at least 40% encouraged (cash or in-kind).
Boating Infrastructure Grants (SAFETEA-LU/ DOI/ USFWS)	Facilities for transient, non-trailerable recreational boats (26-feet and over). \$12 million available nationwide. Eligible projects include docking or tie-up facilities (e.g. mooring buoys, transient slips, piers); facilities improvements, (e.g. pump-out stations, fueling stations, dockside utilities). Navigational aids, educational materials also eligible. Facilities must be open to the public, but may be privately owned. Minimum local match is 25%; 50% is recommended.

New York State Department of State (DOS)

The New York State Department of State funds several programs that are relevant to Niagara River Greenway purposes. The Coastal Zone Management program (Local Waterfront Revitalization Program) offers grants through the State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) on an annual basis as well. A minimum 50% local match is required. Project categories include the following:

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- Urban waterfront redevelopment,
- Preparing or implementing a waterbody/watershed management plan
- Coastal education
- Signage programs under NYS Coastal Resource Interpretive Program (NYSCRIP)
- Community visioning
- Development of revitalization strategies
- Completion of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
- Implementation of LWRPs
- Creating a Blueway Trail (water-based trail)

The DOS also uses the EPF to fund the Quality Communities (QC) Program. This program funds projects that link environmental protection, economic development and community livability. The program encourages projects that build intermunicipal cooperation, that help preserve significant open space, or that focus growth in appropriate locations, with a preference for revitalization of existing community centers. The QC program also helps fund visioning and planning efforts that implement the quality community planning principles. Funding is available for up to 80% of program costs. If the community has been designated a distressed municipality (based on census tract data), the required local match may be reduced to 10%. The program will not fund capital costs, costs of land acquisition, printing costs for brochures or marketing pieces, or certain overhead costs.

The DOS also cooperates with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on funding the Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program. This program funds the assessment, planning and redevelopment of areas affected by the presence of brownfield sites. The goal of the program is to facilitate the reuse of underutilized sites and help promote the revitalization of communities where brownfield sites have hindered redevelopment. Both the Cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls are participating in this program, targeting specific areas of their communities for cleanup and redevelopment. The program also provides technical assistance to participants on how to facilitate the clean-up of brownfield sites. A local match of at least 20% is required.

Another program administered by the DOS is the Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) Grant Program. This program will provide assistance to municipalities for shared services, cooperative agreements, mergers, consolidations and dissolutions. State assistance will fund up to \$100,000 per project per municipality for eligible expenses. A local match of at least 10% of the grant award is required. Projects must demonstrate that they result in cost savings to the municipalities. Eligible activities include legal and consultant services, feasibility studies, implementation plans and capital improvements. Comparable programs are available for Shared Highway Services, Countywide Shared Services and Local Health Insurance programs. Eligible projects most likely to directly benefit the Niagara River Greenway would be capital projects. For example, a shared wastewater treatment plant may lead to improved water quality. Other Shared Services projects may indirectly benefit the Greenway, through lowered municipal costs or streamlined services.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has a number of resources that would advance the purposes of the Niagara River Greenway. These resources provide assistance with brownfield remediation, water quality improvement, habitat protection, and tree planting.

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The DEC has several brownfield related programs, and provides technical assistance to public sector and private sector owners of contaminated sites. They also monitor conditions, and encourage activities to promote remediation activities. Three programs offer direct funding for brownfields. The Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program, described above, is intended to be used for the clean-up of specific problem sites in order to spur area-wide redevelopment. The DEC also offers the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) for brownfield clean-ups. ERP assists with the costs of remediating sites owned by municipalities, providing funding for up to 90% of costs for site remediation for eligible sites. The Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) program provides funds to community groups to help them understand remedial activities taking place at an eligible site and obtain independent technical assistance on the process. Eligibility of the site is determined by the DEC and the site must pose a significant public health threat. While a useful program for increasing public participation and awareness, it would only indirectly help implement specific Greenway projects.

