

Subject: New submission from Community Development Combined
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 9:41:35 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: jnytko@govsol.org
To: jnytko@govsol.org

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| General Information |
| Date of application: 01/04/2024 |
| Organization name: Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy |
| Organization TIN or EIN: 14-1754157 |
| Organization physical address: 425 Kenwood Ave Delmar, New York 12054 United States Map It |
| Is the mailing address different from the physical address? No |
| Contact Information |
| Primary contact name: Mark King |
| Primary contact title: Executive Director |
| Primary contact phone: 518 436-6346 |
| Primary contact email: mark@mohawkhudson.org |
| What is the preferred method of contact? Email |
| Website (if available): https://mohawkhudson.org |
| Organization Info and Structure: |
| Is the organization a nonprofit? Yes |
| If nonprofit, please attach to this application proof of your organization's Tax-Exempt Status <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MHLC-irs-determination.pdf |

Date of establishment:

06/19/1992

Give a brief description of your organization. Please include information on the organization's activities or mission statement (150 words or less):

The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC) is dedicated to conserving and stewarding lands and waters of the Mohawk and Hudson River Valleys for the benefit of people and the environment. MHLC's conservation work protects natural resources to ensure clean water, clean air, and working landscapes for current and future generations, with an emphasis on connecting people to nature to cultivate future stewards of our environment. Since our founding in 1992, MHLC has protected 15,241 acres of land within Albany, Schenectady and Montgomery Counties as public nature preserves and private conservation easements. MHLC is a 501(c)(3) organization and is accredited through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Provide the total number of full-time employees (if applicable):

5

Provide the total number of part-time employees (if applicable):

2

Provide the total number of volunteers (if applicable):

300

What is the organization's current annual budget?

\$799,314

Have you or the organization ever received any form of COVID-19 relief funds or loans specific to the negative impacts of the Pandemic?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify type and amount.

Yes, we received a Paycheck Protection Program loan for \$82,000 in 2020.

Did your organization lose revenue as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic? If yes, provide the amount of lost revenue (2020-2022)

It is difficult to determine whether or not we lost revenue as a result of COVID-19. Charitable giving was generally lower during this period, but MHLC was fortunate to receive a PPP loan which offset potential losses. Additionally, our preserves experienced a dramatic increase in visitation as people sought refuge in nature and safe outdoor activities during the lockdown period.

Project Proposal

Applicants may choose to apply for up to 2 program areas. Please select the primary program area for which you would like to apply.

Recreation and Outdoor Infrastructure

What amount of funding is being requested (Must be at least \$100,000 and should not exceed program area totals)?

\$100,000

Is this a new project or expansion of an existing initiative, please describe.

Creating a public preserve on the former Bender Melon Farm is an existing initiative. The property was acquired by MHLC in 2019. Following the acquisition, a public process was initiated to gather comments and ideas for the future of the land. Based on input from this process and other information gathering, a vision for the future of the preserve is being implemented. The extensive frontage of the property along the rail trail and the adjacency to the Hilton Town Park and Hilton Barn, on property gifted to the Town of New Scotland by MHLC, before the Bender acquisition, provide an opportunity to develop an exceptional public open space on the property.

Please provide an executive summary of the proposed program or project for which you are requesting funds. Include a description of the target population, as well as the goals and objectives of your proposed project (500 words or less).

We are seeking funds for the rehabilitation of the former Bender Melon Farm bridge spanning the Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail. The bridge serves as a link, connecting two segments of the Bender Melon Preserve divided by the Rail Trail. Originally constructed in 1925 to enable access to the Bender farm after the advent of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, the existing steel and wood structure replaced an earlier wooden version lost to fire around the same time.

The Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail is a premier recreational destination, and the Bender Bridge stands as a distinctive landmark along this corridor. Our primary objective is the restoration of the bridge, aiming to foster increased public accessibility to the Bender Melon Preserve, Joseph Hilton Town Park, and the Hilton Barn. This revitalization effort is poised to create connections between the rail trail and the Preserve, thereby expanding recreational opportunities and significantly enhancing the rail trail.

The target populations for the project include residents and visitors to Albany County.

Please explain why this program or project is needed within the County.

This project aligns with the vision for the Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail. The trail, envisioned as a bicycle and pedestrian corridor, serves as a vital link connecting communities while providing avenues for healthy outdoor recreation, carbon-free transportation, and enhancements to overall quality of life. We believe that the rail trail, over time, will evolve into a central artery, interconnecting communities with various destinations throughout the region and eventually integrating into an extensive network of safe trails.

