

Conservation Futures Tax Levy (CFT)

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW *(Slide 2)*

- 1. Conservation Futures policies
- 2. Funding availability & timeline
- 3. Application evaluation criteria
- 4. Application review

Reminder: This handout is available online with our workshop information.

PART 1. CONSERVATION FUTURES POLICIES *(Slide 3)*

- Conservation Futures Tax Levy (“CFT” acronym) – property tax collection.
- State authorized CFT to conserve open spaces in 1971, King County implemented in 1982
- CFT grants have protected >100,000 acres in cities & rural King County

Conservation Futures Advisory Committee *(Slide 4)*

- Official committee to advise King County government
- 16 members appointed by King County Executive, confirmed by Council
- Review applications for CFT funding
- Recommend funding awards to Executive and Council

What Types of Lands can CFT Funding Protect? *(Slide 5)*

- Types include natural lands, forest, rivers, trails, farmland, urban greenspaces

What Uses Are Allowed? *(Slides 6-10)*

Low-impact, passive recreational uses, e.g.:

- walking and hiking
- gardening and farming
- free play (e.g. kicking a ball around)
- picnicking
- biking on dispersed trails
- horseback riding
- fishing
- small playgrounds

What Uses Are Not Allowed? *(Slides 11-12)*

Uses requiring intensive development, dedicated infrastructure, athletic programming, etc. - e.g.:

- mountain biking park
- ballfields
- community center
- golf course, disc golf course
- off-leash dog parks

Sites should be mostly open space/15% limit *(Slides 13-15)*

Site should be mostly open space.

≤15% of the site “non-vegetative impervious surfaces” (graveled or paved, without vegetation).

Trails don’t count towards the 15% (paved or soft-surface).

Within the 15%, development can support appropriate site uses, such as:

- parking, trailheads/kiosks
- restrooms
- picnic shelters
- small playgrounds (<5,000 s.f.)
- community garden toolshed
- *Consider bioswales or raingardens to infiltrate runoff from paved surfaces*

What Can CFT Funding Buy? *(Slide 16)*

Fee Title: Buying a whole parcel of land.

Easement: Buying only certain rights to the land (the fee title remains with a private landowner)

(e.g. conservation easement protects forest & stream on private land)

Entire parcels or portions of parcels.

What If Only Part of a Site is Eligible? (Slide 17)

CFT funds can help buy the eligible part of the site, with uses allowed under CFT policies. Applicant can use other funds to buy the part of site that doesn't meet CFT policies. This isn't part of the "CFT" project area, and funds spent here don't count as match to CFT.

Who Can Receive CFT Funding and Own CFT-Funded Land? (Slide 18)

The following parties can receive CFT funding awards, and own CFT-funded land:

- County
- Cities or towns
- Metropolitan park districts
- Certain eligible nonprofits with 501c3 tax exempt status, which meet state statute definitions of historic preservation corporations or nature conservancy corporations
 - *Review nonprofit's mission, articles of incorporation, etc., for eligibility.
 - *Consider nonprofit's ability to manage/own property...this is a "forever" responsibility
 - *Nonprofit must identify a successor agency or eligible nonprofit willing to own the land if the applicant ceases to maintain 501c3 status or shuts down.

There are opportunities for community partnerships with agencies/nature conservancies to help initiate and support projects.

Community Partnership Examples (Slides 19-21)

Match Requirement (Slide 22)

Dollar-for-dollar match requirement typically applies. Usually "cash match"

e.g.: \$400,000 land cost of property to be purchased
 \$200,000 CFT grant
 + \$200,000 cash match
 = \$400,000 total funding for purchase

"Land match" may also be considered (e.g., land donated nearby, or bought with other funding)

e.g.: \$400,000 land cost of property to be purchased
 \$400,000 CFT grant for new property
 + land match of a \$400,000 property nearby
 = \$400,000 total funding for purchase

- Match must be secured before CFT award is paid
- Match does not have to be secured at the time of application. CFT is often the first funding awarded to a project, helping the applicant secure awards from other grant sources.

