



MEMORANDUM

DATE August 3, 2017
TO Measure A Steering Committee
FROM Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD)
SUBJECT Reenvisioning the Grantmaking Process

A. INTRODUCTION

This white paper has been prepared to inform the development of grant processes and guidelines for the Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks, Open Space, Beaches, Rivers Protection and Water Conservation Measure of 2016 (referred to as “Measure A”) that are consistent with Measure A’s mandate to ensure that “programs funded under this measure will increase the accessibility of public lands, park facilities, and park amenities to the people of Los Angeles County.”

Measure A was approved by 74.9 percent of voters in November 2016, and was developed in response to the expiration of the Regional Park and Open Space District’s (RPOSD) authority to levy taxes under Proposition A, which funded parks and open space projects and their maintenance throughout Los Angeles County (County) since 1992. Measure A was drafted to meet and its content reflected the findings of the 2016 Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA). The metrics-based PNA found that park needs vary greatly throughout the County, and demonstrated that there is serious need for billions of dollars of investments in all types of parks and open space areas in the County. Measure A was drafted to address the metrics identified in the PNA, and includes a needs-based hybrid approach to funding through formula-based allocations and competitive grants.

Measure A contains language designed to deliver funds to areas of high and very high park need. In RPOSD’s experience administering Proposition A grant funds, it has seen that many agencies and organizations in areas of high and very high park need encounter barriers during the grantmaking process that prevent them from securing grant funds and/or successfully implementing park projects.

Given these findings, RPOSD has prepared this white paper and is asking its stakeholders and collaborators to assist in developing grantmaking guidelines that will help ensure that barriers to identification and development of projects are diminished and that barriers to accessing funds are removed or lowered. Lowering these barriers will assist agencies and organizations in areas of high and very high park need to secure grant funding and successfully implement park projects.

The information in this paper is intended to inform the Steering Committee workshop to be held on August 17, 2017. The purpose of the workshop is to explore strategies for ensuring that barriers to accessing Measure A funds are reduced, thus helping to ensure that Measure A funds are distributed in a manner that results in increased investments in parks and open space in high and very high need areas of the County and/or to parks and open space that serve residents who live in the high or very high need areas of the County.

Information contained in this document includes:

- **SECTION B – Distributing Park Funds.** This section provides information on academic research regarding models for distributing funds.
- **SECTION C – Technical Assistance.** This section provides a brief overview of the need for technical assistance in any grantmaking program, and particularly in the distribution of Measure A funds. Technical assistance will be explored in more detail in a future stand-alone memo.
- **SECTION D – Local Park Funding in Los Angeles County.** This section summarizes Proposition A (1992 and 1996), Proposition K (City of Los Angeles), the Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, and the development of Measure A.
- **SECTION E – Case Studies.** This section summarizes a review of twelve grant programs and policies from across the country, and the strategies they have employed to ensure effective distribution of funds. Detail on each of the programs is provided in the Appendix.
- **SECTION F – Measure A Features Intended to Address Need.** This section summarizes the key features of Measure A that are specifically intended to lower barriers to accessing Measure A funds.
- **SECTION G – Recommendations.** This section uses information from the review of past local park funding efforts and the case studies to recommend potential strategies and best management practices for lowering barriers to accessing Measure A funds. These include strategies related to policies, grant criteria, and monitoring and tracking.
- **APPENDIX.** The appendix contains a case study summary of each of the grant programs and policies reviewed. The following grant programs and policies, and included:
 - California’s Proposition 84
 - Great Outdoors Colorado Program, CO
 - 20-Year Neighborhood Park Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, MN
 - WaterWorks Grant Program, King County, WA
 - Get Moving/Recreation for All Grant Programs, Seattle Park District, WA
 - 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Metropolitan Council, Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, MN
 - Transformative Climate Communities Program, Strategic Growth Council, CA
 - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, National Park Service
 - Grants-for-Blocks Program, Savannah, GA
 - Parks & People Foundation, Baltimore, MD
 - Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service
 - Strong, Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge

B. MODELS FOR DISTRIBUTING PARK FUNDS

The section summarizes academic research that describes basic models for grantmaking with government funds for parks, and evaluates them relative to their ability to lower barriers to access and thus increase investments in parks and open space in high and very high need areas of the County and/or to parks and open space that serve residents who live in the high or very high need areas of the County.

The academic research cited is based on the understanding that grant processes can create difficulties for those potential grant recipients who lack the necessary administrative capacity to compete for grants and administer them. These potential recipients may lack the resources to access technical experts and skilled grant writers, and may also lack a track-record of successful project delivery and grant fund administration. A comparative lack of administrative capacity may cause potential grantees to struggle to put forth projects of the same caliber as those submitted by organizations working in communities with greater capacity. In this way, **competition can diminish the distribution of grant expenditures to communities of high need**. As a specific example, without the capacity or access to professional resources to address complex administrative burdens such as real estate negotiations, communities with low capacity may be at a direct disadvantage. Such a handicap may be most relevant in built-out urban areas where securing a site for new parkland is complex and costly.

To ensure that funds are effectively distributed to meet need, grantmakers commonly use two basic methods: **formulas** and **competition**. To understand this distinction, Brian Collins of the University of North Texas and Brian Gerber of Louisiana State University worked together to examine funding distributions from the federal government's non-entitlement Community Development Block Grants program in four states. Through this work, they found that funds are more likely to be distributed to high need areas and populations when grantors do not rely solely on competitive grantmaking.

In their work, Collins and Gerber present four distinct models of grant allocation: one based purely on formulas, one based purely on competition, and two hybrid approaches.

Formula-Dominated Model

In formula-dominated grantmaking, grantors use precise definitions of eligibility and need to construct formulas that are used to select recipients and allocate grant funding. Such formulas can accommodate specific criteria for park need, and they can provide a depoliticized, limited-discretion, low-cost solution to the issue of targeting benefits to intended populations. For instance, a program could use a simple population formula to define eligible applicants and then use one or more complex formulas to allocate funding.

Collins and Gerber suggest that a formula-dominated model engenders relatively high levels of social equity performance but lower levels of potential performance accountability. In this context, social equity performance refers to the degree to which public service distribution and policy implementation is fair, just, and equitable. This is because formula-based selection has no inherent mechanism to screen out service providers that lack the capacity or willingness to deliver outputs consistent with grantor expectations. In addition, formula-dominated models do not screen out applicants, and can therefore result in performance accountability challenges.

Competition-Dominated Model

Competition-dominated grant contracting uses competition to govern eligibility to compete for grants, select proposals, and determine how funding is allocated. The competitive process used by agencies is relatively standardized. Organizations apply for grants through proposals that are evaluated and ranked. These proposals can be extensive and information-rich in order to justify funding requests, representing an upfront gamble for prospective grantees investing administrative resources in proposal preparations and project planning. Funding is allocated to proposals that are most highly ranked until the funding is exhausted.

Collins and Gerber suggest that a competition-dominated model should demonstrate relatively higher levels of performance accountability than formula-dominated models. In theory, market-like competitions should force prospective grantees to reveal information that mitigates agency problems. Under these conditions, competitors must carefully consider proposed costs because grantors can evaluate costs in a comparative context. Applicants must also credibly commit to fulfilling the objectives held by the grantor, which typically entails a demonstration of both the intent and capacity to deliver projects consistent with the grantor objectives. However, this model theoretically produces relatively lower levels of social equity than formula-dominated models, due to the strong influence of competitors' administrative capacity and grantwriting skills.

