**Section 3025.60 Project Evaluation Priorities**

The following factors are used by the Department in evaluating and recommending local project applications for funding assistance consideration (see Appendix A):

a) Statewide Outdoor Recreation Priorities – 60%

1) Department Statewide Priorities – 35%

Projects are evaluated in terms of their ability to address major outdoor recreation and conservation issues identified by the Department in its "Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan". These include, but are not limited to, natural area and wetland preservation, protection of endangered/threatened species and critical habitat resources, conservation education, creation of greenways and long distance trail corridors, water-based recreation, recreation for disadvantaged populations and adaptive re-use/redevelopment of urban lands, including brownfields. These priorities are listed in this Section and also available in the Department's OSLAD Local Participation Grant Manual (2007 ed.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Grant Administration, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield IL 62702-1271).

2) Statewide Local Needs Assessment – 25%

Determination of local need is based on a comparison of:

A) existing local supply of recreation facilities per capita to the statewide median for those facilities as identified in the Department's "Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan"; and

B) existing supply and distribution of open space and park land acreage, measured in acres/capita, to the statewide median and/or to locally adopted standards. Recreation needs based on project service area are also given consideration.

b) Project concept and site characteristics – 25%

The project proposal is evaluated in terms of the site's physical and aesthetic qualities, including accessibility; soil, topographic and hydrologic characteristics; site vegetation; compatibility with adjacent land uses; environmental intrusion on the site; impacts to cultural and natural resources; and the overall recreational diversity provided by the project.

c) Local Planning – 10%

The major consideration under this criteria is public support and input into the project plan and existence of a comprehensive local recreation and/or open space plan identifying the proposed project as a priority. Consideration is also given for unique recreation opportunities not specifically identified in a local plan but having documented widespread public support.

d) Other Considerations – 5%

Relevant factors considered in evaluating the overall merits of a project and need for funding include projects located in inner-urban areas; proposing initial site development; involving private donations; representing economic revitalization efforts; or from applicants not previously benefitting from OSLAD assistance.

e) Penalty Factors – (deduct up to 15%)

Consideration is given to the applicant's past performance in completing OSLAD or other Department grant projects or unresolved project violations, ability to properly maintain the project site, and failure to cooperate with the Department in completing the "Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory" (IRFI).

f) Project Application Review and Grant Award:

Department grant staff, in consultation with executive and appropriate resource staff, reviews all applications in accordance with the established evaluation criteria. Recommendations from the Department grant staff are then submitted to the Director for OSLAD grant approval.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 18097, effective October 27, 2022)