The rehabilitation of the Bender Melon Farm bridge plays a crucial role in advancing Albany County's goals for the Rail Trail. By restoring this historical bridge, we contribute directly to the realization of the trail's potential as a sustainable, community-oriented asset. The project aligns with the broader objective of reducing reliance on motorized transportation by promoting alternative, eco-friendly modes of travel such as walking and biking. This shift not only supports environmental sustainability but also fosters a healthier, more active lifestyle for residents. Moreover, the improved connectivity facilitated by the bridge restoration enhances accessibility to the Bender Melon Preserve, Joseph Hilton Town Park, and the Hilton Barn. These interconnected spaces not only serve as recreational hubs but also contribute to a sense of community and shared heritage.

The rehabilitation of the Bender Melon Farm bridge is not just a restoration effort; it is a strategic investment in the County's future. By aligning with Albany County's vision for the Rail Trail, this project serves as a catalyst for sustainable transportation, improved community connections, and an overall elevation of the quality of life for residents throughout the county.

All funded activities must meet the objective of responding to the public health and negative economic impact of the pandemic. Please describe how your proposal will help address this objective and assist with recovery (250 words or less).

The pandemic brought the need for safe outdoor recreational experiences into sharp focus and access to nature and natural areas is increasingly recognized as a critical public health issue. Numerous studies have documented the value of spending time in natural areas for both mental and physical health.

The location of the Bender Melon Preserve along the rail trail offers a unique opportunity to provide access to a beautiful natural area to a wide variety of communities, and in particular, Albany's Southend a neighborhood that is severely lacking in opportunities to access nature and open space.

Everyone benefits from time in nature, and MHLC's preserve usage increased exponentially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As people experienced unprecedented stress and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, MHLC's preserves provided safe spaces for families and loved ones to gather and recreate. The increased visitation has continued into 2023, with more people using MHLC's trails than ever before. From the physical benefits of exercise to the mental health benefits of reduced stress and anxiety, time in nature directly improves community health.

MHLC's nature preserves are open 365 days a year, from dawn to dusk, and are free to visit. The preserves are treasured community resources that provide easy access to local trails, and MHLC offers extensive public programming throughout the year to help connect people of all ages to nature with educational and immersive experiences on the land.

If an award is made, describe how Albany County stakeholders will benefit. Where possible, please use measurable outcomes to quantify impact.

The Bender Melon Bridge is a widely recognized landmark along the Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail Benefits to Albany County stakeholders from restoring the Bridge include:

- The preservation of a historic structure along the Rail trail
- Interpretation of the former Delaware and Hudson Railroad and its impact on communities.
- Improved access to recreational trails on the Bender Melon Preserve from the Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail.
- New Rail Trail access for neighborhoods adjacent to the rail trail such as the rapidly expanding Kensington Woods

development.

- It will help facilitate future connections from the rail trail to the New Scotland hamlet commercial district and the surrounding area.
- A natural buffer between increasing residential sprawl between Slingerlands and Voorheesville.
- The 170-acre preserve and adjacent 16-acre park will provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.
- At least five miles of trails will be developed throughout the property.

All these benefits will improve the quality of life in the Capital Region and contribute to a healthier environment.

Please describe your organization’s ability to implement the project you propose including organizational structure, staff members involved, a summary of similar initiatives you have undertaken and the date they were completed:

The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy was founded in 1992 and the organization has extensive experience in the creation and operation of public preserves. We currently operate 22 public preserves on 3,000 acres including more than 36 miles of trails. These preserves range from rural locations covering more than 500 acres to small “pocket parks” of just a few acres. The latter includes the Noonan Preserve, a small property located along the rail trail on the banks of the Normanskill within the city of Albany. Many of these preserves include a variety of pedestrian bridges varying widely in scale. The Bender Bridge is of a different order and requires professional engineering and construction. To accomplish this we have secured the services of Creighton Manning for structural inspection and engineering. Both the structural report and design plans were provided to the Albany County Department of Public Works for review and approval. Construction services will be provided by William Keller and Sons, Inc. This organization has extensive building and bridge construction experience including the completion of numerous projects for Albany County. Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy staff involved in the project include; Mark King, Executive Director, Sarah Walsh, Associate Director and Marshal Lefevre, Stewardship Director.

How will you track performance goals and define success? Include at least two key performance indicators and expected annual outcomes/impact?

Success will be defined by the complete rehabilitation of the bridge allowing pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency vehicle access to the Bender Melon Preserve and surrounding communities. Steps toward that performance include:

- Restoration and opening of the bridge to public use.
- Public usage and activity at the Bender Melon Preserve and surrounding areas resulting from the completion of the project.

Project start date:

10/15/2023

Project End date:

08/01/2024

Please provide key project milestones inclusive of the anticipated timelines and descriptions

| Milestone | Anticipated Timeline | Task Description |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Project Preparation | Fall 2023 | Removal of decking (Albany County) Access Road construction, paint preparation |
| Painting and Redecking | Spring/summer 2024 | Painting for rust control and installation of new deck |
| Recognition ceremony/Ribbon cutting opening bridge for use and dedication of the structure | Fall 2024 | Event recognizing partners and supporters of the project |

At the top of this page is a downloadable project budget. Please download the budget form and upload it here.