Strategies to ensure that competitive processes are balanced with formula-based allocation and other methods of ensuring equitable distribution of grant funds are considered below.

Hybrid Models

As seen in Figure 1, Collins and Gerber suggest two additional models that can affect the pursuit of both social equity (funding need) and performance accountability. One of these models, the adverse hybrid model, utilizes neither formulas nor competition. Collins and Gerber state that this model is counterproductive in both aspects. It is not recommended and is not discussed further here.

The other model, known as the moderating hybrid model, represents a compromise that takes advantage of the formula approach to target need and the information-rich environment of competition to increase accountability. Social equity performance is expected to be relatively better than that of the competition-dominated model because formulas that target funding to needs should at least limit any allocative bias toward administrative capacity.

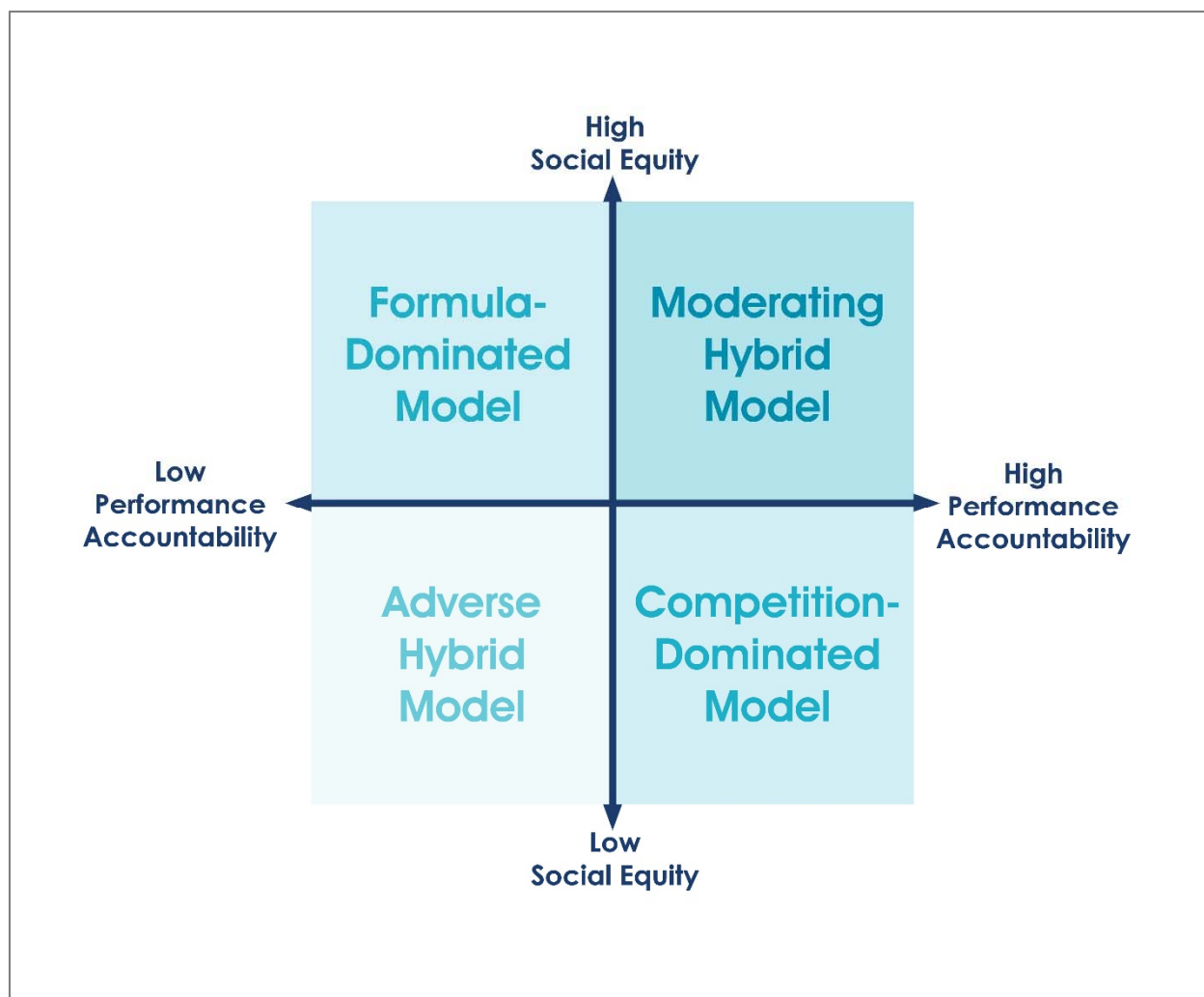


Figure 1. Models for Distributing Park Funds (Collins and Gerber)

Measure A is an example of a moderating hybrid model, combining the use of formulas for annual allocations from Category 1, 2 and Maintenance and Servicing (M&S) funds, and the use of competitive grants in Categories 3, 4 & 5. By using the moderating hybrid model, Measure A ensures that funding is invested in areas of high and very high need through annual allocations to all Study Areas and additional allocations to the Study Areas identified by the PNA as high and very high need. By creating a grantmaking process that lowers the barriers to accessing competitive grants, Measure A can enable more agencies and organizations to effectively compete for these funds. If these barriers are lowered, Measure A further ensures that funds are invested in projects in areas of high and very high need and/or projects that serve residents from areas of high or very high need.

C. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to utilizing a moderating hybrid model to distribute funds to projects that address need, grantors can invest resources to offer technical assistance to prospective grantees, particularly those with lower capacity to formulate plans, administer grants and implement projects. Such an approach can be considered a hybrid between direct and indirect governance. Specifically, this assistance can mitigate the likelihood that lower administrative capacity will reduce the ability of the competitive selection processes to ensure funds meet identified needs. More so, those working on behalf of the grantor to provide assistance can help identify and address administrative challenges faced by grant applicants. Technical assistance can be provided along the grant-making continuum, from project formulation to administration. Technical assistance can take many forms and can include assistance with the following:

- Project formulation and development;
- Grant application;
- Community outreach and engagement;
- Grant fund administration;
- Multi-benefit projects;
- Other funding sources; and
- Monitoring and reporting,

Section G of this memo provides some recommendations on technical assistance as part of Measure A Implementation. Due to the important role of technical assistance in lowering barriers to accessing Measure A funds, the RPOSD is holding a Steering Committee workshop on the topic on September 7, 2017. A separate stand-alone memorandum addressing technical assistance will be issued by RPOSD in advance of this workshop, for review and input by the Steering Committee.

D. LOCAL PARK FUNDING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

This section provides an overview of past and current local park funding in Los Angeles County, highlighting the role of Proposition A (Los Angeles County) and Proposition K (City of Los Angeles) in informing the development of a comprehensive assessment of park need and shaping Measure A. It also considers the preparation and findings of the PNA, as well as the need-related provisions of Measure A.

Proposition A (1992 and 1996) and Proposition K successfully directed funding towards park resources in Los Angeles County, yet were driven by different goals and applied different approaches to fund distribution. Both have fueled discussions about appropriate distribution of park funds within a geographically and demographically diverse county. Table 1 summarizes the key information for each local park funding source considered below.

