

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: January 3, 2019

Subject: Competitive Equity Grant Program Exploratory Discussion

District(s), Member(s): All

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

Staff Prepared/Presented: Emmett Mullin, Regional Parks and Natural Resources Manager (651-602-1360), Amanda Lovelee, Senior Outreach Coordinator (651-602-1375)

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 develop a set-aside, competitive equity grant program in 2019. This program will be designed to explicitly strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System. To develop this grant program, the Council will work in close collaboration with regional park implementing agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other partners to formulate criteria and measures for awarding grants to regional park implementing agencies for projects aimed at advancing equitable usage of the system.

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*. To date this program has not been established. This discussion will share what we've learned to date, generate ideas for establishing the new program, and begin to align expectations and hopes for the program.

At this Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, staff will invite Commissioners and others to generate their hopes, expectations, and questions about this program. Members of the Equity Advisory Committee have been invited to participate at this meeting. The goal of the discussion will be to begin to develop a pilot program for 2019 to help shape this program for the future.

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 key 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

Funding for the equity grant program is included in the Council's adopted 2019 budget.