

## Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program Application

### Project Narrative

---

#### Section 1: Project Data

|                                         |                   |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Submission Date (to State of MD)</b> | September 1, 2026 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|

#### Applicant Information

|                                     |                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Applicant Organization</b>       | Maryland Department of Natural Resources                                                 |
| <b>Applicant Contact Name</b>       | Molly Pickel                                                                             |
| <b>Applicant Contact E-Mail</b>     | <a href="mailto:Molly.pickel@maryland.gov">Molly.pickel@maryland.gov</a>                 |
| <b>Applicant Contact Phone</b>      | 443-223-4302                                                                             |
| <b>Project Sponsor Organization</b> | Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP)                                               |
| <b>Project Sponsor E-Mail</b>       | <a href="mailto:andrew.shoffner@baltimorecity.gov">andrew.shoffner@baltimorecity.gov</a> |
| <b>Project Sponsor Phone</b>        | 443-826-8522                                                                             |

#### Project Information

|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title</b>                                                     | Cherry Hill South Shoreline Gateway (Phase 3)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Park/Property Name</b>                                                | Broening Park                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Property Title Holder</b>                                             | Mayor and City Council of Baltimore / Baltimore City Recreation and Parks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Property Address/Location</b>                                         | 2825 S. Hanover Street / Broening Park area, Baltimore, Maryland 21225                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>LWCF Boundary Acreage</b>                                             | 11.65 acres                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Project Type</b>                                                      | Renovation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Has this property received previous LWCF/ORLP funding?</b>            | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Brief description of project and its impacts (100 words or fewer)</b> | Cherry Hill South Shoreline Gateway (Phase 3) will improve the Broening Park waterfront as a safer, more visible and connected gateway to the Middle Branch. The project will renovate public recreation facilities and strengthen the critical connection between Phase 2 at the MedStar Harbor Hospital property line and Middle Branch Park. Improvements will expand opportunities for walking, biking, gathering, boating, fishing and shoreline recreation while improving trail conditions, water access, visibility and the public waterfront experience. BCRP is the project sponsor, with South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) serving as subrecipient and project implementer. |

## Section 2: Project Overview

1. **What are the property's physical features (e.g. terrain, water, built structures, existing amenities)? Quantify where possible. (e.g. 50 acres of forested land)**
  - a. The project is located on Baltimore City-owned parkland along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River in South Baltimore. The Phase 3 area occupies the Broening Park waterfront near South Hanover Street and forms the northern continuation of the Cherry Hill South shoreline improvements. The site includes an existing shared-use trail, mature and overgrown vegetation along the shoreline, a degraded public boat ramp, and fishing/water-access facilities. Current design documents map tidal floodplain, Critical Area, stormwater and drainage conditions, existing utilities, public rights-of-way, vegetation and shoreline conditions. Approximately 1.87 acres within the broader design limits are identified within the mapped 100- and 500-year tidal floodplain. The final LWCF protection boundary and acreage will be shown on the project boundary map submitted with the application.
2. **What are the current uses of the property? Note whether those uses will be discontinued or remain in place when the project is completed**
  - a. The property is an existing public waterfront park used for walking, biking, fishing, boating, passive recreation, gathering and enjoyment of the Middle Branch. These public recreation uses will remain and be enhanced. Phase 3 is intended to improve the quality, visibility, safety and continuity of existing recreation rather than displace current public uses.
3. **What site constraints exist, such as utilities, easements, rights-of-way, contamination history, or other physical or legal limitations**
  - a. The site is a tidal waterfront environment with mapped floodplain, Critical Area, stormwater/drainage, shoreline and grading constraints. Existing water, storm drainage, electrical and other utilities have been incorporated into the design. The project is being designed and permitted for these conditions, including erosion and sediment control, stormwater management, grading and applicable tidal/waterway approvals. The ORLP project is limited to BCRP property; MedStar Harbor Hospital property is outside the Phase 3 ORLP scope. An easement identified in the design record relates to Phase 2 access on MedStar property and is not a Phase 3 constraint. No known contamination or other legal condition has been identified in the project materials that would prevent Phase 3 implementation.

### Development Description (only if project includes development)

1. **What are the planned physical improvements and facilities? Note whether they are new construction, rehabilitation, areas for conservation, or replacements. Consider using a list format, rather than a paragraph.**
  - a.
    - Broening Boat Ramp, Floating Docks & Fishing Pier Replacement - renovation/replacement of existing public waterfront recreation infrastructure supporting boating and fishing access.
    - Broening Beach & Gathering Area - improvements to shoreline recreation and gathering space.
    - Broening Area Trail Realignment - realignment and improvement of the shared-use trail to separate trail users from vehicles backing boat trailers into the water

and create a safer, more continuous connection between the Phase 2 endpoint and Middle Branch Park.

