

**Cumberland County Community Development Program
2016 CDBG General Program Application
Community Cover Page**

Project Title Leon Gorman Park playground and bridge rehab

Lead Community Freeport

Additional Communities _____

Contact Information Name Donna Larson, Town Planner

Address 30 Main St, Freeport, ME 04032

Email dlarson@freeportmaine.com Tel 865-4743 ext 103

Program Category

Public Infrastructure/Facility X Downtown Revitalization _____

Housing _____ Economic Development _____

CDBG "National Objective"

Low/Moderate Income: Area-Wide X Limited Clientele _____

Direct Benefit: Presumed Group _____ (Identify Group)

Slum/Blight: Area-Wide _____ Spot Basis _____

Amount of CDBG Funds Requested \$95,690

Total Estimated Project Cost \$136,700

Name of Authorized Official Peter Joseph, Town Manager

Signature of Authorized Official _____

2016 General Application Questions

Respond to the narrative questions in a maximum of six pages (economic development & non-economic development project applications) or seven pages (multi-jurisdictional project applications.)

1. Provide a **brief summary** (400 words maximum) of the proposed project.
- **10 points.**

Focus your answer on issues *such as, but not limited to*: What will be built? What will happen? Where will it happen? Who's in charge? Who will be served?

Leon Gorman Park is in downtown Freeport just 2,000 feet from the LLBean retail store. The park is 7 acres and is a combination of wooded ravine and upland lawn. The park offers picnic tables, a covered pavilion, parking and bathrooms (warm weather only). The steep topography creates a quiet wooded oasis in an otherwise densely developed area.

The .75 mile trail includes a total of 8 bridges. Seven of the bridges span drainage areas and range in length from 10' to 20'. A 53' bridge spans the stream in the ravine. Unfortunately the bridges were not built with pressure treated lumber and the supports and decking are starting to fail.

At one end of the park a skating pond was built, but it couldn't hold enough water to be good for skating. After several attempts to fix the problem, the town abandoned the idea of a skating pond in 2013. For the past few years the area has grown up in weeds. At this point, the town mows the area a couple of times each summer as maintenance. In 2014, a public process was conducted by the Town Planner to gather information on how the skating pond could best be used. Over the course of two years, 130 people have expressed their opinion. The winning concept is a natural play area and wildflower garden. A big part of the construction of the play area and garden includes filling the pond so that it is no longer a depression.

This grant will repair the bridges and will construct the natural playground and wildflower garden. The town will undertake the project. Because of its location in the village, the park is used by both residents and visitors. This park is in a census designated area.

2. Provide a response to the four questions below defining and justifying the **need for the activity**. - **20 points**

- a. Convey the magnitude and severity of the issue to be addressed.
- b. Identify the total number of people affected by the issue.
 - i. Out of the total number of people affected, identify the number of people from low/moderate income households.
- c. Describe to what extent the project makes in the long-term measurable difference in the economic and social health of the region.
- d. Construction related activities: Convey how the project relates to the community's long-range planning and capital improvement needs.

The park is in a “census designated area” where 70.21% of the 705 residents of the census tract are low/mod income households. It is also 1,400 feet from the Mast Landing Elementary School. The park is well connected to the school property with a sidewalk and raised crosswalk. This park is also adjacent to the Bow St. Market which is a very popular local market that does a big take out business. The town allowed the Market to put some picnic tables in the park a couple of years ago. During the summer it is not unusual for people to get lunch or dinner at the market and eat it in the park overlooking the defunct skating pond.

Rotting wood in the bridges has created a safety issue, some board on the bridge decks have rotted through and the town is replacing them as it happens. The bridge supports are also rotting. One bridge was closed in 2015, that bridge will be removed and not replaced because of the extent of the damage. The bridges aren't old, but have not stood the test of time as was expected. Repairing the bridges means replacing all of the wood that isn't cedar with pressure treated lumber.

With the exception of mowing the skating pond area a couple of times a year, this area has been neglected and is an eyesore. It also serves no function but as a place for mosquitoes to breed, yet it is in the middle of the most densely populated part of Freeport and could be a great new spot, especially for children.

The school children already like to run on the mowed areas of the park, now they will also have a play area with logs to walk on, and rocks to climb. Best of all a stainless steel slide that follows the steep contours on an adjacent embankment means you can slide into the play area. This is the most expensive, but coolest feature of the play area. These types of natural play areas are becoming more popular and are now a good alternative to the structured playgrounds that are so common. Liability insurance on natural play areas are significantly less than insurance for play structures and the cost is much less. The wildflower garden will have a mowed path going through it and it will be mowed twice a year to keep saplings from taking hold. This will be a colorful but low maintenance area.