Table 1. Local Park Funding Summary Table

Measure	Goals	Funding Amount	Funding Mechanism
Prop A 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District • Improve safety of recreation areas for children and senior citizens • Prevent gangs by increasing the safety of neighborhood parks • Plant trees and preserve beach, park, wildlife, and open space resources 	<p>Total: \$203,150,000 \$161M for specified projects \$42M for competitive grants</p>	Regional Park and Open Space District Tax Benefit formula
Prop A 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet need for parks, recreation, youth and senior facilities • Gang prevention and recreational alternatives for at-risk youth • Permanently protect natural lands and biologically diverse environments for future generations 	<p>Total: \$69,050,000 \$55M for specified projects \$14M for competitive grants</p>	Regional Park and Open Space District Tax Benefit formula
(City of LA) Prop K 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat inadequacies and decay of youth infrastructure • Address unmet needs for park, recreation, childcare and community facilities 	<p>\$25 million annually \$299M for specified projects \$144M for competitive grants</p>	Annual real property tax assessment, 30 year period
Measure A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet need for investment in neighborhood parks, watershed, open space healthy communities and community recreation • Improve community access to parks • Provide job training and gang violence prevention 	<p>\$96,000,000 million annually (estimated) 2% off the top for BOS projects 69.5% for formula-based allocations, including M&S 23.3% for competitive grants 7.2% for program innovation/oversight</p>	Special tax of 1.5 cents per square foot of structural improvements

1. PROPOSITION A (LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1992 AND 1996)

Parks and recreation facilities in Los Angeles County are supported in part by funds generated from the Safe Neighborhood Parks Tax Measure (Proposition A) approved by Los Angeles County voters in 1992 and again in 1996. RPOSD's authority to levy the 1992 Proposition A tax expired in 2015, and the second Proposition A was approved in 1996, under which taxing authority will expire in 2019.

Proposition A was developed in response to more than a decade of drastic funding cuts to park and open space spending spurred by the passage of California State Proposition 13. Passed in 1978, Proposition 13 lowered property taxes and further restricted the ability of municipalities to tax property owners. With increasing loss of open space to development in Los Angeles County and mounting community concern for park maintenance and upkeep, major proponents of open space and habitat protection guided the crafting of Proposition A.

The purpose of Proposition A is stated as "improving the safety of recreation areas for children and senior citizens, preventing gangs by increasing the safety of neighborhood parks, planting trees and acquiring, restoring and preserving beach, park, wildlife, and open space" (Proposition A, 1992). In the development of Proposition A, park agencies, cities and the County were asked to identify the park and recreation projects they had envisioned, this addressed the backlog of projects and included projects that already had been identified. Proposition A funds, as a whole, were distributed to projects that were specified in 1992 and 1996, for the amounts identified for each project in the propositions. Proposition A dedicated \$12 million to programs for at-risk youth in low income areas, and included a per parcel formula-based allocation to all cities and unincorporated areas in the County (\$110 million in total). However, in Prop A 1996, there was a mechanism that allowed for excess funds that were derived from interest to be allocated to priority projects across the County at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors. These Excess Funds, totaling \$367 million, have been allocated to a higher percentage of projects within the urban core.

Although the goals of Proposition A included "improving the safety of recreation areas for children and senior citizens" and "increasing the safety of neighborhood parks," some analyses of the proposition have found that Proposition A funds were utilized more for natural lands and regional open space projects, and were not as widely utilized for recreation areas and neighborhood parks in what are today defined as park-poor areas. For example, two studies found that:

- Approximately 80 percent of Proposition A funds were directed to projects specified in the proposition (Pincetl, 2003). Projects identified in the proposition were required to demonstrate "regional significance and regional use," emphasizing investment in areas with existing regional facilities or where large parcels of land are available.
- Much of the acquisition funding from Proposition A went to the preservation of large parcels, particularly in the Santa Monica Mountains (Wolch, 2005). As shown in the PNA (discussed below), urbanized areas contain the greatest concentration of park need in the County.

In sum, the fund distribution approach utilized for Proposition A emphasized project-specific grant allocations as well as improvements to existing park and recreation facilities. While this approach provided a clear framework for project funding, Proposition A had a series of funding priorities which emphasized existing park facilities and open space – both of which are less often associated with urban, higher need

populations. This highlights the barriers faced by agencies attempting to access Proposition A funds in highly urbanized areas, as these areas frequently lack existing park resources and are generally far from open space or other large undeveloped parcels.

2. PROPOSITION K (CITY OF LOS ANGELES, 1996)

In 1996, voters in the City of Los Angeles passed Proposition K, a park bond measure to increase and enhance park and recreation space in the city. Proposition K is a City of Los Angeles proposition, yet is important to the history of park funding in the County because the City of Los Angeles comprises a large percentage of the County, and because outcomes of Proposition K have contributed to the demand for more equitable funding distribution. Approximately \$25 million per year of Proposition K funds are allocated towards acquisition, upgrades, improvements, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities with the main goal of increasing the quantity, quality, and accessibility of youth recreational amenities and programs. Funds are primarily distributed through competitive grant programs to which community-based organizations, cities, and other public entities are eligible to apply.

Wolch, Wilson and Fehrenbach's review of two grant cycles of Proposition K funding, as presented in a study entitled *Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis*, found that distribution of Proposition K funds did not necessarily reflect the proposition's priorities. For instance, although youth infrastructure was a key focus of Proposition K, areas with higher concentrations of youth population had lower funding proposal success rates than areas with lower concentrations of youth population. In terms of actual expenditures, census tracts with the highest percentage of youth residents did receive the most money in absolute terms. However, areas with the largest shares of young people received half as much Proposition K funding on a per youth basis than areas with the least concentration of children. Based on their analysis of Proposition K, Wolch, Wilson and Fehrenbach stress the importance of focusing funds on obtaining new park space, providing technical assistance to community-based organizations from low-income neighborhoods, and ensuring that organizations can become partners in planning, designing, and managing park projects.

3. 2016 PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The 2016 Comprehensive Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment was launched in March 2015 to inventory existing parks and recreation facilities and conditions, analyze collected park inventory and population data, quantify the need for **neighborhood parks and recreational resources**, and work with the local communities to develop lists of priority projects and cost estimates to meet that need.

Park need is traditionally measured with a single metric, such as the number of acres of park land available to residents, or the percentage of residents living within walking distance of a park. Measuring only a single aspect of need provides a one-dimensional understanding of park need. The PNA Steering Committee recognized that park need is affected by many variables and approved a suite of five metrics that produced a robust understanding of physical park needs in each Study Area and in the County. The five metrics included park pressure, park land, park access, park amenities and park condition. With the exception of "Park Condition," the metrics are based on quantitative features of parks and the neighborhoods surrounding them. As such, they can be easily re-evaluated in the future as a way of gauging progress toward the goal of meeting park need in Los Angeles County. The results of the analysis of the park metrics were combined to determine an overall park need level for each Study Area. This

approach creates a framework for assessing park need from a countywide perspective, from areas of very-high and high need, to areas of very low need.

In addition to park need, the PNA included a community profile summarizing demographic, health and environmental information in each Study Area to supplement park metrics. This data was not directly used to identify need, because the PNA was focused on the physical needs of existing neighborhood parks and the need for new neighborhood parks. However, the community profile provided information about factors that affect park need and that were beyond the scope of the PNA. For example, park access is affected not only by the distance a household is from a park, but by access to a vehicle. Community profile data were provided to each Study Area for internal use and to inform park staff, who could in turn use the information as part of community meetings. Demographic information included population by race/ethnicity, population at or below 200 percent poverty level, population without vehicle access, population in linguistic isolation, and population distribution by age. Health and environmental information was gathered from CalEnviroScreen 2.0 and included ozone, PM 2.5, obesity, asthma, diesel emissions, diabetes, pollution burden, and bicycle/pedestrian collisions.