King County Land Conservation Initiative (Slide 23) www.kingcounty.gov/land-conservation

Conservation Futures funding is part of a county-wide Land Conservation Initiative ("LCI") to preserve the remaining high conservation value lands and secure our regional trail corridors within 30 years.

Conserving Green Space Faster, Prioritizing Communities Where the Need is Greatest (Slide 24)

We are working to prioritize adding open space in communities with the greatest need.

Goals (King County Land Conservation Advisory Group Final Report, December 2017)

- Areas where "past history of inequities, discrimination, injustices, and limited regional investment is evident today"
- To "eliminate disparities in access...in communities with the greatest and most acute need"

Match Waiver for “Opportunity Area” projects (Slide 25) www.kingcounty.gov/CFTmatchwaiver

“Match waiver”: CFT pays 100% of eligible acquisition costs for “opportunity area” projects

e.g. \$400,000 land cost
\$400,000 CFT grant
+ \$0 cash match
= \$400,000 total funding for purchase

Qualifying as an “Opportunity Area” (Slides 26-28)

Method #1 – Three Mapped Criteria

Property is in an area with:

- a. Lowest incomes (lowest 1/3 of census tracts)
- b. Highest hospitalization rates (highest 1/3 of ZIP codes)
- c. Lack of open spaces (defined as no publicly accessible park or open space within ¼ mile in the urban area or 2 miles in the rural area)

Map available through a link at: www.kingcounty.gov/CFTmatchwaiver

Method #2 – Qualitative Method

Property is in an area where applicant demonstrates that residents in the area, or populations that the project is intended to serve, experience:

- a. Disproportionately limited access to open space
- b. Demonstrated hardships (e.g. incomes, health, social, environmental factors) that reflect a lack of “Determinants of Equity”

Projects might qualify that are:

- Near an existing park but add land with meaningful new community benefits
- Areas that don’t quite qualify under Method #1, but still show demonstrated hardships

How Do I Request a Match Waiver? (Slides 29-33)

Community Engagement:

- Community engagement around the project (e.g. local residents and community-based organizations; community discussion/open forum; planning process).
- Recent engagement. Integrating community leadership into engagement/planning.

Data Report:

- Contact CFT Coordinator for “Data Report” or use [interactive map viewer](#)

Application + Letters of Support:

- Make the case in application, including Application “Supplemental Form #1”
- Attach two letters of support

Site Visit/Presentation:

- CFT Committee application review includes site visit/presentation with applicant

Committee Determination:

- In an opportunity area?
- Community engagement?
- Recommend match waiver?
- Recommend funding?

What Can CFT Pay For? (Slide 34)

- Purchase price for land or easement property interests
- Transaction costs: title, appraisal, closing costs, taxes, environmental assessment, etc.
- Staff, legal, and administrative costs associated with acquisition
- *CFT is for acquisition - not development or maintenance costs
- *Appraisal & appraisal review are required
- *Condemnation is not allowed
- *No prior authorization needed if spending funds prior to application or award

King County Noxious Weed Control Program (Slide 35)

Get help controlling invasive weed from the Healthy Lands Project (“HeLP”).

After weeds are controlled, HeLP will assist with planning for long-term stewardship

Contact: Dan Sorensen, Dsorensen@kingcounty.gov

Related Grants (Slide 36)

- King County Parks Grants – including Targeted Equity, Open Space, River Corridor, Youth and Amateur Sports (YASG)
- Waterworks grants for water quality improvement projects
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

Show Me the Money! (Slide 37)

Agreements: Once King County Council approves awards, we need an agreement.

- Cities: Interlocal Cooperation Agreement (new template 2019) + amendments for each award
- Non-profits: Agreements

Reimbursements: Funding can be paid at completion of project, or along the way once we have an agreement in place, e.g.:

- CFT funds placed in escrow for closing
- Progressive payment as funds expended (invoices for title, appraisal, environmental, etc.)