This park was a gift from LLBean in 2007. Over the years, use of the park has grown substantially. For some it's a short cut through the woods from a nearby elementary school to the other side of the ravine. Many like to walk their dogs through the park and the loop trail provides a nice walk. For visitors, it's a quiet retreat and an alternative to shopping, and it shows visitors that Freeport is more than just shopping.

With this work, the park will be the gem it was intended to be. The .75 trail is fairly short, but enjoys some topographic changes. The playground is next to a covered pavilion (originally built as an area to put skates on). Both the trail and the playground provide an opportunity for people of all ages to be active.

The bridges, skating pond and wildflower garden have not been part of the capital plan; but solutions to the bridge problem and how to re-use the skating pond have been explored by staff with the help of the public for the last two years.

The rehab of the skating pond into a place that can be used by the public is a high priority of Freeport's Active Living Plan that was accepted by the Town Council in 2014.

- 3. Provide a response to the three questions concerning management of the proposed activity – 10 points**
 - a. Define *who* will manage the grant funded project and *how* they will manage it.
 - b. Explain the experience of the applicant in undertaking projects of similar complexity.
 - c. Demonstrate that an ongoing commitment exists to continue the maintenance and operation of the activity or facility.

The town will oversee the construction of the project and the administration of the grant. This will be done as a cooperative effort between the planning and engineering departments. The town has successfully completed several CDBG projects since the program began.

To be honest, it took the town 5 years to figure out the best way to maintain the park. In 2015, part-time maintenance staff was added specifically for the park. In addition to hiring staff, a "Friends of Leon Gorman Park" volunteer group was started in 2013. That group has expanded to 45 participants. That group is expected to grow as the improvements of this grant are completed. The volunteers have spread wood chips on the trail, crushed stone around the campfire pit, and kept invasive species at bay.

An eagle scout fixed a chronic drainage problem and one resident keeps the area around the trail open during the summer. The more people that use the park, the more they want it to be better.

The construction of this project will be overseen by town staff. The funds requested include final design work for the play area and wildflower garden, then that project will go out to bid. The bridges are a different specialty and will be bid separately. No changes to the design of the bridges will be done, just a change of materials. The town planner and engineer are highly experienced in bidding and overseeing the successful completion of a wide range of construction projects. The parts of the bridges that are cedar are still in good repair, they will either be re-used on the bridges or will be re-purposed in the playground. For example, the bridge that has been closed for the last year has beautiful long cedar railings; they will become balance beams in the play area.

4. Demonstrate that the project is ready to proceed – 20 points

For construction related projects:

- Describe the steps that have *been* completed or must *be* completed to bring the project to construction start. These may include: site control, design, engineering, cost estimates, procurement of permits, testing, consultations concerning life safety, ADA, or other special requirements, traffic studies, zoning, Planning Board approval.
- Describe any existing and/or potential impediments to project initiation.

The town owns the property. An extensive public process to decide how to re-use the skating pond has been completed. The process started on a Saturday morning in 2014. A local landscape architect who is an enthusiastic user of the park put together a variety of ideas on how the area could be re-used. People who participated commented on what features they liked. In the fall of 2014, an evening campfire meeting was held to gather more input. Conceptual plans were drawn and were shown at the polls during the 2014 election. Over 130 voters commented on what they liked best. The Freeport Active Living Committee used all of the information and decided that the natural playground and wildflower garden requires the lowest amount of maintenance; it has the lowest cost and would probably get the highest use.

The conceptual plans for the playground and wildflower garden are done. The final engineered plans need to be completed. The design of the bridges was done in 2006. The same design will be used, the materials will

change. Cost estimates have been completed for the bridge repair and the skating pond reconstruction.

On January 19, 2016, the Town Council unanimously endorsed submitting this application (the approved minutes of that meeting will be available on February 3rd). At that meeting 5 letters of support were submitted by community members another 4 came to the meeting to express their support.

No state permits will be necessary, but Site Plan Review approval from the Project Review Board will be required for the playground. Once the grant is approved and the contract is signed, the town will authorize the development of the final engineered plans so that the project can be brought to the Board.

Funding is the only impediment to initiating construction.