4. MEASURE A OF 2016

The PNA laid the groundwork for making important planning and funding decisions in Los Angeles County and provided the residents of the County with a wealth of parks-related information and opportunities to engage in the process of defining needs and potential projects in their communities. Most importantly, the PNA showed that there were many areas in the County with very-high and high need, and a lack of vacant land for new traditional parks in those areas as most of these very-high and high need areas are located in the most urbanized areas of the County. Measure A was crafted to address the findings of the PNA, as well as the regional opportunities within the County that include open space, regional projects, employment programs for youth and veterans, beaches, habitat and trail connectors and was ultimately approved by 74.9 percent of voters in November 2016.

The features included in Measure A to specifically address issues of need are further discussed in Section F.

E. CASE STUDIES IN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT FUNDS

Existing policies and grant programs designed to deliver funding to recipients with the greatest need can provide insights for the processes, policies, and procedures needed to implement and administer Measure A in a manner that reduces barriers to accessing funds.

The case studies presented in Appendix A offer examples of strategies used by a variety of agencies to attempt to ensure funds are directed to those most in need. Policy plans and grant programs included in these case studies were selected based on several factors, including effective community outreach, innovative approaches, breadth of application process, and iterative nature of their processes. Addressing equity in park funding is a fairly new concept nationwide, and several of the case studies presented are recent programs that are too new to measure their success. Nonetheless, they are included as examples of what is being tried, and can be referenced in the future to verify their effectiveness.

Each case study includes a description of the overall grant program, and a discussion of the processes, policies, or procedures that contributed to the grant program's success. Although each grant program defines need differently, all the selected case studies offer strategies that could be utilized to help lower barriers to accessing Measure A funds and thus ensure that funds are distributed in a manner that results in increased investments in parks and open space in high and very-high need areas of the County.

Common themes that emerged from the case studies include the following strategies that could be considered for Measure A's grantmaking processes:

- Technical assistance opportunities at every stage of the grant process can help organizations with low capacity (which frequently operate in areas of high and very high park need) succeed in securing grants and completing projects.
- Outreach to potential applicants can ensure that all eligible organizations are aware of the funding opportunities available to them.
- Clearly defined goals and metrics help to ensure that grantmakers, applicants, and the general public share a common understanding of a grant program's purpose.
- Using quantifiable metrics at various stages of the grant process can add a layer of objectivity. Clear metrics can also be valuable when evaluating the effectiveness of grant programs in getting funds to areas of high and very high need.
- Evaluation of a program's effectiveness in meeting goals, followed by course correction as needed, helps ensure that goals are met in the long run. Innovation in the form of pilot programs, community feedback opportunities, and experimental programs can all be incorporated in the effort to ensure that funds go to areas of high and very high need.

F. HOW MEASURE A ADDRESSES NEED

RPOSD developed Measure A with the goal of meeting park need in Los Angeles County and funding park projects throughout the County. To this end, Measure A contains several mechanisms for lowering barriers to accessing funding, thus helping to ensure that funds are invested in areas of high and very high park need. Many of these mechanisms echo the themes cited in the case studies in Section E. The existing provisions of Measure A that lower barriers to accessing funds include:

Concrete Definition of Park Need and Ties to Comprehensive Park Needs Assessment

As discussed above, the PNA findings informed the allocation of Measure A funds. The PNA clearly identified the metrics and process used to define park need for neighborhood parks and amenities, and assigned a need category to each of the County's Study Areas. As stated in the Measure A funding resolution, grant programs are intended to "increase the accessibility of public lands, park facilities, and park amenities to the people of Los Angeles County, especially to those living in high need and very high need Study Areas [as identified in the 2016 Countywide Park Needs Assessment]." The PNA also created a replicable process for assessing park need in the future, in order for funding to continue to be directed to high and very-high need areas.

Hybrid Model of Allocations and Competitive Grant Programs

Measure A utilizes a moderating hybrid model (as described in Section B of this memo) for awarding funds. This model results in the best balance between social equity and accountability. Measure A's Category 1 and Category 2 funds use the Formula-Dominated model, with an emphasis on formula-based allocations to high and very high need areas. Categories 3, 4, and 5 primarily use the competitive allocation model (refer to Table 1 for detailed information). On balance, these approaches mean that Measure A uses a hybrid of formulas and competitive grants, as recommended in the literature.

High Percentage of Funds to High Need Areas and Services

Measure A includes several categories of funds specifically targeted to higher need communities:

- Category 2 funds (13% of available funds) are specifically designated for high and very high need study areas only.
- Category 5 funds (3.8% of available funds) are prioritized for organizations that provide services to, or recruit a majority of their participants from, the areas of high and very high need, as identified in the Parks Needs Assessment.
- Fifteen percent of the funds provided in Categories 3 and 4 (3.9% of available funds) are designated for projects to develop and implement Recreation Access programs including education, interpretive services, safety information, transportation, and other activities that increase the accessibility for County residents, especially for those in high need and very high need areas.

Population-Based Allocation Formula

Measure A utilizes a Per Capita Improvements formula to allocate Category 1, Category 2, and Maintenance and Servicing (M&S) funds to recipients, which gives two-thirds weight to population and only one-third weight to building square footage. This means that more densely populated areas and areas with higher levels of development, which tend to have the greatest park need, will tend to receive higher levels of funding.

Fund Advancement

Requiring that grant recipients incur project costs and receive reimbursement from grant funds later can be a problem for organizations with small operating budgets that do not have the capital available to pay for expenditures up front. Measure A includes a provision that allows for the advancement of funds, making it easier for organizations or groups with limited budgets to apply for and receive funding. These types of advancements encourage all organizations to apply for funds, regardless of their existing operating budget.

Monitoring and Evaluation Over time

Measure A requires that the PNA be regularly updated, which will make it possible to track changes of park need in the County and allow an evaluation of park need over time. While the PNA completed in 2016 analyzed neighborhood parks and park spaces, it excluded the beaches, large open spaces with habitat, and trail connectors. The first update of PNA will need to analyze these areas of the county along with an abbreviated update on neighborhood parks.

Measure A calls for both an Oversight Committee as well as an annual report to the Board. It is envisioned that the reports to both shall include detailed descriptions of Measure A allocations and expenditures, evaluation of these expenditures against the explicit goals of Measure A, and evaluation of the grant programs success, including meeting the identified needs in the PNA and its subsequent update.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

As documented in Section F, Measure A contains multiple provisions that clearly establish funding for high and very high need areas. This section recommends additional policies and implementation strategies that could lower barriers to accessing funds and build upon the foundations established in Measure A for ensuring that funds are distributed as required in the resolution. In particular, these recommendations respond to the goal established by Measure A (Section 5(a)4) for “increasing investments in high need and very high need regions identified in the Countywide Park Needs Assessment.”

Recommendations are based on best practices and innovations identified through the research and case study reviews presented above. Recommendations share common themes of removing barriers to participation in grant programs, and proactive and adaptive grant administration. Recommendations are organized by topic, below, with relevant Measure A programs identified for each topic.

