

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: May 6, 2019

Subject: Competitive Equity Grant Program Update

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Chapter 8, Strategy 4

Staff Prepared/Presented: Libby Starling, Director of Regional Planning (651-602-1135) Emmett Mullin, Regional Parks Manager (651-602-1360)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed.

Background

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* commits the Council to developing a set-aside, competitive equity grant program pilot in 2019. The Council originally introduced the idea to establish an equity grant program in February 2015, as part of the original 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. The Council has not yet established this program, but staff conducted extensive community engagement that laid the groundwork for this year's efforts.

This program will be designed to explicitly strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System. To develop this grant program, the Council is working in close collaboration with the Council's Equity Advisory Committee, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, Council staff and staff from regional park implementing agencies to formulate criteria and measures for awarding grants to regional park implementing agencies for projects aimed at advancing equitable usage of the Regional Parks System.

Council staff will present the process to date as well as share scenarios to prompt committee discussion. Staff seek insights and advice from committee members on what elements to consider for the final grant program recommendation. If desired, staff is able to return to the May 20, 2019 Community Development Committee meeting, to continue the grant program discussion, so that they can bring a recommendation forward to the Council in June 2019.

Rationale

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Finance Chapter 8, Strategy 4 states that equity is a consideration in the Regional Parks System funding and investment. The equity grant program is one Council strategy for advancing equity in the region.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The competitive equity grant program seeks to advance the *Thrive MSP 2040* outcome of equity by increasing the equitable usage of the Regional Parks System by all residents of the region.

Funding

There is \$300,000 for the equity grant program included in the Council's adopted 2019 budget.