The DEC also provides funding for a number of environmentally-related programs. The Water Quality Improvement Projects program offers funding for a variety of water quality projects. Certain types of stormwater projects, non-agricultural non-point pollution reduction, water quality management and wastewater treatment improvements are eligible. Funding is also available for aquatic habitat restoration projects. The required local match and program requirements vary by specific project type. These grants generally would benefit the Niagara River Greenway because they would support projects that would improve water quality in the Niagara River corridor and establish aquatic habitat. It should be noted that these grants tend to be highly competitive.

The DEC Urban and Community Forestry Program offers grants for tree planting or development of tree management plans. DEC also administers the Great Lakes Protection Fund, in conjunction with the New York State Great Lakes Basin Advisory Council. This fund supports projects with a regional or statewide impact that promote the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem in New York State. Funded projects are generally research oriented, but can also fund development of pollution prevention, remedial action, or environmental education. Under the priorities of the program, projects should foster interaction and cooperation between researchers, academics, industries, governments and private organizations. The small grants program provides seed money of up to \$10,000 per grant. The large grant program, which is offered on a periodic basis, funds larger projects that meet current priorities.

The DEC oversees two additional programs that would be relevant to the Niagara River Greenway, but which are not currently available. The Invasive Species Eradication Grant Program was created to provide funds to municipalities and non-profit organizations for projects that eliminate invasive species in the State's water bodies. In 2005, the first year of the program, the State Legislature appropriated a total of \$1 million for this fund. Grant amounts ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000. The DEC received applications totaling approximately \$1.5 million from across the State. The availability of future funding under this program depends upon the State appropriations process. In 2005, the State Legislature also appropriated \$100,000 from the Habitat Account¹ for the Habitat/ Access Stamp Funding program. The grants that were funded supported fish and wildlife habitat management and public access for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife-related recreational activities. Grants ranged from \$1,500 to \$14,999, with no local match required. It is not known when these programs will be available again.

¹ The Habitat Account is funded through voluntary purchases of a \$5 Habitat Stamp, offered with Hunting and Fishing licenses.

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New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)

Transportation funding operates on a specific process that is not grant based. Transportation projects include roadways, trails, and transit. Increasingly, roadway projects also include what is known as enhancements, or features designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic or environmental benefits of transportation projects.

The most significant grant program relating to transportation is the federal SAFETEA-LU program. There are several categories of grants created by this bill, including the Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP). There are 13 categories of projects that TEP grants will fund, including scenic overlooks, transportation museums, bicycle and pedestrian paths and trailhead facilities. The application for the current round of TEP grants occurred in June 2006. Another round of funds will be available in the future, and subsequent rounds will depend upon Congressional reauthorization of appropriation. Grants are available for up to \$2 million, with a 20% local match required.

Other State Programs

There are a number of other state programs that could benefit the Greenway:

- ***Canal Corporation- Canal Grants***
The Erie Canal extended from the current terminus at Gateway Harbor south through the Town of Tonawanda into the City of Buffalo.
- ***Agriculture & Markets- non-point source abatement***
The State Department of Agriculture and Markets offers a grant program to address pollutants from agricultural stormwater run-off. This program is similar to the DEC program that addresses non-agricultural non-point source pollution.
- ***New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)***
NYSERDA offers assistance and programs to help fund implementation of energy efficient design in facilities to help reduce future operating costs.
- ***Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC)***
EFC funds water and wastewater facilities. To the extent that outdated facilities have a negative impact on water quality, these projects benefit the Niagara River.
- ***Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR)***
NYS Main Streets Programs
Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) funds are administered by DHCR to fund grants for the revitalization of urban centers and Main Streets across New York State. Eligible projects include building façade work, streetscapes, building renovations, gap financing, and ancillary enhancements, such as signage, kiosks or trees. Municipalities may not apply for the funds, which must be administered by a local non-profit that is designated a “Local Program Administrator” (LPA).
- ***Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)***
RestoreNY Grants
In 2006, the State Legislature appropriated \$300 million for the RestoreNY program, with \$50 million to be distributed in the first round (Fall 2006). The program is intended to promote urban revitalization and the stabilization of residential areas, by funding demolition of blighting buildings and renovation and reconstruction of residential and/or commercial properties.

