

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: December 6, 2021

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 8, 2021

Subject: Extend Planning Assistance Grant Agreements

District(s), Member(s): Councilwide

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. § 473.864

Staff Prepared/Presented: Sam Johnson, Senior Grants Administrator (651-602-1757)

Division/Department: Community Development/Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council extend Planning Assistance grant agreements until June 30, 2021 for grantees with incomplete 2040 Comprehensive Plans.

Background

Minnesota Statutes section 473.867 authorizes the Council to establish a planning assistance fund for the purpose of making grants and loans to local governmental units to help local governmental units in the seven-county metropolitan area conduct and implement comprehensive planning activities, including the “decennial” review of local comprehensive plans (Plans) and fiscal devices and official controls as required by section 473.864, subdivision 2.

On March 25, 2015 in business item [2015-60](#), and on April 27, 2016 in business item [2016-76](#), the Council adopted initial and additional need-based eligibility criteria for awarding available planning program assistance and established potential grant amounts for eligible grantees to help grantees review and update their comprehensive plans as required by the “decennial” review provisions of Minnesota Statutes section 473.864, subdivision 2. Grant agreements were issued in the fourth quarter of 2016 with an original ending date of December 31, 2019.

On January 10, 2018, the Council approved business item [2017-293](#) authorizing Council staff to administratively review and execute extensions to planning grant agreements. Council staff made applications for extension available in the spring of 2018, and 37 communities received extensions.

In a subsequent review of Plans, Council Staff found 15 to be incomplete and in March 2021 Council staff extended these grantees’ grant agreements to December 31, 2021. In that period, five Plans were resubmitted and found to be complete and another Plan was resubmitted but found incomplete.

Council staff are actively working with the remaining ten grantees to help them submit their Plans for review. Given the generous timeline extensions already offered by the Council, staff recommend that this be the final round of grant extensions. Staff are bringing this business item forward as it raises the possibility that after this final opportunity for grantees to complete grant agreement requirements, some grant agreements would be allowed to expire without grantees receiving final payment and having to return previous grant payments.

Rationale

Minnesota Statute gives Council authority to extend the deadline for Plan completion. Extending grant agreements for six months will support remaining grantees to complete their Plans.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed extension request is neutral on Thrive outcomes. Grant extensions align with the Thrive principles of collaboration and accountability by demonstrating that the Council is a responsible and dedicated partner to local governments in the development of their comprehensive plans as well as providing direct assistance to help local governments meet statutory planning requirements .

Funding

The Council originally awarded planning grants of approximately \$1.9M to 70 local units of government to prepare their 2040 comprehensive plans. Ten grants totaling \$188,000 are impacted by this action .

Known Support / Opposition

No known opposition.