- [Budget-1.pdf](#)

If you are funding a multi-year initiative, please provide a breakdown of funding level per year below:

| 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|------|------|------|
|------|------|------|

| | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| \$281,500 | | |
|-----------|--|--|

Use this space to provide a narrative supporting and clarify anything from the proposed project budget above. In addition, if "Other Funds" or "Other Uses" are included above, please specify the source(s) below.

Budget Detail
Wm J Keller Construction
Bridge Construction \$ 165,500
Access Road Construction \$ 22,000
Rust proofing and painting \$ 66,500
Subtotal \$ 254,000
Creighton Manning Engineering
Bridge Inspection and load rating \$ 5,500
Bridge Design \$ 5,500
Project Management \$ 6,500
Subtotal \$ 17,500
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
Operational Support \$ 10,000

Project Cost \$ 281,500

Explain why ARPA funds are needed to complete the proposed program/project. Would the proposal be possible without ARPA assistance? Describe how your proposal would be impacted if you are awarded a smaller grant than requested?

This project would be very difficult to accomplish without ARPA funds. Reduced ARPA funding would result in a delay of the project and could jeopardize the completion of the project.

ARPA funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. Please describe how your project will be sustained if it will continue beyond this date.

We anticipate the completion of the bridge project in the summer of 2024. The primary circumstance that could delay the project is a lack of funding. Most of the funding for the project is identified but the failure to secure ARPA funds could result in a delay.

List any project partners/subrecipients:

Albany County
The Town of New Scotland

Please list any matching funds:

Tim Long and Elizabeth Clyne (Pledged support) \$150,000
Creighton Manning Engineering \$ 17,500
Bridge Inspection and load rating (\$5,500)
Bridge Design (\$5,500)
Project Management (\$6,500)
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
Operational Support \$10,000
Total Matching Funds \$177,500

Tax Information or Additional Information

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2019

- [2019-990-wout-Char-5001.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2020

- [2020-Federal-990-Mohawk-Hudson-Land-Conservancy-Clt1.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2021

- [990-US_4059_2021_Government-Tax-Return_Mohawk-Hudson-Land-Conservancy1.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2022

- [990-US_2022_Client-Tax-Return_Mohawk-Hudson-Land-Conservancy1.pdf](#)

Please upload IRS Form W-9

- [W9-2023-signed1.pdf](#)

(OPTIONAL) please feel free to upload anything which you feel would strengthen your application.

- [Mesick-Cohen-images.docx](#)

Risk Assessment:

Has the organization adopted and/or implemented policies relating to: records retention, conflict of interest, code of ethics, and/or nondiscrimination policies

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

We have a Conflict of Interest Policy and Records Retention Policy (note: all critical records are stored digitally in the cloud, with backups stored at an off-site location and physical copies filed in our office). We do not have a single Code of Ethics Policy but rather a variety of policies including our Sexual Harassment Policy, Whistleblower Policy, and our Personnel Manual, which defines our discrimination policy and ethical standards.

Is the organization properly insured?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify the types of insurance held and the limits:

General Liability Insurance - \$2,000,000 Umbrella Liability - \$1,000,000 Directors & Officers Insurance - \$1,000,000
Automobile Liability Insurance - \$1,000,000 Workers Comp - \$500,000

Does the organization have a financial management system?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

We use Raiser's Edge to manage fundraising, and we use Quickbooks as our general accounting system. We also employ a staff Bookkeeper and accounting contractor. A professional audit is performed annually.

Has there been any change in your organization's key staffing positions in the last 2 years?

No

Has the organization previously done work for the Federal government (i.e. Is the entity experienced in managing Federal funds)?

No

Certifications

Acknowledgment 1

I Have Read and Understand the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (see below link)
U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:
<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>

Acknowledgment 2

Should the County Allocate ARPA Funds, I am Able to and Pledge to Adhere to ALL Compliance and Reporting Requirements of the U.S. Treasury as it relates to any State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Acknowledgment 3

I Understand the County Will Contact me if/when Additional Information is Needed and that Information will be Promptly Provided to the County to Support Reporting Requirements

Acknowledgment 4

If for Any Reason I am Unable to Comply with the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Requirements I will Immediately Notify the County in writing by email or letter

Acknowledgment 5

All Information Submitted in this Application is True & Accurate

Electronic Signature Agreement

I agree

By checking the "I agree" box, you agree and acknowledge that 1) your application will not be signed in the sense of a traditional paper document, 2) by signing in this alternate manner, you authorize your electronic signature to be valid and binding upon you to the same force and effect as a handwritten signature, and 3) you may still be required to provide a traditional signature at a later date.

Type name

Mark King