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Federal Programs

There are several federal sources of funds for Greenway related projects.

- ***United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)***
The EPA offers funding for Brownfield programs and environmental restoration programs. They also administer grants through the Great Lakes National Program Office, an interagency task force that addresses Great Lakes issues. The current round of grant applications prioritizes pollution prevention, biological monitoring, a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for the Niagara River, and planning for other Great Lakes' areas.
- ***U. S. Community Development Block Grant Program/ NYS Governor's Office of Small Cities***
The Community Development Block Grant program funds projects that address blight, benefit low- to moderate-income residents, or address an urgent threat to health or welfare. Programs that revitalize neighborhoods, expand affordable housing offerings, create job opportunities and/or improve community facilities and services are eligible activities.

In Erie County, this federal program is administered by several entities. The City of Buffalo receives funds directly as an entitlement community. The Towns of Amherst, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda have formed a consortium that applies jointly for funds; and the remainder of the County participates in a consortium headed by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. In Niagara County, the City of Niagara Falls receives fund directly, and the remainder of the communities in the County, including the County, fall under the jurisdiction of the Governor's Office of Small Cities (GOSC), a statewide consortium. The GOSC also administers Technical Assistance Grants, which are small planning grants, to help communities prepare strategic plans for community development. This planning helps communities position themselves to more effectively compete for funding under the annual competitive round. Strategic plans funded under this program often target downtown revitalization, infrastructure improvements and other programs that could benefit the Niagara River Greenway.

- ***Environmental Development Administration (EDA)***
This program funds projects that lead to job creation. Various programs fund essential public infrastructure and facilities to support private sector jobs; and provide technical assistance to address unemployment, underemployment, and out-migration in distressed regions. While these programs are tangential to Greenway purposes, there may be scenarios where EDA support could be tapped.
- ***Congestion Mitigation/ Air Quality (CMAQ) grants***
This program provides funding for projects that reduce traffic congestion and thereby help improve air quality through lowered emissions. Applicants must demonstrate a positive benefit to air quality through set formulae. In addition to roadway and signal improvements, eligible projects also include trails and bikeways.
- ***US Fish and Wildlife Service***
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides grants to conserve fish and wildlife habitat. Grants under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act fund acquisition, restoration or enhancement of wetlands and associated habitats for

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migratory birds and other wetlands. Targeted habitats include wetlands, riparian corridors and streambanks. The Private Stewardship for Imperiled Species program assists habitat enhancements that benefit threatened and endangered species. USFWS also administers the Fish Enhancement, Mitigation and Research Fund, a fund established as part of the Settlement Agreement with NYPA for the St. Lawrence-Franklin D. Roosevelt Power Project. Projects that benefit fisheries resources in the Lake Ontario basin are eligible for funding under this program.

- ***National Park Service***
The National Park Service is a potential funding source for heritage-related programs. Projects could qualify under the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor or the currently proposed Niagara National Heritage Area.
- ***US Army Corps of Engineers***
US Army Corps of Engineers has programs available that offer funding assistance for habitat and ecosystem restoration.

Private Foundations

There are also a number of private foundations that have programs that could be used for projects benefiting the Niagara River Greenway. These include the following:

- Buffalo Renaissance Foundation,
- Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo,
- Margaret L. Wendt Foundation,
- Niagara Area Foundation,
- John R. Oshei Foundation,
- Western New York Foundation

Each of these foundations has its own criteria for project selection. Generally, their approach is flexible and targeted toward projects that are beneficial to their service area.

Private companies, such as local banks and other institutions, also fund worthwhile community projects. Private investment will also be required to achieve the full potential of the Niagara River Greenway. Private development is likely to be focused within the activity nodes along the Greenway and would generally consist of ancillary services, such as restaurants, gift shops, marinas, commercial tourism venues and other features that would add character, activity and interest to the Greenway. The challenge is to encourage these activities in appropriate locations and in a manner that complements the functions and values of the Greenway.