1. OVERALL POLICY REGARDING MEETING PARK NEED

RPOSD could consider adopting an overarching policy to guide the approach to lowering barriers to accessing Measure A funds. This policy might include one or more of the following components:

- **Existing Features of Measure A** – Measure A already includes formula-based funding allocation models, particularly in Categories 1 and 2, with Category 2 focused on high and very high need communities. This will help to ensure that a portion of funds are utilized in the areas with the highest need.
- **Project Types** – To further advance projects that are in or serve residents from high and very high need areas, RPOSD could prioritize projects in the competitive grant programs (Categories 3, 4, and 5) that fund projects in high and very high need communities, that serve residents from high and very high need areas through regionally focused recreational access or projects that improve the regional facilities, open space and connectors within the County.
- **Funding Targeted to Projects in High Need Areas, or That Serve Residents from High and Very High Need Areas** – To further advance distribution of funds to projects located in high or very high need areas or serving residents from high and very high need areas, RPOSD could consider directing a specific portion of competitive grant funds (in Categories 3, 4, and 5) to these projects. This may include projects implemented within high and very high need areas, projects that improve access to regional facilities for residents living in high and very high need areas or projects that improve the regional facilities, open space and connectors within the County.
- **Evaluation Criteria** – As a further means of advancing distribution to projects in higher need areas, competitive grant programs (in Categories 3, 4, and 5) could include evaluation criteria such as Study Area need level or proximity to high and very high need areas, and give appropriate weighting to those criteria.
- **Technical Assistance** – RPOSD could provide technical assistance throughout the following stages of the grant process: Community Outreach and Engagement, Planning, Grant Writing, Design, Grant Administration, Construction, and Programming. Delivering such technical assistance through a variety of tools will help to support general capacity building, cultivate strategic regional

partnerships, and engage outside funding sources and grantors while increasing the number of applicants from high and very high need areas.

- **Monitoring and Correction** – RPOSD should monitor and track the distribution of both competitive funding and annual allocations, in order to assess whether funding is reaching high and very high need areas and helping to meet the need, and could adjust grant programs as needed to meet this goal over time.

2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section identifies overarching recommendations relevant to all Measure A funds to help ensure that funds are effectively distributed to projects in high and very high need areas and projects that serve residents from high and very high need areas.

Set Clear Benchmarks

Quantitative benchmarks could be identified to inform application evaluation criteria, and monitoring and tracking efforts. This includes setting specific benchmarks for the percentage of funds for competitive and annual allocations to be allocated and expended. Other benchmarks may be connected to evaluation criteria for specific grant programs, as further discussed under Competitive Grant recommendations. Benchmarks should be followed by one or more metrics to guide measurement and evaluation.

Continue Consistent Use of Definition of Need

Measure A's definition of Park Need is based on the PNA. This should be clearly stated in all grant-related materials.

Create a Simple and Uniform Eligibility Process

As outlined in the May 11, 2017 "Overview of Measure A Eligibility, Application, and Reimbursement Process" memorandum, an eligibility process that is completed prior to applying for any funds (including M&S funds) can reduce the administrative burden on applicants. Once established, eligibility could remain active for up to three years, or until submitted documents are no longer valid (for example, if a non-profit organization's mission changes significantly). After three years, eligibility could be renewed through a simple process that includes verification of the validity of previously submitted documents, thereby reducing the burden of resubmitting all documents.

Ensure that all Eligible Entities Complete the Eligibility Process

RPOSD could ensure that all eligible entities complete the eligibility process. RPOSD could directly contact entities that do not complete the process and offer technical assistance to do so.

Ensure that all Eligible Entities Apply for Funding

Once all eligible agencies have completed the eligibility process, RPOSD could help ensure timely application for Category 1, 2, and M&S funds. RPOSD could contact and offer technical assistance to agencies and organizations that are eligible but do not apply for these funds.

3. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' ALLOCATIONS

Up to 2 percent of total funds may be allocated to eligible projects by the Board of Supervisors.

The Board could consider allocating a percentage of these funds to high or very high need areas and/or facilities or programs that serve residents of these areas. Additionally, these funds could be focused on specific high or very high need areas that did not receive Category 3, 4, or 5 funding in previous grant cycles.

4. COMPETITIVE GRANTS

Maximize the Number of Eligible Entities that Complete the Eligibility Process

RPOSD could utilize a diverse array of outreach methods to maximize the number of agencies and organizations completing the eligibility process. Because the majority of public agencies will have completed the eligibility process in order to apply for Category 1, Category 2, and M&S funds, outreach efforts should focus on those entities that have not completed this process, the local park agencies and the non-profit organizations that would be eligible for competitive grants. Minimum criteria for this would remain as stated in Measure A: project applicants include Public Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations. As described in the June 19th memo regarding competitive grants, the process for establishing eligibility would be kept as simple as possible, with the intent of reducing barriers in the application process.

Information collected during the application process regarding organizational capacity could be used after projects are chosen to inform the percentage of funds to be allocated to technical assistance (discussed in greater detail in Section 6, below).

The following eligibility requirements are suggested:

Public Agencies

- Proof of attendance at an eligibility meeting in person or via webinar
- Proof of jurisdiction support to apply for Measure A funds from the head of the organization
- Review of PNA data and updates on any changes in park acreage, amenity quantities, and amenities condition
- Readiness to accept RPOSD's contract terms and conditions

Non-profit Organizations

- Proof of attendance at an eligibility meeting in person or via webinar
- Proof of non-profit status (compliance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986)
- Readiness to accept RPOSD's contract terms and conditions
- Mission related to one or more of the following focus areas:
 - Community empowerment
 - Environmental protection and preservation
 - Park, recreation or community services or facilities
 - Gang prevention and intervention
 - Environmental education and interpretation
 - Tree-planting
 - Conservation and preservation of wetlands or of lands predominantly in their natural, scenic, historical, forested or open-space condition
 - Restoration of lands to a natural, scenic, historical forested or open space condition
 - Job skills training and educational opportunities to young adults or veterans
- Proof of certification from the California Conservation Corps, if the organization is a Conservation Corps.

Schools with Joint-Use Agreements

- Proof of attendance at an eligibility meeting in person or via webinar
- Proof of joint-use agreement that meets the following requirements:
 - Minimum agreement length of 20 years
 - Public use and access of the school site for a substantial number of hours each week
 - Allow operation of programs by third parties
 - No differential fees may be charged
- Readiness to accept RPOSD's contract terms and conditions

Grant Program Design

Use Examples that are Relevant to High and Very High Need Areas

High and very high need areas may lack the type of open space and regional facilities or vacant land that may be assumed to be required for projects in Category 3 and 4. To encourage applicants from high and very high need areas to apply for competitive grants, outreach materials about grant programs, and project examples in grant application materials could make it clear that projects in any area of the County can apply. This would include illustrating how projects in dense urban areas with limited open space or park facilities can qualify for competitive grants. For example, Measure A describes "Natural lands, wildlife corridors, and watershed protection" as types of eligible projects for Category 3 grants. Outreach materials regarding the grant program could identify examples such as the following: rainwater capture

gardens or habitat gardens adjacent to public buildings, roadways or under freeways, and the creation of publicly accessible space along flood control channels which may include habitat restoration, native plants, restrooms, biking or walking trails, pedestrian bridges, picnic areas, interpretive signage. These examples would help illustrate how more urban areas might be able to qualify for competitive grants in Categories 3 and 4.

Develop Mini Grant Incubator

Small grant award programs could be considered for competitive grant funds. This strategy fosters the engagement of communities with less capacity to implement large grant-funded projects. The Blocks-for-Grants program in Savannah, GA found that mini grants helped to build ongoing resident engagement and support for public space over time, and mini grants were also utilized by the Parks & People Foundation in Baltimore. The Strong, Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC) program used a series of grants that increased in size to assist applicants in strengthening their applications. Furthermore, grantmakers participating in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development Habitat III Conference in 2016 reported that small projects tend to be more successful and lasting when continuous support is provided for up to ten years (Adebowale-Schwarte, 2017). RPOSD could consider a grant funding structure for small grants (\$10,000-\$15,000), with opportunities for repeat funding for up to ten years to serve as a community organization incubator (equivalent to total grant of \$100,000-\$150,000). These could be grants for either phased capital projects or for planning and design grants.

