

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: November 7, 2019

For the Community Development Committee meeting of November 18, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 11, 2019

**Subject:** Equity Grant Program Pilot, 2019 Funding Recommendations

**District(s), Member(s):** All

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

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jessica Lee, Senior Parks Planner (651-602-1621)

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

None; information and discussion only.

### Background

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan commits the Council to developing a set-aside, competitive equity grant program in 2019. This program is designed to strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System. To develop this grant program, the Council worked in close collaboration with Regional Parks Implementing Agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other partners to formulate criteria and measures for awarding grants to Regional Parks Implementing Agencies for projects aimed at advancing equitable usage of the Regional Parks System.

### Recommendation

Regional Parks Implementing Agencies submitted applications in August of 2019, which were then reviewed internally for eligibility and completeness. A formal review committee met on October 17, 2019 to receive the applications and discuss the pilot program and process. This review committee was comprised of representatives from the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, the Community Development Committee, and the Equity Advisory Committee. After the first meeting, committee members reviewed each application on their own and provided scores to Council staff. On November 5th, the committee met again to discuss their scores and develop a funding recommendation, which is shown in Table 1:

*Table 1. Funding Recommendations*

Agency and Project Name	Amount	Project Summary
1. Dakota County Dakota Homeland Interpretation Along the Minnesota River Greenway RT	\$90,000	Design, fabricate and install interpretation frames.
2. Saint Paul Wakan Tipi Center at Bruce Vento (RT) Nature Sanctuary Equitable Enhancements	\$154,255	Environmental costs, exhibits, interior art, public art, and architect fees.

3. MPRB Bde Maka Ska Cloud Man Memorial Interpretive Signage (Mpls Chain of Lakes RP)	\$55,745 (*requested \$136,500)	Design and construction of five panels and concrete pads at four locations around lake.
<i>Total Amount Recommended for Funding</i>	\$300,000	

There is \$300,000 for the Equity Grant Program in the Council’s adopted 2019 budget. The [Regional Parks System Competitive Equity Grant Program 2019 Fund Distribution Plan](#) also states that the Council may award up to an additional \$331,000 in 2020 regional bonds during this initial round if the quantity and quality of applications are sufficiently robust.

The initial round received 14 eligible applications requesting \$1,256,755, and 3 have been recommended for funding for a total of \$300,000. The review committee began their deliberations by commenting on the quality and thoughtfulness of all the applications. In the spirit of a pilot program, the committee recommends using only the \$300,000 from 2019, with the desire to use lessons learned from this first year to improve the program for the next cycle.

The review committee provided feedback for the regional park implementing agencies who proposed projects that were not included in the funding recommendation. The review committee encourages these agencies to consider this feedback and refine their projects for future submission. Projects which were not selected for funding are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Projects Not Recommended for Funding**

<b>Agency and Project Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Project Summary</b>
Anoka County Accessible Dock at Wargo Nature Center (Rice Creek Chain of Lakes PR)	\$90,000	Design, purchase and install accessible dock and kayak/canoe launch.
Carver County Lake Waconia RP, Beach Area, and Coney Island ADA Access	\$63,000	Materials, installation, and professional design for an ADA accessible walkway across the beach area and an accessible boat dock for Coney Island.
Dakota County Accessible Non-Motorized Boat Launch at Holland Lake in Lebanon Hills RP	\$35,000	Design, engineering, construction, and installation of an accessible non-motorized boat launch.
Dakota County Inclusive Play Tree Walk at Whitetail Woods RP	\$90,000	Construct an inclusive Tree Walk.
MPRB Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Accessibility Improvements (Theodore Wirth RP)	\$200,000	Design, engineering, and construction of accessible pathways and overlooks.
MPRB Roberts Bird Sanctuary Multi-Lingual Signage and Sound (Mpls Chain of Lakes RP)	\$48,000	Design of interpretive signage and outdoor-resilient sound system.
Ramsey County Keller RP Archery Range Improvements	\$110,000	Paved walkway, ADA shooting lanes, platform for shooting and backstops, signage and installation.
Scott County Community Engagement in Support of the Development of the Lakefront Zone at Spring Lake RP	\$30,000	Fund the hiring of a consultant to assist in preparing a community engagement process to

Agency and Project Name	Amount	Project Summary
		further equity in the Lakefront Zone at Spring Lake RP.
Scott County Recreational and Cultural Interest Sign Improvements (Jurisdiction-wide)	\$35,000	Fabrication and installation of signs with universal messaging.
TRPD Adapted Paddling Station	\$100,000	Accessible paddle station with self-serve adapted boat lockers and boat launch.
Washington County Cottage Grove Ravine RP Lower Landing Area Improvements	\$75,000	Self-serve paddle sport equipment sharing station; shore fishing platforms; interpretive signs.
<i>Total unfunded (*includes unfunded portion of MPRB's Cloud Man Memorial project)</i>	\$956,755	