

DOVER LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Financing Projects

Overview

The two sites being studied within the Landscape Master Plan project include a variety of recommendations for which there is the potential of a wide variety of funding options. The community may be able to fund some of the smaller elements, such as road signs, trees, benches, or planters on their own or in conjunction with other funding options. They could also finance several of the recommendations, such as the banners or information kiosks, through a public-private partnership in which the municipality contributes some of the funds and private interested contribute the rest. The municipal portion of the funding could come directly from the town budget for from some other funding source. The might secure funding for the larger budget recommendations from a variety of sources. The following sections provide more information on various funding and financing options.

Financing Potentials

The Town has already taken advantage of one option for raising local funds, the local option tax. Two other options are also possible.

- *Business Improvement District:* The Town, working with the landowners along Route 100 could create a special Business Improvement District within which a special tax or fee could be collected to fund the improvements planned in the Landscape Master Plan. One drawback to using a special taxing district is that a substantial majority of the property owners in the area must agree to pay these additional fees or taxes. Often, however, business and property owners realize that there are certain district wide improvements that could improve their economic self interest so they are willing to invest their funds to support them.
- *Municipal Bonds:* Using municipal bonds to finance Route 100 improvements is another options for the Town. General obligation bonds help raise money for a project but create an obligation to repay the bonds over a certain set time period.

Grants, Loans & Other Funding Sources

A wide variety of grants, loans and other funding sources are available to the Town for potential funding of the numerous aspects of the Landscape Master Plan Recommendations. Attachment X provides even more information on possible funding potentials that are available in Vermont. It is a compendium of funding sources maintained by the State of Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. There are numerous other potential funding sources listed in it that could be of interest to the Town.

- *Surface Transportation Program/VTrans Capital Program (STP Funds):* The STP funds are the most flexible funding source from federal transportation funds. These funds could be used for almost any of the recommendations relating to the roadway itself. These funds require a 20 percent match. Projects funded with STP funds need to be included on the States Transportation Improvement Program.

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- **Transportation Alternatives Program:** This program was recently created in the new federal transportation bill which combines the former transportation enhancement grant, safe routes to school and recreational trails programs into one. These funds could be used to increase bicycle and pedestrian mobility, improve aesthetics along a roadway or other specific types of projects that enhance the overall transportation experience. They could also be used to fund improvements to physical connections to grade and middle schools that will increase the ability of students to walk or bicycle to school. These funds might be used to assist in developing a trail between the library and the school. Or the expansion of the sidewalk system. These funds have historically been distributed in Vermont through a competitive grant program and have covered a maximum of 80 percent of the project costs with the remaining portions most likely coming from the project sponsoring organization. How the State will administer and allocate its potential funding for this type of project under the new federal transportation bill is still unknown.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Program:** These funds cover specific bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects and are also provided via a competitive grant program. The future of this program under the new federal transportation bill is not yet known.
- **Safety Improvement Funds:** Safety Improvement Funds are available to cover projects that are directly related to improving specific safety related problems. These funds are administered by VTrans and could potentially be used to fund the intersection reorganizations.
- **High Risk Rural Roads Program:** This program is meant to address specific safety issues on rural roads with low cost safety improvement projects to achieve significant reductions in traffic fatality and serious injury crashes. The locations for the use of these funds are recommended by the regional planning commissions.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program:** The focus of this program is to enhance safety at the high crash locations throughout the State. This program attempts to address up to 50 high crash locations a year with studies and recommendations for remedial actions. Federal funds are used for this program.
- **Vermont Local Roads/Circuit Rider Program (vermontlocalroads.org):** This program is made available to local municipalities to assist them in planning and designing better rural roads or addressing specific transportation projects. These funds are not meant to fund construction. These programs may be able to assist the municipalities in more complete studies of the intersection redesigns near the Town Common.
- **State Research & Planning Funds:** These funds are available for the development of plans and research at the State level. They can also be passed through to regional entities to fund planning or research that has statewide significance. The Town may be able to work with the State and the Regional Planning Commission to do research on the narrowing of travel lanes on State routes in village areas as means of controlling traffic speeds.

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- Bikes Belong Grants: These grants are given by the Bikes Belong organization to improve bicycling conditions throughout the United States. The grants are for both facilities and advocacy. The grants for 2012 are by invitation only, but it may still be possible to be invited to submit a grant. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/who-can-apply/>.
- Town Roadway Improvement Class 2 paving funds are also available from VTrans and administered by the VTrans Districts. Dover is in District 1. Other forms of State aid to local communities may also be appropriate; additional information can be found in *The "Orange Book" a Handbook for Local Officials*.
- Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Grants: These grants are currently awarded yearly and can be used for tree inventory and tree planting programs. Typically, awards for actual tree planting are given only after an inventory has been completed, but the recommendations in this report may potentially be substituted for a street tree inventory in the village area.
- Clean Water Act Section 319 Funds: These funds are used to improve water quality and could possibly help fund storm water improvements in the historic village zone. (See #4 in the attachment.)
- Community Development Block Grant Program - Accessibility Modification Grants: These funds are meant to improve accessibility to existing municipal buildings and might be a source of funding to improve the access to the Town Hall. (See #7 in the attachment.)
- Community Facility Loans and Grants (CFLG): This program is meant to help fund "essential" community facilities, including museums and other similar buildings. They might be useful in the moving and upgrading of the ice house into a nature center. (See #8 in the attachment.)
- Cultural Facilities Grants: This program provides funds for items similar to the CFLG. (See #10 in the attachment.)

Several other funding sources may be available for the construction of sidewalks, including:

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation;
- MCI/Worldcom Royalty Donation Program (For this and several subsequent ideas, see <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/TipsFund.html>); and
- Cliff Bar Sponsorship.

Some additional resources that may provide insight into additional funds include:

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/Funding.html>,
<http://rlch.org/>, and
<http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/bicentennialsourcebook.pdf>