PART 2. FUNDING AVAILABILITY & TIMELINE

Funding Availability: 2023 Awards (Slide 38)

Thanks to the efforts of the King County Land Conservation Initiative to make funding more available, there may be up to \$30-35 million in CFT 2023 funding (this year’s application cycle)

- Annual funding: longer timelines to raise match & make a deal
- Bond-backed funding: ready-to-go projects, high likelihood of success, match secured

Funding Availability and Timeline (Slide 39)

Grant Timeline + March 8, 2022 Due Date

Request technical assistance/support by emailing CFT Program Coordinator

CFT Website (Slide 40) www.kingcounty.gov/CFTapplication

Application Materials:

- CFT Application for 2022 (*application will be automatically saved in your Downloads folder*)
- CFT Application Guidance

Additional Reference Material

- Schedule for 2022
- CFT Program Manual
- Application Evaluation Criteria
- Frequently Asked Question (FAQs)
- Match Waiver information

Technical Assistance sessions with CFT Program Coordinator are available.

CFT Program Manual captures much of the information covered in the workshop.

PART 3. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA *(Slide 41)*

Projects are highly varied, and are not expected to meet all criteria.

Characteristics vary for urban vs. rural sites.

CRITERIA PART 1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

A. Wildlife Habitat or Rare Plant Reserve *(Slides 42-43)*

- Wildlife habitat value (rural or urban)
- Plant communities
- Connection to larger systems
- Restoration potential

B. Salmon Habitat and Aquatic Resources *(Slides 44-45)*

- Quality of salmon habitat – on site and in basin
- Headwaters, streams, rivers, marine
- Restoration potential
- Access & education opportunity

C. Scenic resources *(Slides 46-48)*

- Preserving scenic views & landscapes
- Visual relief in an urban setting
- Viewpoints, view corridors, area that is viewed

D. Community Separator *(Slide 49)*

- Areas that define regional form, separate neighborhoods or cities, waterways
- Scaled benefits: neighborhood vs. regional separator

E. Historic or Cultural Resources *(Slides 50-51)*

- Land only, not structures
- Designated or eligible historic sites
- Cultural or tribal significance

F. Urban passive use natural area/greenbelt *(Slide 52)*

- Located in an urban area (city or urban unincorporated)
- Adding to greenspaces, providing access to waterways
- Larger size may provide more benefits

G. Park, open space, or natural corridor addition *(Slide 53)*

- Adds to existing park or open space system
- Meaningful contribution, critical links, inholdings

H. Passive recreation in area with unmet needs *(Slide 54)*

- Adding passive recreation opportunities where needed
- Need may be demonstrated in adopted plan

I. Projects to redress historic disparities in access to open space in opportunity areas (Slide 55)

- Project determined to be in an Opportunity Area
- Community engagement & support required (2 letters)

CRITERIA PART 2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

A. Educational/interpretive opportunity (Slide 56)

- Opportunity for meaningful education or interpretation
- Access and site suitability

B. Impact to open space resources (Slides 57-58)

- Threat to open space resources if site is not protected
- Opportunity to create new open spaces

C. Feasibility: ownership complexity, willing sellers, community support (Slide 59)

- How complex is the deal – many landowners?
- Have landowners been contacted, will they sell?
- Neighborhood & community support?

D. Partnerships (Slide 60)

- Public & private partnerships encouraged
- Includes volunteer efforts, stewardship, donations

E. Identified in an adopted plan (Slide 61)

- Comprehensive, park, natural resource plan
- Identify but don't attach the plan

F. Transferable development rights (TDR) (Slide 62)

- Will development rights be transferred?
- Designated sending site or receiving area

Criteria - Additional Consideration. Stewardship/maintenance (Slide 63)

- How will the property be stewarded / maintained?
- Volunteer stewardship opportunities?
- Funding availability?

Criteria - Additional Consideration. Regional Significance (Committee recommends) (Slide 64)

- Demonstrable regional visibility, use, ecological, cultural, historical, or other natural resource significance
- Visibility from park or public right-of way
- Number of visitors
- Unique or highly important resource

PART 4. APPLICATION REVIEW (Slides 65-85)

Review the application (available at www.kingcounty.gov/CFTapplication)

CONTACT INFORMATION (Slide 85)

Website: www.kingcounty.gov/CFTapplication

Program Coordinator: Ingrid Lundin, Ingrid.Lundin@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-4578