- Associated grading, drainage, landscape, lighting, visibility, access and site work necessary to deliver the approved Phase 3 recreation improvements.

Final construction quantities and the precise extent of individual trail/site elements will be refined through final design, permitting and procurement so the project remains within the fixed \$3 million construction budget. Phase 1 and Phase 2 are separately funded and are not part of the proposed ORLP Phase 3 scope.

**2. What are the expected impacts on the natural landscape? Note whether they are temporary disturbances or permanent changes.**

- a. Construction will create temporary disturbance associated with demolition/site preparation, grading, trail and waterfront facility construction, landscape work and shoreline access improvements. Permanent changes will consist of the approved recreation facilities, trail alignment, landscape/site restoration and associated drainage/stormwater measures. The 60 percent design addresses tidal floodplain conditions, stormwater management, drainage, erosion and sediment control, vegetation and utilities. Work near the water will proceed through the identified State and federal permitting process with required construction controls. The adjacent MedStar wetlands restoration is separately funded and is not claimed as an ORLP deliverable.

### **Population Description**

**1. What is the most recent census population of the Qualifying Urban Area?**

Answer: Baltimore, MD Qualifying Urban Area - 2,212,038 (2020 Census population, as listed in this DNR ORLP application template).

**2. What is the community's low-income status?**

- a. Answer: The project is located in Census Tract 2502.03. According to 2026 FFIEC census data, the tract median family income is 32.21% of the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD MSA/MD median family income, well below the 80% threshold for low-income status.

### **Section 3: Merit Review Criteria**

**1. Increasing Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

Phase 3 directly addresses an outdoor recreation access gap at a strategically important point on the Middle Branch waterfront. The Broening Park area is already public parkland and is used for walking, biking, fishing, boating and passive recreation, but the existing trail and waterfront facilities do not yet function as a clear, continuous or high-quality gateway from the Cherry Hill South improvements into Middle Branch Park. Overgrowth and poor sightlines, deteriorated or uneven trail conditions, limited wayfinding, inadequate lighting and constrained water access have been identified through project planning and community input.

The project will convert that weak link into a connected public recreation destination. Trail realignment will separate pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicles backing boat trailers toward the water, resolving an existing circulation conflict while creating a safer,

more continuous connection through the park. Improvements to the Broening boat ramp, floating docks and fishing pier will strengthen direct access to the water for boating and fishing. The beach and gathering area will support shoreline recreation, informal gathering and enjoyment of the Middle Branch. Collectively, the improvements will make existing public land more usable, visible and welcoming while linking it to the preceding Cherry Hill South trail investments.

The project also advances Maryland recreation priorities. Maryland's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPRP), which serves as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, emphasizes safe and easily accessible recreation, interconnected trails, and increased opportunities for land- and water-based outdoor recreation. Phase 3 advances those objectives by improving a close-to-home urban waterfront park, strengthening a trail connection, and expanding public access to boating, fishing and shoreline recreation.

## 2. Alignment with Community Needs

The Cherry Hill South improvements emerge from the broader Reimagine Middle Branch planning effort, a multi-year community-driven initiative undertaken by SBGP in partnership with Baltimore City and community partners. The planning process identified trails, waterfront access, recreation and stronger connections between South Baltimore neighborhoods and the Middle Branch as priorities. Subsequent project-specific outreach continued that engagement through surveys, pop-up outreach, stakeholder meetings and formal community meetings.

Recent project outreach provides direct evidence of demand for the improvements proposed in Phase 3. A formal community meeting drew 35 participants, and the project survey received 56 responses. Among survey respondents, 72.73% supported general trail improvements such as lighting, signage, furnishings and accessibility; 70.91% supported improved pedestrian and bicycle access; 69.09% supported extension of the trail connection; and 56.36% supported stormwater and ecological restoration. Qualitative feedback identified overgrowth and poor sightlines, deteriorated trail surfaces, trash, inadequate wayfinding, unsafe crossings, insufficient lighting and poor water access as concerns.

The project design responds directly to that input. Trail and gateway improvements address connectivity, surface condition, visibility and navigation. Waterfront recreation components respond to demand for better access to the Middle Branch for fishing, boating and shoreline use. Gathering areas create places for residents and visitors to spend time at the waterfront rather than simply pass through it. BCRP and SBGP will also be positioned to connect the completed physical improvements with ongoing park stewardship, recreation and community programming. SBGP's broader South Baltimore partnerships include community organizations and environmental/workforce partners that provide opportunities for volunteer stewardship, environmental learning and workforce exposure; these complementary activities can activate the public investment without being charged to the ORLP construction scope.

## 3. Leveraging Resources in Support of Recreation

Phase 3 is supported by strong intergovernmental and public-private coordination.

