**Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program**

Implementation Guidelines for Project Criteria, Eligibility, Project Selection Process, and Administration of Grants

August 23, 2020

**Background**

In 2019, as part of the King County parks, recreation, trails and open space levy, voters approved up to $25 million in Parks Levy proceeds to create the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program to provide moneys for a broad range of land protection and recreation, including park acquisition and development, habitat conservation, community gardens, and construction of passive and active recreation facilities. King County envisions this program to not only acquire those lands which may be lost to future development pressures, but also as a tool to construct new, and improve existing, recreation facilities to address the pressures of rapid growth in this region.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Eligible Project Types

Grant applications for this program shall be evaluated in four separate categories:

1. Open Space Acquisition
2. Active Recreation
3. Passive Recreation
4. Local Trails

All projects must allow public access and be geographically located within King County.

Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible to be recipients of the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant moneys:

1. King County cities and towns
2. Metropolitan Park Districts geographically located in King County

**Advisory Committee**

Nomination Process

1. The King County Executive will seek input from King County Councilmembers on advisory committee recommendations and provide notification to the King County Council 30 days prior to appointment.
2. The King County Executive will appoint committee members who reflect the diverse needs and populations within King County.
3. The committee will make recommendations for both the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program and the Aquatic Facilities Grant Program.

Committee Makeup

The committee will be staffed by Parks and Recreation Division and composed of up to 17 people appointed by the King County Executive based on the composition below, and will make recommendations for both the Parks Capital and Open Space grant program and the Aquatic Facilities grant program.

The following composition shall make up the Aquatic Facilities Grant and Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Advisory Committee:

1. City/park district representatives – up to nine members of the committee shall be elected or employed officials of cities or park districts in King County. Cities or park districts in each of the nine county council districts should be represented.
2. School districts – up to four members shall be elected or employed officials of school districts actively engaged in aquatics recreation and/or implementation of the recommendations in the State of Play Report.
3. Non-profit organizations – up to four members shall represent organizations with a strong history of championing public access to recreation, to include active, passive, and aquatics recreation in King County.

Upon formation, the Advisory Committee will work closely with Parks and Recreation Division staff to further develop and refine the application, review, and recommendation process to ensure a streamlined process is in place for ease of use by applicants, the Advisory Committee, and program administrators.

**Project Selection and Reporting Process**

1. King County Parks and Recreation Division staff will prepare and advertise a request for proposals and receive applications on a biennial basis.
2. The Advisory Committee will review and rank proposals and will recommend projects and grant amounts. Proposals will only be ranked against other proposals of the same project type, as listed in the eligibility criteria. In accordance with Motion 15378, all awards in unincorporated areas should be made in consultation with the Department of Local Services.
3. The Advisory Committee will recommend a project for a grant award to the Department of Natural Resources and Parks only if the proposal meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Additional criteria to weigh the relative strength of applications include:
   1. The project will further established Countywide priorities, such as equity and social justice, the Strategic Climate Action Plan, improving water quality and increasing habitat, for example through green stormwater infrastructure, the Land Conservation Initiative, or implementation of the recommendations in the State of Play Report;
   2. The project is supported through partnership and will be measured by resulting community benefits, as well as the strength and diversity of partnership;
   3. The project has been identified in an adopted plan;
   4. The project is located in an underserved area or provides recreational access or benefit where none currently exists;
   5. The project demonstrates certainty in success of delivery;
   6. The project demonstrates how successful implementation will be measured over time;
   7. The project identifies cost effectiveness and ability to leverage other funding or in-kind donations.
4. The King County Executive will transmit to the King County Council a recommended list of grant awardees, including a summary description of how each project meets the selection criteria and the objectives of the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant program. The King County Executive will also transmit an ordinance to approve grant allocations for each project.
5. The King County Parks and Recreation Division will administer the contracts for approved projects. Any town or city receiving a grant will be required to notify the King County Council of any major milestones such as groundbreaking or ribbon cutting 30 days prior to the event.
6. The King County Parks and Recreation Division will provide an annual report on the status of the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program. Information on the number of proposals received, projects awarded in that year, and a summary of completion of past projects shall be included in the report.

**Program Staffing**

The King County Parks and Recreation Division shall be responsible for administering and staffing the program, utilizing a percentage of program moneys to pay for this administration. The percentage of moneys for program administration shall be consistent with other grant programs managed by County agencies.

Administration shall include development of the application materials and review process, announcements, staffing the Advisory Committee, contract development and administration, project tracking, financial accounting, project reporting, and audit function.