

# 2020 Equity Grant Program Priorities Discussion

September 3, 2020

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



# Purpose of today's discussion

- Advice for the 2020 Equity Grant Program
- Share available funding information for 2020
- Focus on parks interest earnings

# History

- Thrive 2040
  - “The Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies, and state partners to strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin and ability.”
- 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
  - “Using Council bonds, the Council will create, fund, and administer a set aside, competitive equity grant program for projects explicitly aimed to strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System. The purpose of this grant program will be to strengthen equitable use of the Regional Parks System.”

# 2019 Pilot Established the Competitive Equity Grant Program

- \$300,000 in Council capital bonds
- Capital projects only
- 14 applications received from 9 Agencies; 3 grant awards made:
  - Dakota County: Dakota Homeland Interpretation Along the Minnesota River Greenway RT
  - Saint Paul: Wakan Tipi Center at Bruce Vento (RT) Nature Sanctuary Equitable Enhancements
  - MPRB: Bde Maka Ska Cloud Man Memorial Interpretive Signage (Mpls Chain of Lakes RP)
- Follow-up survey sent to applicants and review committee members after grant awards were announced

# What we learned from 2019 Pilot Program

- Excerpts from 2019 Applicant Survey
  - “This amount of funding does not make a significant equity impact for capital projects; funding for programming/events would better fit the budget amounts and allow for more opportunities for collaborations with community partners”
  - “Grants for program support would better help racial equity efforts”
  - “Developing capital-driven equity projects that fit the criteria and limitations of the grant was difficult, specifically the timeframe and engagement criteria”
  - “Because engagement can be a slow process, we had to build our proposals based on existing relationships rather than use this as a process to foster new relationships”

# Funding for 2020/2021

- \$1.4 million in parks interest earnings
  - The Community Development Committee directed staff to invest these interest earnings in the 2020 Equity Grant Program
  - Competitive, non-capital projects
- \$664,000 in Council bonds is available for capital projects
  - \$331,000 from 2020
  - \$333,000 from 2021

# Discussion

- What are your non-capital or programming ideas? For example:
  - Engagement
  - Partnership building
  - Marketing
  - Communications
  - Outreach
  - Special events
  - What else?
- What is your advice for 2020 program priorities?

# Questions, Comments, and Discussion

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