BCRP owns the Phase 3 park property and is the local project sponsor. SBGP will serve as BCRP's subrecipient and project implementer, leading design and construction and supporting grant administration, procurement, construction management and stakeholder coordination. The partners have an established history of advancing public recreation investments together.

The ORLP request also leverages a substantial sequence of preceding investment. Phase 2 has \$5.14 million in secured funding: \$1.5 million through the Land and Water Conservation Fund managed by Maryland DNR, \$640,000 through a Maryland DHCD SEED grant, and \$3 million in Congressionally Directed Spending managed through Maryland SHA. Those funds advance the immediately preceding section of the Cherry Hill South shoreline and position Phase 3 as the next logical construction segment. For the proposed \$3.125 million Phase 3 project, SBGP has committed \$1.5 million in non-federal funds, and an additional \$125,000 in Maryland Waterway Improvement Fund funding will support eligible pre-award Phase 3 design costs. Together, these sources provide \$1.625 million in non-federal funding toward the requested \$1.5 million ORLP award.

The project is also part of a larger network of Middle Branch investments. Along the Westport waterfront, a new approximately \$30 million public park and trail system is advancing, with its first phase under construction and a second phase anticipated in 2028. Together, the Cherry Hill South and Westport investments are building a connected system of public trails and waterfront spaces along the Middle Branch. This coordinated approach is cost-effective because Phase 3 uses completed planning, advanced design, established partnerships and a defined permit pathway rather than recreating the planning and mobilization infrastructure of an isolated project.

#### 4. Promoting Conservation and Ecological Benefits

Phase 3 is first and foremost a public outdoor recreation project, but its waterfront design integrates recreation with responsible treatment of the shoreline and site. The 60 percent design documents address tidal floodplain conditions, stormwater management, drainage, erosion and sediment control, vegetation and utilities. Trail realignment and site grading will be coordinated with drainage and stormwater measures. Vegetation management will improve visibility and access while allowing the final landscape design to incorporate appropriate planting and site restoration. Work near the water will proceed through the identified State and federal permitting process with construction controls incorporated as required.

Phase 3 also builds directly beside major ecological investment already occurring on the Cherry Hill South waterfront. The preceding MedStar Harbor Hospital wetlands project is restoring approximately seven acres of waterfront greenspace and strengthening shoreline resilience; that work is separately funded and is not claimed as an ORLP deliverable. Its proximity demonstrates the larger strategy of pairing restored waterfront systems with permanent, high-quality public access so conservation and recreation investments reinforce one another.

## 5. Project Feasibility

Phase 3 is substantially advanced. Design has reached the 60 percent stage, final design is underway and is scheduled for completion by December 1, 2026. The project team has identified the required City, State and federal approvals and established a permitting schedule. The Phase 3 Joint Permit Application is scheduled for submission by November 1, 2026, with all Phase 3 permits anticipated to be in hand by December 1, 2027 - well in advance of the anticipated ORLP award execution in May 2028.

The implementation schedule is similarly defined. Phase 2 construction is scheduled from August 2027 through July 2028. Phase 3 subcontractor procurement is targeted for completion by June 1, 2028, followed by construction beginning July 1, 2028, construction completion by November 1, 2029 and grant closeout by February 1, 2030. This sequencing allows Phase 3 to build directly upon the immediately preceding work and minimizes the risk of a long gap between connected construction phases.

The financial plan is straightforward and fully defined: a \$3,125,000 total Phase 3 project consisting of a \$1,500,000 ORLP request and \$1,625,000 in non-federal funding. SBGP has committed \$1,500,000, and an additional \$125,000 in Maryland Waterway Improvement Fund funding will support eligible pre-award Phase 3 design costs. The project budget allocates \$1,210,000 for the Broening Boat Ramp, Floating Docks & Fishing Pier Replacement, \$500,000 for the Broening Beach & Gathering Area, \$1,200,000 for Broening Area Trail Realignment, and \$90,000 for Project Administration. Project Administration is limited to costs directly associated with implementation, including staff time administering the grant and project, construction management oversight consultant services, and external legal counsel costs for grant and vendor contracting. SBGP's Executive Director has provided a signed commitment letter confirming that the \$1,500,000 match is committed and available. The budget therefore meets the 1:1 match requirement while directing the substantial majority of project resources to public recreation improvements.

BCRP and SBGP have demonstrated implementation capacity. BCRP is the public landowner and recreation agency. SBGP has worked with BCRP and other partners to advance the Middle Branch Shoreline Trail through planning, community engagement, fundraising, design and implementation and will serve as BCRP's subrecipient/project implementer for Phase 3. SBGP will support grant administration, procurement, construction management and stakeholder coordination. The property will remain public outdoor recreation land subject to the LWCF perpetuity requirement, with the final LWCF boundary coordinated with BCRP and Maryland DNR. Long-term operation and maintenance will remain within the public park framework.