

Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Dates: August 3, 2023

Topic

Regional Parks and Trails System 2024 Competitive Equity Grant Program Draft Notice of Funding Availability

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.325 and 473.315; <i>Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> , Chapter 8, Finance Strategy 3
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Jessica Lee, Senior Parks Planner (651-602-1621)
Division/Department:	Community Development

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. In 2021 the Council dedicated \$664,000 in Council bonds for capital projects and \$1,400,000 in parks interest earnings for programming or a mix of non-capital/capital projects. The competitive grant round resulted in the funding of 23 capital and non-capital projects.

Similar levels of funding have been set aside for the 2024 Competitive Equity Grant Program. \$658,000 is available in Council bonds for capital projects and \$1,410,000 in parks interest earnings is available for programming/non-capital. The interest earnings may be used for capital projects if funds remain after awarding programming projects, or for programming projects that have small capital components.

At this Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPSOC) meeting, staff will share the key information from the draft Notice of Funding Availability (see attachment 1) and ask for feedback and discussion before finalizing the NOFA and bringing it back in October for approval.

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.