



Friends of Mill Ridge Park  
5333 Hickory Hollow Parkway  
Antioch, TN 37013

**February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Talia Lomax-O'dneal, Director of Finance  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County  
1 Public Square, Suite 106  
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Director Lomax-O'dneal,

**Subject: FY20 Direct Appropriations Funding Request**

With much appreciation for your consideration, I respectfully request funding in the amount of \$25,000 for the FY20 operation of Friends of Mill Ridge Park ("FMRP").

Located in Antioch, Tennessee, FMRP serves a "vast diversity amongst the park neighbors in age, race, and socio-economic status" (*NashvilleNext*). With 22% growth between 2000-2010, the area comprises 12.4% of the population of Davidson County. Many New American communities call Southeast Davidson County home, and continued growth of racial and cultural diversity is expected in the region. The southeast region of Nashville and Davidson County was identified as "park poor" – lacking natural areas and recreation programming (*Plan to Play, 2016*). Community input and planning have consistently and expressly emphasized the expansion of green space and services in Southeast Nashville for improving livability and social and physical health for all Nashvillians. FMRP was established as a nonprofit in 2017 with a mission to enhance and preserve outdoor space for the health, recreation, and cultural enrichment of Southeast Davidson County. To that end, with startup support from local foundations and corporate partners, we are on the ground in Antioch, developing and facilitating activities, events, and partnerships at Mill Ridge Park!

FMRP is led by a fulltime executive director, supported by a committee of regional advisors, and governed by a board of directors consisting of twelve business and community leaders. Our budget covers the meager operating expenses associated with staff, community engagement, and administration. With the requested support, the executive director and the board of directors will continue to collaborate with Metro Parks and Recreation to advance the mission of FMRP through the pursuit of these priorities: 1) growing community engagement and impact; 2) building productive partnerships; 3) generating sustainable resources; and 4) growing effective operations.

For your review, I have enclosed the requested information. I enthusiastically await your decision to provide additional support for increased access to outdoor space and recreation for the people of Southeast Nashville. Please let me know if you need additional information.

Respectfully,

Darrell Hawks  
Executive Director

Enclosure: Requested Information (pp. 2-3)  
CC: Monique Odom; Dennise Meyers; Vaughn Wilson

**Information for FY20 Direct Appropriations Funding Request  
To Talia Lomax-O'dneal, Director of Finance, Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County  
By Friends of Mill Ridge Park  
February 8, 2019**

**1. What services does your organization provide to the residents of Davidson County?**

The mission of Friends of Mill Ridge Park is to enhance and preserve Mill Ridge Park for the health, recreation, and cultural enrichment of southeast Davidson County. With support from two Nashville-based foundations, FMRP was incorporated as a nonprofit in 2017 and we began operating in Antioch in 2018. We are in the throes of implementing an aggressive strategic plan for 2019-2020 that involves greater engagement and service to the people and parkland in the southeast region of Davidson County. We provide opportunities for the people who live, work, and play in southeast Davidson County to engage in the current use, planning, and development of the parkland – before, during, and following the upcoming construction.

Outreach to the community is underway! FMRP involved the community in the design of an attractive brand; and launched a new website and activated social media sites in 2018. Some activities were successfully piloted in 2018: FMRP hosted more than 60 business leaders and local media at an event for unveiling the name of the park and FMRP; and 100 students on the parkland to map trails, fly kites, remove invasive plants, and record and learn about organisms present on the parkland. For facilitating activities and enrolling participants at Mill Ridge Park in 2019, we are developing resources and partnerships with nearby schools (such as Knowledge Academies and Cane Ridge High School), local businesses (such as Asurion, Bridgestone, CHS, Freeland, LKQ, and Wirtgen), foundations (such as Joe C. Davis Foundation and The Maddox Fund), and local organizations (such as Nashville Food Project and Small World Yoga).

For 2019-2020, many activities are being planned, such as: students from nearby Cane Ridge High School will work on a habitat construction and landscape painting projects; Nashville Food Project will operate a community garden at Mill Ridge Park for which FMRP will recruit volunteers and visitors; local employees will participate in recreational and volunteer activities organized by FMRP; hikes; outdoor yoga; kite flying; bird watching; flower & tree identifying; cedar glade restoration; invasive species removal; trail mapping and clearing; summer and farm festivals... Other activities will be integrated based on input from the community requested by FMRP online and at regular community meetings, and from the input gathered during the 2017 planning phase.

The funds requested with this application will support the growing operations and administrative efforts of FMPR in designing, planning, and facilitating those community-wide partnerships and activities for more residents, employees, and students of Southeast Nashville.

**2. How many residents are your currently serving and how do they benefits?**

During our inaugural year of operation, we served over 100 people at Mill Ridge Park. In 2019, we aim to serve more than 500 people living, working, and learning in this region designated as “park-poor” for its scarcity in sufficient and accessible green space. They will receive healthy access to green space, opportunities for recreation, interaction with other cultures, and outdoor/conservation education at Mill Ridge Park. Furthermore, the people of the region will benefit from the increased economic activity and corporate investment generated by partnerships and events facilitated by FMRP.

**3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?**

We are requesting \$25,000 to cover a portion of the annual operating costs of Friends of Mill Ridge Park, to be leveraged significantly by corporate, foundation, and individual donations, and hundreds of volunteer hours.

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**4. If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?**

If funding is awarded, an additional 500 residents, students, and employees (for more than 1000 total in one year) of the region will be directly served at Mill Ridge Park and they will benefit from increased access to nearby green space offering outdoor recreation, education, and events facilitated and coordinated by Friends of Mill Ridge Park.

**5. In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?**

Metro funding will help Friends of Mill Ridge Park achieve added benefits to the community, including increased investment in the region by businesses in the form of event sponsorships and corporate donations to support FMRP in service to the community and care of the parkland. An active FMRP, with ongoing community engagement opportunities, will increase the quality of life, safety, and property values for residents of the region. Hundreds of volunteer hours facilitated by FMRP and dedicated to Mill Ridge Park will improve the condition of and reduce the costs of caring for one of Nashville's largest parks.

**6. How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?**

The southeast region of Nashville and Davidson County, with its "vast diversity in age, race, and socio-economic status," was identified as "park poor" – lacking natural areas and recreation programming (*Plan to Play, 2016*). In a growing area representing 12.4% of Davidson County and including 37% African American, 48% White, 3% two races, and 22% under age 18, it is the one quadrant of the county without a regional park and the related services and activities. The median household income served is as much as \$7,000 lower than the Nashville median household income. FMRP will help create a more equitable Nashville by using the funding to provide regular access to green space and outdoor activities and events at Mill Ridge Park for the people in Southeast Nashville.