Variations on the incubator grant program could include:

- **Variation 1** – Increase grant size for organizations over time. Organizations would start with a small grant and would be awarded larger grants as capacity and success was demonstrated.
- **Variation 2** – Allow established organizations to apply for larger grants that could in turn be used to hire other organizations for small projects.

Include Funding for Planning and Design

In order to address this barrier to participation and ensure that funds are allocated to meet park need, grants could be provided for planning and design efforts that will lead to the development of projects fundable under General, Recreation Access, and Cultural Facilities competitive grants.

Utilize Simple Grant Cycles

The June 19th Memorandum “Overview of Measure A Competitive Grant Programs” outlines several thematic grant cycles. Some of these are more complicated than others. As recommended by the Steering Committee, the competitive grant cycle could be simplified to include only broad categories that are easily understood, such as “General Grants,” “Recreation Access,” “County Cultural Facilities,” “Youth and Veteran Education and Training,” and “Youth and Veteran Certification and Job Placement.” One grant calendar should be released annually for all categories.

Allow for Administrative Costs

For organizations and agencies with fewer resources, the cost associated with applying for and administering grants can be prohibitive. As presented in the June 19th memorandum regarding competitive grants, 10 percent is recommended as the limit for Administration. Administrative costs include planning, monitoring, and reporting necessary for the successful design, selection, and implementation of the projects and verification of projects. This may include community engagement costs incurred during the planning phase of a project and costs stemming from required monitoring and reporting of allocated funds.

Additional funds for administrative costs may be drawn from non-bonded funds that are not subject to a 10 percent maximum.

Simplify the Application Process

The June 19th memorandum discussed several approaches pertaining to the application process. Of those approaches, Approach 3, which included the fewest constraints and several opportunities for feedback and assistance, is recommended in order to encourage high need project applications.

The following are recommended:

- **Pre-application** – The pre-application process should include: letter of intent, followed by staff guidance for qualifying applicants, further detailed below in the recruitment portion of Technical Assistance. Invitations should not be required for applications. The intent of the pre-application is for applicants to solicit staff input and guidance prior to undertaking the more substantial application process and project development. Advice could be available in different languages commonly used in Los Angeles County.
- **Application Tools** – Grant applications should be available online or as printed copies, and submitted using an online application or internet portal. Application guidelines, forms, and updates should be available through one website.

Assign a High Weight to Level of Need

The most important criterion for ensuring funds are distributed to meet Park Need is level of need (as identified in the Countywide Parks Needs Assessment and future updates). Level of Need could account for the most points among evaluation criteria.

Minimize Requirements for Matching Funds

Criteria that require matching funds may result in fewer funds reaching high and very high need areas. While Measure A grants programs may consider the availability of matching funds, they will not be considered a requirement for grant evaluation and award. However, as described in the June 19th memo regarding competitive grants, projects that use Measure A funds to match other funding sources, including annual allocations, would receive more points than those that do not.

If used, the availability of matching funds could include other less common displays of commitment such as coalition partnership and in-kind goods and services.

Set Targets for Grants to High and Very High Need Areas

Measure A does not outline limits or percentages of competitive grant funds for high or very high need Study Areas. To ensure that competitive funds are directed to these areas, RPOSD could recommend that a specific percentage should be located in high and very high need Study Areas or that serve residents from high and very high need areas.

Include Representatives of High Need Areas on Evaluation Committee

In order to ensure a broad representation of perspectives in the review of grant applications, the evaluation committee could include representatives from high and very high need areas for all competitive grant cycles, with a balance of staff and outside members.

Provide Training for Evaluation Committee

Once selected, evaluation committee members could be trained in cultural competency and the definition of Needs per the Park Needs Assessment. Additionally, committee members should be trained in grant application evaluation, in order to ensure an objective, consistent evaluation process across proposals.

5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance is critical to implementation of both formula-based allocations and competitive grant programs. More detailed recommendations for technical assistance will be provided in a subsequent memorandum that will be provided to RPOSD and the Steering Committee prior to the September 7, 2017 workshop. The overarching recommendation below affirms the importance of technical assistance in lowering barriers to accessing Measure A funds.

Develop a Comprehensive Technical Assistance Program

RPOSD could develop a comprehensive technical assistance program that provides a strong suite of technical assistance tools throughout the grant-making continuum for both competitive and non-competitive grants. The technical assistance program could include assigning program managers for all applicants, training program managers in culturally appropriate community engagement, tailoring level of assistance to applicant needs, providing proactive engagement and assistance to high and very high need areas, and offering a range of technical assistance tools.

6. MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Measurement, evaluation, and learning during implementation are important to (1) ensure there are not unintended consequences, (2) to measure specific impacts, and (3) to decide if programs should be continued, modified, or terminated. This requires sufficient data reporting and accountability systems be built in to the Measure A grantmaking process, and that results are utilized for learning and program

improvement. This section provides general recommendations related to measurement and evaluation, and Section 8 provides recommendations regarding the use of the results to inform program improvements. More detail regarding measurement, evaluation and learning, as well as reporting to the Measure A Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (Advisory Board) and Board of Supervisors, will be addressed in a subsequent memo.

Require Measurement and Evaluation for all Allocations and Competitive Grants

All grants could be required to participate in measurement, evaluation, and learning, as lessons from each may be useful for others. Similarly, funding distributed under all Measure A expenditures could be measured and evaluated based on Measure A goals, specific benchmarks established for programs, and other factors as discussed below.

Use Annual Reporting Process to Share Progress and Data

Measure A requires reporting of the location and footprint of each funded project, its objectives, status, and outcomes, any matching funds used, and the applicable program from the Measure's expenditure plan schedule. Additionally, a publicly accessible data portal is required by Measure A, and could be updated as part of the annual reporting process to ensure transparency and facilitate use of data by County staff, grant applicants, project managers, scholars, and the broader public.

Annual reporting could be used as an opportunity for sharing progress with the community, as well as an opportunity for evaluation and learning by the Board, RPOSD, or Advisory Board.

Utilize Results to Inform Needs Assessment Updates and Course Correction

Results of measurement and evaluation could be used to inform course corrections, and specifically include corrections targeted to ensure that funds are distributed to meet park need. Results could also inform Parks Needs Assessment updates and thus potentially expand on the definition of park need.

Evaluate Distribution of Funds against Park Need and Other Community Characteristics

The distribution of Measure A Funds could also be evaluated against other data sources to identify patterns or trends in distribution. Other data sources could include demographic, geographic, and environmental data, as well as data corresponding to benchmarks set for specific programs.

7. ADAPTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND COURSE CORRECTION

Establish Indicators for Potential and Required Course Corrections

Indicators for evaluating implementation should be directly connected to Measure A goals and benchmarks established for each grant program. Potential indicators used for informing course corrections could include information gathered during evaluation, described above.

Connect Potential Course Corrections to Indicators

Course corrections should be tied to indicators, and therefore benchmarks, and could include the following:

- **Refinements and Improvements to Existing Programs** – Course correction may involve a change to the existing program or requirements. This may include changes to eligibility requirements, the application process, or technical assistance programs. Changes to grant applications could include but are not limited to modified grant cycles, revised evaluation criteria, or revised eligibility requirements.
- **Employ New Programs and Strategies** – Some indicators may necessitate the development of new programs and strategies. New types of technical assistance may be offered or a new type of grant may be offered under a competitive grant category.

