

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: September 3, 2020

Subject: 2020 Equity Grant Program priorities discussion

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), Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst (651-602-1548)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* commits the Council to develop a set-aside, competitive equity grant program to strengthen equitable use of the Regional Parks System. The Equity Grant Program was formally established in 2019 through a pilot program with capital funding that resulted in the awards for three Regional Park System equity projects.

On August 17, 2020, the Community Development Committee directed Council staff to use the 2018 and 2019 parks interest earnings for the 2020 Equity Grant Program for non-capital programming and communications projects that further the goal of increasing equitable use of the regional parks system. A total of \$1,426,316 is available from the interest earnings. In addition, \$331,000 has been committed in the Council's adopted 2020 budget for the 2020 Equity Grant Program for capital projects.

At this Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPSOC) meeting, staff will share lessons learned from the 2019 Pilot Program and feedback from the Community Development Committee, and will invite Commissioners to discuss and provide advice for the use of parks interest earnings for the 2020 Equity Grant Program. The goal of the discussion will be to identify program priorities to inform the development of the 2020 Equity Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). A draft NOFA will be brought back to MPOSC later this fall.

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

The Council's adopted 2020 budget includes \$331,000 in funding for the Equity Grant Program for capital projects. The \$1,426,316 in Parks Interest Earnings will be adopted into the Council's 2020 budget in an upcoming budget amendment.