For projects requiring a match:

Community sponsored applicants require a threshold 20% match in cash, donated land or building materials, or contracted project development services. In-kind contributions are allowed, but need to be documented, quantifiable services for work performed.

- List sources and amounts of matching funds on match sheet provided (*Appendix III*).
- Are the funds secured?
 - If yes: Provide documentation
 - If no: Describe what is pending or next steps

To demonstrate the importance of this project, the Town Council has agreed to a 30% match. In the endorsement of this application, the Town Council agreed to add the necessary funding to the Capital Improvements budget for the next fiscal year (starting July 1, 2016). In addition, local businesses have pledged \$8,500 toward the project if the grant is awarded.

5. **Budget for project.** Fill in the attached budget form *and provide the basis for determination of budget amounts (Appendix IV)*. - **5 points**
- Describe how funds, including match when applicable, will be distributed between project elements.
 - Limit the budget and budget description to that portion of your program that is applicable to this application.

Applications will not be accepted without a completed budget.

6. **Implementation schedule** for project: Fill in the attached schedule form (*Appendix III*). - **5 points**

7. 7A) NON-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ONLY

Provide a response to the three questions demonstrating the **need for CDBG program funds** - 15 points

- a. Why are CDBG funds critical for the commencement and ultimate success of the project?
- b. Have you, or will you, seek funds from other sources? If so, what are those funding sources?
- c. What is the impact on the project if CDBG funds are not received or if only partial CDBG funds are received?

CDBG funds will get this project completed for the neighborhood and the community. Without funding, it is likely that the trail will have to be closed due to the poor condition of the bridges while the town assesses other options and decides what to do. The town doesn't have an alternative plan. A private fundraising campaign may be one option that the town considers.

The town is currently mowing the skating pond twice a summer to keep the weeds down. Most likely that minimal maintenance will continue until another grant opportunity becomes available.

If partial funding is received, the focus has to be on the bridges because of the safety hazard. The slide in the play area is estimated at \$12,000. That part of the project could be put off.

This application is the town's top priority for CDBG funding.

7. Distress Score

Each community will be **assigned** a score from **0 to 10 points** based upon two factors:

- a. Percent of low/moderate income community residents of the total community population.
- b. Percent of low/moderate income residents in the 25 communities of the Cumberland County Entitlement Jurisdiction that reside in the applicant community.

County sponsored projects serving region-wide initiatives will receive a distress score of **6 points**.

8. Multi-Jurisdictional Bonus

This park is used by people from all over the region because of its proximity to downtown Freeport, but it is not a multi-jurisdictional project.

Appendix IV: Budget

Construction Projects - bridges				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Design/Engineering	\$7,500			\$7,500
Land Costs				
Materials/Supplies	\$10,390	\$15,190		\$25,580
Construction Costs	\$67,190	\$16,000	\$8,500	\$91,690
Project Management				
Other				
1. construction waste removal	\$2,800			\$2,800
2. equipment rental	\$6,000			\$6,000
3. bridge removal		\$1,320		\$1,320
4. contingency	\$1,810			\$1,810
Total Costs	\$95,690	\$32,510	\$8,500	\$136,700

Project Implementation Schedule

<u>Activity</u>	Q #1 J – S 2016	Q #2 O – D 2016	Q #3 J – M 2017	Q #4 A – J 2017	Q #5 J – S 2017	Q #6 O – D 2017	Q #7 J – M 2018	Q #8 A – J 2018
Contract/ Environmental Review	X							
Reporting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Project Completed:								

Type of Funding	Match Amount		Source of Match	How is the match calculated?	Is the match secured? Please circle yes or no.	If yes, please attach relevant documentation. ¹	If no, please outline and attach future steps to secure match. ²
Cash	Municipal Cash	\$32,510			Yes	Agreement to add in FY 17 (starts 7/1/16) budget if awarded	
	Other Cash	\$ 8,500			Yes	Business pledge, but only if grant is awarded	
	Other Cash	\$			Yes / No		
	Other Cash	\$			Yes / No		
In-Kind/ Donation	Municipal In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
TOTAL MATCH		\$41,010					

¹ Please feel free to attach up to 1 page of additional documentation demonstrating secured match.

² Please feel free to attach up to 1 page explaining the future steps that will be taken to secure matches.





The park entrance after a volunteer cleanup day. The skating pond is in the background



Footbridge #2 after a volunteer cleanup day. Since this picture was taken 3 of the decking boards had to be replaced because of holes



skating pond with campfire pit in the foreground.