Test Innovative Programs and Strategies

Adaptive administration could allow for experimentation and innovation. New programs and strategies could be launched as experiments and closely monitored. In some cases, small-scale pilot programs could be used prior to implementing larger changes.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES OF EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT FUNDS

Case studies of twelve policies and programs informed the recommendations for distributing funds to meet park need presented in this white paper. Common themes that emerged from the case studies are presented in this white paper, and a description of each case study is provided in this appendix for reference. Each case study includes a description of the overall grant program and a discussion of the processes, policies, or procedures that contributed to the grant program's success.

Case studies were selected based on several factors, including effective community outreach, innovative approaches, breadth of application process, and iterative nature of their processes. Although need is defined differently in each case study, all the selected case studies offer strategies that are informative to the implementation of Measure A. Several of the case studies presented are recent programs that are too new to measure their success, but are included as examples of what is being tried, and can be referenced in the future to verify their effectiveness.

Case studies include:

- A. California's Proposition 84
- B. Great Outdoors Colorado Program, CO
- C. 20-Year Neighborhood Park Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, MN
- D. WaterWorks Grant Program, King County, WA
- E. Get Moving/Recreation for All Grant Programs, Seattle Park District, WA
- F. 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Metropolitan Council, Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, MN
- G. Transformative Climate Communities Program, Strategic Growth Council, CA
- H. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, National Park Service
- I. Grants-for-Blocks Program, Savannah, GA
- J. Parks & People Foundation, Baltimore, MD
- K. Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service
- L. Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge

A. CALIFORNIA'S PROPOSITION 84

Overview

The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) provided \$5.4 billion for improving parks; natural resource protection; and water quality, safety, and supply in California. Proposition 84 sought to ensure distribution of bond funds to those most in need by prioritizing funding for disadvantaged communities. Proposition 84 used income to define disadvantaged communities, with lower income communities considered to be those most in need of funding. Jon Christensen's 2016 study of Proposition 84, *Environmental Bonds Should Equitably Benefit*

All Communities: Looking Forward Based on an Analysis of Prop 84 utilized California’s bond accountability website, State agencies, CalEnviroScreen and the United States Census to analyze how well the bond’s expenditures matched the proposition’s stated goals related to equity. A key finding was that where Proposition 84 included specific criteria regarding funding allocation priorities, funding was distributed to meet those priorities. However, where bond language regarding priorities was vague or where serving disadvantaged, park-poor, or urban communities were listed among several priorities, the results were mixed. The study attributes the differences in equitable distribution to the lack of explicit criteria and guidelines for equitable implementation in several sections of Proposition 84.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Clear and Specific Language** – Ensure that clear and specific language is used for guidelines, priorities, and criteria throughout the grant process.
- **Define Metrics** – Clearly define measurable criteria that reflect the program’s goals, for use in both the selection of projects and the evaluation of success. For example, if benefitting more people is a goal, include the number of people who will be served by a project as one of the application evaluation criteria. Analysis of clearly defined metrics can be used to learn from past experiences and to adapt.
- **Planning for Projects** – Consider requiring agencies and organizations receiving funds to have a strategic master plan in place with defined priorities and criteria for selecting projects to be funded. Require that spending is justified, accounted for, and reported in relation to those priorities and criteria.
- **Data Reporting** – Require clean, transparent, and readily accessible and usable reporting of data on projects that are funded, under what programs they were funded, and their impact or footprint.

B. GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO PROGRAM

Overview

The Great Outdoors Colorado Program (GOCO) was initiated in the 1990s by a citizens committee, including conservation, business, and political leaders, and was approved by voters in 1992. GOCO redirected a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to a trust fund to preserve and enhance the State's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts, and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Since its inception, the fund has dispersed \$917 million in lottery proceeds to more than 4,800 projects in all 64 Colorado counties. GOCO funding allocation is driven by an outreach-focused, five-year strategic plan that evaluates how the program might better serve current trends and needs, and adapts in response. The current GOCO five-year strategic plan is guided by three primary goals: 1) protecting urban and rural land for people and wildlife, notably once-in-a-lifetime, large-scale projects; 2) connecting people to the outdoors by increasing bike and pedestrian access and filling gaps in important trail systems; and 3) inspiring more kids and their families to explore and take care of the outdoors by addressing the growing disconnect between youth and nature.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Flexibility** – GOCO regularly solicits input from grantees and the public about the effectiveness of its grant programs in meeting the State’s needs. Programs are then adjusted to respond to concerns raised.
- **Technical Assistance** – Grantwriting workshops are held in the fall and spring in advance of each grant cycle. Applicants are also encouraged to contact staff directly for one-on-one assistance and have the opportunity to receive a “pre-review” by submitting application prior to the actual deadline.

C. 20-YEAR NEIGHBORHOOD PARK PLAN, MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

Overview

The 20-Year Neighborhood Park Plan guarantees an additional \$11 million for neighborhood park maintenance, rehabilitation, and capital improvements over the next twenty years. One of the goals of the plan is to ensure that investments in neighborhood parks are made equitably, with a focus on parks in low income and diverse neighborhoods. In service of this goal, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) developed the Criteria Based System for Capital and Rehabilitation Neighborhood Park Project Scheduling in 2016. This set of equity-based criteria are used to prioritize capital investment and large rehabilitation projects, and are designed to quantify aspects of neighborhood parks and the surrounding community using multiple data sources. Every park in the MPRB’s jurisdiction will be scored annually, with funds going to those parks that score the most points. This dynamic approach to re-ranking is intended to ensure that the park rankings stay current from year to year, so that funds are continually targeted to those parks that most need the funds based on their score. Although the system has not been in place long enough to evaluate its success, it contains several key characteristics seen in other successful case studies and should be followed closely in the future for additional insights.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Clear Goals and Language** – MPRB’s system makes it clear that racial equity is an important priority. This clarity results in a transparent scoring system that supports this priority.
- **Scoring Criteria** – Each park is scored using a set of quantifiable metrics that are clearly defined. The regular updating of park scores means that the most current information is used to disburse funds, and this flexibility should result in advancement toward MPRB’s goals.
- **Type of Data** – MPRB uses data that is easily understood and readily available. Use of this type of data increases understanding of the ranking process for recipients, evaluators, and members of the public. MPRB provides clear explanations of each data type and the associated scores.

- **Community Engagement** – On the surface, the Criteria Based System for Capital and Rehabilitation Neighborhood Park Project Scheduling seems very data driven, and it is; however, this data-driven system also has a soft touch. Each of the different criteria was vetted by community groups. In addition, those that were scoring and evaluating projects were members of the community and offered unique perspectives. All future updates to park scores will involve public input as well.

