

**NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION  
RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM**

**GRANT APPLICATION SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

Project Narrative: Wilderness Park South Bridge Replacement

1. Narrative

- A. Purpose – This project is to replace a bridge that had collapsed and was removed in 2010. The bridge is needed to provide access for bicyclists, pedestrians and possibly equestrians to the southern part of Wilderness Park. This bridge was originally funded with city funds and private donations. There were no federal funds in the project the first time it was constructed.
- B. Linkages – The bridge will provide a connection to the existing trails in the southern part of Wilderness Park going south as well as an existing trailhead that provides parking. Going north from the trailhead the bridge will provide a connection to the trails in the northern part of the park as well as the Jamaica North Trail that connects Lincoln on the north with Beatrice on the south. Eventually, the trail going south of the bridge will connect with a new trail along the future South Beltway. The future trails plan identifies trails going east of the bridge and connecting with future development east and north of Wilderness Park – Exhibit A. This bridge will provide an important future link for the southwest neighborhoods of Lincoln
- C. The bridge will be 120 feet in length and 10 feet wide, steel truss with wood decking. See Exhibit B. The trail connecting on both ends of the bridge is a natural surface. The approaches are maintained as 10 feet wide. Future trail connections may be limestone.
- D. Trail uses – The bridge will provide a connection for hikers and bicyclists, and could provide connections for equestrian users in the future. There are existing trails both north and south of the bridge site that cannot be accessed without the bridge in place. The trail is for non-motorized commuter and recreational use.
- E. The anticipated start date – It is anticipated this project will start once the program agreement is signed and authorization is given to proceed to hire for preliminary engineering. It is expected this project will be completed by December 2019.
- F. Special or unique characteristics – Wilderness Park is a 1,475 acre park that was acquired in the 1960's to store flood waters before water proceeds through the Salt Creek Levee system located along the western and northern part of Lincoln. It is a linear park no more than ½ mile in width at its widest location. The park provides opportunities for bird watching, hiking, jogging, equestrian, and bicycling as well as cross-country skiing in the winter. The terrain is relatively flat however there are several areas where the trail does have grade changes as it proceeds through the park. These grade changes are mostly from old oxbows or dry creek channels that feed into Salt Creek during periods of heavy rain. There are large stands of native trees typical with riparian corridors including ash, bur oak, and hickory as well as areas of native grasses and wildflowers, wetlands, Salt Creek along with several tributaries and open areas that were once old fields. Access to the park is provided at several locations throughout the park. Bicyclists usually access the park at the northern end and ride continuously through the park to where this bridge was once located.
- G. Describe any partnerships with others – The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County have a long standing agreement for Wilderness Park which names Lancaster County the landowner,

and the City of Lincoln as having primary development and maintenance responsibilities. Matching funds are being supplied through a settlement associated with the collapse of the original bridge, and held by the City of Lincoln. These settlement funds were designated specifically for replacement of this bridge. The Great Plains Trails Network and the Run for the Bridges organization are providing matching funds for the project as. Both of these organizations receive donations and membership fees from a large number of private donors. If the project is approved, the City Parks and Recreation Department will act as primary contact for the project as identified in the Resolution approved by City Council. See letters of commitment from the agencies and organizations – GPTN – Exhibit C, Run for the Bridges – Exhibit D, and City of Lincoln – Exhibit E. GPTN has typically funded new projects around Lincoln and has recently provided financial support for projects that involve renovations. Run for the Bridges is an organization that holds a trail run each year, the proceeds of which are used specifically for bridge repair and replacement in Wilderness Park.

- H. Controversy – We are not aware of any controversy or objections with this project. In this case, there has been a lot of public support to replace the original bridge at the location identified, and to make the other bridges in the park safe. Much public involvement has taken place including a community advisory group for activities in Wilderness Park, as well as fundraising and news media coverage. Please see attached articles on the bridge as well as the fundraising that has taken place. Exhibit F.
  - I. Describe signage – Minimal signage will be needed since this is a bridge project which is a component of the trail.
  - J. Maintenance Plan – See attached Exhibit G.
  - K. Forced Labor will not be a part of this project.
  - L. Describe what a user will see and experience – The bridge over Salt Creek provides a “birds eye” view of the creek channel below including fish, turtles, and frogs that inhabit the channel. It is possible to see great blue heron that nest nearby, kingfishers and other birds typical in creek and riparian corridors along with woodchucks, squirrels, beaver and muskrat. The approaches to the bridge on both ends go through trees giving an element of surprise once the bridge comes into view. See attached Exhibit H for photos of the bridge area.
2. Site Plan – Please see Exhibit I
  3. Itemized Cost Estimate –See Exhibit J
  4. Plat Map – Please see Exhibit K
  5. Floor Plan – Not applicable
  6. Environmental Documentation – Please see Exhibit L
  7. Ownership of Land – The County of Lancaster owns the land known as Wilderness Park. The City of Lincoln maintains the park based on an agreement signed August 4, 1966. We have attached copies of the deeds to the property – Exhibit M, and the agreement between the City and County – Exhibit N.

8. Resolution – The County of Lancaster approved a resolution – Exhibit O - supporting the project and that funds will be provided to fund the project as well as manage the project. This resolution was approved on August X, 2017. The City of Lincoln also approved a resolution supporting the project and is agreeing to provide the funds and maintain the bridge for a minimum of 25 years. This resolution was approved on August X, 2017 - Exhibit P.
9. Land acquisition – Not applicable
10. Easements/Leases – Not applicable
11. Historical/Cultural Resources – The bridge location and surrounding areas do not have any known historical significance.
12. Local Comprehensive Planning – The bridge was identified in the 1999 Wilderness Park Subarea Plan which was originally adopted along with the 2025 Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, and each subsequent update of that plan, including the 2040 Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan adopted in December 2016, Exhibit A. This bridge connects the trails to the southern end of the Park, but it is also critical for the development of future trail linkages in southwest Lincoln, including links to the existing Jamaica North Trail, and the future South Beltway Trail. This bridge has been noted as a priority project in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the City of Lincoln for the past 4 cycles, and is included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), however both will need to be amended if approved in order to show the project in the correct funding year.
13. Wetlands – There will be no wetland impact.
14. Fish/Wildlife/Plants – We have reviewed the project site for threatened and endangered species and it appears there are none, however U.S. Fish and Wildlife will make that determination if the project is funded.
15. Right-of-Way Certificate – The trail is located within an existing park.
16. Trails dealing with Railroads – Not applicable
17. Support of the Community – There is considerable support for this project. We have attached letters from individuals as well as from the Mayor’s Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee, Great Plains Trails Network, Run for the Bridges, and the Friends of Wilderness Park – Exhibit Q.