

# University of Virginia Grounds Improvement Fund Process and Procedures Guidelines

October 3, 2007

## **Summary:**

This statement describes a funding program for projects and programs that promote improvements to the University's environs that benefit the general University community.

## **Policy Statement:**

The Grounds Improvement Fund (GIF) will support projects and programs proposed and developed for the betterment of the physical environment of the University. As the Lawn served as the focus of community life in Jefferson's Academical Village, the larger University landscape provides the connective tissue that links individual schools, departments and buildings, providing opportunities for circulation, community gatherings, events and recreation. As such, the quality of the outdoor environment reflects the overall vitality of the institution. The Grounds Improvement Fund will provide a mechanism to ensure that this infrastructure system will be developed as necessary to improve its appearance, functionality, and safety and to promote conservation in both land use and resources utilization.

This system includes the conventional physical infrastructure, other than utilities, that are part of a typical city or county public works program, including streets, paths, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, hardscape and landscape, lighting, signs, site furnishings, and public art. The funding program covers the construction as well as the advance design efforts that support these items. General improvements to the grounds under this program will include major rehabilitation/improvements of such elements as sidewalks, trees and other plantings, but excludes items of normal, deferred or planned maintenance. The Grounds Improvement Fund is intended to supplement, not replace, the landscape budget associated with projects funded by the six-year capital program, maintenance reserve, and utilities projects.

## **Project Eligibility:**

Any academic or auxiliary program (e.g. Parking and Transportation, Intramural Recreation and Sports, individual Schools or departments) may identify a need for a potential GIF project and seek funding by submitting a project request to the Office of the Architect for the University. A panel composed of staff from the Office of the Architect and Facilities Management will evaluate the project requests and develop an annual list with the University President having final approval authority.

Each request must represent a project that will provide benefits to more than a single campus user, group, or building and each will be evaluated against the following general criteria:

- Eliminates or prevents an existing health, environmental or safety hazard
- Satisfies a particular academic or auxiliary program need,
- Reduces total capital and operating budget expenses,
- Supports campus planning objectives,
- Provides renewal of a deteriorating infrastructure asset(s),
- Enhances the aesthetic quality of the public domain, including the addition of public art.

The Grounds Improvement Fund projects can be proposed for all University properties. These include the main University Grounds in Charlottesville, the Medical Center, the College at Wise, Mountain Lake, Oyster, Blandy Experimental Farm, and University property at UVAF research parks. Funds raised through College at Wise project assessments shall be spent only for improvements at the Wise campus.

**Applicability:**

The GIF assessment will be applied to projects in the University's capital program for the Academic Division, the Medical Center and the College at Wise. This includes projects located on the University grounds in Charlottesville (including the Health System, North, West, and Central Grounds), the College at Wise, and off-campus projects located at sites such as the Farm Vivarium, Mountain Lake, Oyster, and Blandy Experimental Farm. Affected projects include 1) renovation projects with budgets greater than \$2.0 million, 2) new construction projects (with budgets greater than \$1.0 million), 3) building acquisitions costing more than \$1.0 million including projects built by UVAF for the University, and 4) utility infrastructure projects with budgets greater than \$1.0 million. Exempt projects include 1) non-capital outlay projects, 2) State Maintenance Reserve projects, 3) repairs or replacements of building systems and components, 4) repairs to utility infrastructure systems, 5) land acquisitions, and 6) state funded handicap accessibility and fire/life safety projects.

No assessments will be taken on GIF- funded projects or projects funded by Arboretum & Landscape (A&L), Accessibility and Safety/Security Committees or the utilities infrastructure fund.

**Assessment Rate**

The assessment will be a 1.5% fee applied to the construction cost (initial construction budget plus construction contingency) of applicable projects regardless of size. The maximum assessment contribution per project will be capped at \$500,000. The assessment will be collected at the time of contract award. The assessment will be applied to budget increases that occur during the design phase, but will not be applied to increases resulting from bidding or from changes that occur during construction.

Assessments will apply to split funded projects where the funding is split between GIF eligible and GIF ineligible funds, but the assessment will only be levied on the GIF eligible funds. In these cases the construction cost will be split on a proportional basis between the eligible and ineligible funds. The assessment rate will be re-evaluated biennially.

**Fund Structure**

The Grounds Improvement Fund will have three components: (1) an Academic Division/Medical Center expendable account, (2) a Academic Division/Medical Center investment fund, and (3) a College at Wise expendable account. \$1 million of each year's income will be carried in the Academic Division/Medical Center expendable account; any amount over \$1 million per year will be invested in the Academic Division/Medical Center Internal Investment Program managed by Treasury Operations and used to supplement the fund in the years when income is less than \$1 million; and any amount resulting from College at Wise project assessments will be deposited to the College at Wise expendable funds. Amounts left in the Academic Division/Medical Center expendable account at the end of the fiscal year may either be carried forward to the subsequent year or added to the investment fund.

This is a distinct fund and is not intended to combine funds currently dispensed by the A&L, Accessibility, and Safety/Security Committees.

**Effective:**

The Grounds Improvement Fund assessment will apply to capital projects that receive approval of their Concept, Site, and Design Guidelines after January 1, 2007.