

# | Agenda Item | cover sheet

for consideration by the Apex Town Council

Item Type: CONSENT AGENDA

Meeting Date: October 13, 2026

## Item Details

Presenter(s): Shweta Nanekar, Parks Planning Manager

Department(s): Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources

### Requested Motion

- A. Motion to approve a commitment of future matching funds, contingent upon grant award, for the Town's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant application to pursue up to \$750,000 in grant funding for major park improvements, including playground renovations and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements at Apex Community Park; and,
- B. Motion to authorize Town staff to finalize, submit, and administer the LWCF grant application in coordination with state partners; and,
- C. Motion to authorize the Mayor as the Chief Elected Official of the Town to execute the required LWCF Basic Facts and Assurances form and associated project exhibit maps.

### Approval Recommended?

Yes

### Item Details

Town of Apex has a unique and timely opportunity to leverage federal grant funding to significantly improve one of our most valued public spaces at Apex Community Park. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal grant, administered at the State level requiring a dollar for dollar match. The grant cap was raised this year to \$750,000 from \$500,000 in past years.

To fully pursue this opportunity, we are asking elected officials to commit to providing the required matching funds if the grant is awarded. This commitment does not require immediate budget appropriation; it simply positions us to maximize external funding and ensures we can accept the grant when awarded.

There are several compelling reasons to support this funding commitment:

1. **This park is an ideal candidate for LWCF funding.**

Apex Community Park development was funded through LWCF grant funds in 1990 and 1994. The entire park boundary is considered LWCF and has to comply with LWCF requirements in perpetuity. The current renovation project was also constructed in 1994 as part of the LWCF and meets all LWCF program requirements. This strong track record means the project is not only eligible, but competitive. LWCF prioritizes investments in parks with documented need, long-term community value, and readiness to proceed, making this project an ideal candidate to pursue this grant funding.

## **2. The project is already part of our long-term capital improvement plan.**

The current CIP allocates 3.1 million dollars for improvements at this park, including shelter renovations, slated for 2028-29 fiscal year. As part of that plan, we are projecting that approximately 2.0 million dollars will be needed to renovate and expand the playground and make significant ADA accessibility improvements. These improvements align with our community's priorities for inclusive recreation, equity, and safety.

The LWCF grant would allow us to offset a substantial portion of this planned investment with external funding, reducing the financial burden on local taxpayers.

## **3. Committing matching funds now strengthens our competitiveness and demonstrates readiness.**

A documented commitment to match funds signals to the state that our project is feasible and fully supported and is one of the mandatory requirements to submit the grant proposal. This readiness and commitment improve our chances of receiving the award and ensures project momentum if we are successful.

Parks Planning Staff is already working closely with Recreation Resource Services (NC State University's grant support team) and with the Division of Parks and Recreation (NCDNCR) to ensure the application is fully aligned with LWCF priorities, technically sound, and strategically positioned. Their guidance further increases the likelihood of success.

## **4. This is a fiscally responsible approach that maximizes our investment.**

Commitment of match funding does not require us to spend additional dollars beyond what is already planned in the CIP. Instead, it allows us to stretch local dollars further. For every local dollar committed, we can potentially secure an additional dollar from the state making it a 100 percent return on investment.

## **5. The improvements will serve our residents long term.**

Renovating the playground and making the park fully accessible are investments in children, families, people with disabilities, and the broader community. These upgrades enhance safety, usability, equity, and

environmental stewardship. With LWCF's support, we can build facilities that match the community's vision without compromising budget priorities elsewhere.

With the growing population of young families, there is already a high demand for our playgrounds which creates high utilization and maintenance needs at destination parks like Pleasant Park while smaller playgrounds remain underused. Updates to these aging facilities will help balance visitors and attract new ones looking for new experiences.

#### Attachments

- CN8-A1: LWCF Basic Facts and Assurances Form - Grant Application Authorization - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- CN8-A2: Boundary map park scale - Grant Application Authorization - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- CN8-A3: Boundary map project scale - Grant Application Authorization - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- CN8-A4: Project site plan - Grant Application Authorization - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