D. WATERWORKS GRANT PROGRAM, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Overview

King County maintains a Strategic Plan for Equity and Social Justice, which is a blueprint intended to guide policies and decision-making, design, delivery of services, and workplace practices countywide, in order to advance equity within County government and in partnership with communities. The County's WaterWorks Grant Program provides funding for projects that improve water quality in the service area of King County's regional wastewater system, while incorporating the principles of fairness and justice. The WaterWorks program awards approximately \$2 million dollars every two years to non-profits, schools, counties, tribes, and special purpose districts. There have been several iterations of the grant applications since 2015, with incremental changes intended to introduce grantees to equity concepts. King County developed a Determinants of Equity Report that helps inform how applications are scored on factors such equity and social justice areas; community benefits and providing benefits to people of color; limited English proficiency; low income; or other underserved populations or communities. Clearly defined indicators and examples provided in the report provide transparency in the scoring and evaluation of grant applications.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Fund Advances** – WaterWorks grants are generally for reimbursement of funds spent. However, in certain cases, advances of a portion of the funds can be made. This policy increases accessibility of funds to organizations without large capital reserves.
- **Explicit Goals** – King County has an explicit framework and lens for describing determinants of equity, which in turn influences grant criteria and evaluation. This type of clarity in describing goals helps ensure that goals are achieved, as grantees, evaluators, staff, and the general public all have the same understanding of the program's goals.
- **Matching Fee Waiver** – The Waterworks program waives matching fee requirements for community-based organizations that work with low income groups. Matching funds can often be a burden for low capacity groups, and this particular exception has been well received.
- **Application Materials Translation** – The WaterWorks program provides application materials in different languages when asked, which lowers barriers to applying for applicants who do not speak English as their primary language.

- **Online Grant Portal** – The WaterWorks Grant program has an easily accessed online portal with information on eligibility, previous funded projects, grant evaluation criteria, background on the program, frequently asked questions, application submittal, and other resources.

E. GET MOVING/RECREATION FOR ALL GRANT PROGRAMS, SEATTLE PARK DISTRICT

Overview

Seattle Park District’s Get Moving and Recreation for All (GM/Rec4all) grant programs expand recreation opportunities for Seattle residents with the most need. Eligible applicants include local community groups, small businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. Qualifying projects must have community partners involved with the project, have a significant physical activity component, be free and open to the public, and adhere to Seattle Parks and Recreation’s mission. In 2016, the programs provided nearly \$730,000 of funding for 14 programs focused on people who are disproportionately affected by health disparities. The programs also funded over \$400,000 in scholarships for reduced fee or no-fee programs. The Park District uses the City of Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit to ensure that its grants provide culturally relevant physical and enrichment programming to under-resourced communities in neighborhoods where health disparities are prevalent. The Racial Equity Toolkit lays out a framework for addressing equity and guides the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues throughout the city. As part of the toolkit, the Racial Equity Analysis contains six steps, including setting outcomes for racial equity; involving stakeholders and analyzing data; determining benefit or burden; advancing opportunities to minimize harm; tracking impacts on communities of color over time; and reporting back.

Although the Seattle Park District has only been providing grants for a few years, it contains several key characteristics seen in other successful case studies and should be followed closely in the future for additional insights

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Community Leaders** – The GM/Rec4all program has been successful due to its communication with community leaders. Throughout the process, feedback on the grant cycle was sought from community leaders and improvements were made.
- **Advertise the Grant Process** – Several workshops were held before the start of the application process to ensure that all eligible organizations were aware of the upcoming funding opportunities. In addition to workshops, outreach included information online, printed information in newspapers, and in-person conversations.
- **Feedback** – The GM/Rec4all program has gone through many different iterations. Feedback on community experience was given at the end of the first grant cycle, and improvements were made accordingly.

- **Transparent Scoring** – A transparent scoring process, including identification of evaluators, helps community groups to feel comfortable with the results of the grant cycle.
- **Minimize Administrative Hurdles** – The GM/Rec4all program made contracting and invoicing more seamless, recognizing that record keeping and invoicing can be a hurdle for smaller organizations.

F. 2040 REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN, METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA

Overview

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is home to a system of regional parks and trails including 55,000 acres of designated parklands and over 300 miles of trails with over 48 million visits every year. The Metropolitan Council is a regional agency charged under State law with establishing regional growth policies and long-range plans for transportation, aviation, water resources, and regional parks. The Metropolitan Council recently completed the 2040 Regional Park Policy Plan, which includes policies and strategies to strengthen equitable use of regional parks and trails by all residents regardless of age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability.

To better understand and address disproportionate or inequitable park use, Metropolitan Council Staff conducted a qualitative research project to identify barriers to regional park visitation among communities of color. The study sought to explore the following: preferred outdoor recreation activities and desired amenities, perceived barriers that prevent use of the system, issues or concerns about regional parks, and recommendations and suggestions to increase and enhance park visits. Metropolitan Council Staff partnered with local community-based organizations and public agencies to organize focus groups throughout the metropolitan region. A total of 263 individuals participated in the sessions, representing various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The Metropolitan Council then developed a regional parks system equity toolkit that includes recommended questions for grant applications. These questions help ensure that funds are targeted to underserved populations. The questions are as follows:

1. What is the population breakdown for your jurisdiction by race, ethnicity, age, national origin, ability status, and income?
2. Which population segments above are currently underserved by the Regional Parks System?
3. Which of the underserved populations (identified in Question 2) will this project better serve?
4. What specific aspects of this project will help to better serve the targeted populations (identified in Question 3)?
5. Exactly how will you verify the target populations (identified in Question 3) are better served?

While the equity toolkit is not currently being used for competitive grants, the council will use the regional parks system equity toolkit in the 2018-2019 for Parks and Trails Legacy fund dollars (beginning on July 1, 2017) and 2019 fiscal year (beginning on July 1, 2018) for Capital Improvement Program dollars.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Clear Goals for Grants** – The Metropolitan Council focused on park use instead of park access, and a developed application questions that directly address this goal.
- **Summarize Existing Data** – The work leading up to the Metropolitan Council toolkit included data gathering with information on needs and priorities. This data was analyzed and will be used in upcoming grant programs to craft application questions and evaluation criteria that help achieve the program’s goals.
- **Grant Award Size** – The Metropolitan Council understood that a minimum grant amount is necessary for community groups to feel like their efforts are justified. Agencies and organizations with low capacity may be more likely to pursue grant funding if the grant award size justifies the effort spent applying for the funds.

G. TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM, STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL, CALIFORNIA

Overview

The Strategic Growth Council’s (SGC’s) Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program directs the SGC to administer \$140 million from California’s cap-and-trade revenues for the “development and implementation of neighborhood-level transformative climate community plans that include multiple, coordinated greenhouse gas emission reduction projects that provide local economic, environmental, and health benefits to disadvantaged communities.” The SCG recognizes that the State’s most disadvantaged communities often lack the capacity and institutional resources to seek competitive grants, and may not be prepared to apply to the Program or to develop and implement transformative plans. They offer technical assistance to applicants through ongoing outreach and support. Technical assistance is offered in all phases of the application process, including before and after the granting of funds, to achieve adequate program outcomes. In addition, the Strategic Growth Council and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA) partner with third parties to give assistance in assessing planning and implementation efforts, strengthening organization capacity, and developing project priorities.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Technical Assistance** – Ongoing outreach, support, and technical assistance throughout all phases before and after the granting of funds.
- **Planning Assistance** – CEPA and SGC partner with third parties in the areas of organization capacity and development of project priorities.

H. OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Overview

The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP), a competitive grant program of the National Park Service, targets the development and enhancement of outdoor recreation in larger urban communities. The program maintains a particular interest in serving disadvantaged areas and connecting young people to public lands and the outdoors. The ORLP is intended to showcase collaborative and innovative partnerships that leverage investments to support of close-to-home recreation. In addition to acquisition and development grants, a new pilot “planning grant” program awards up to \$75,000 to fund planning studies to help target park and recreation investment to urban areas where it is needed most. This is a result of feedback given to NPS from the program’s first year.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Course Correction** – Experimental programs that attempt to respond to feedback and noted challenges of grant programs can help a granting agency remain flexible and effective.
- **Planning Assistance** – \$750,000 of ORLP funds set aside for planning grants to help identify urban areas underserved by parks.
- **Program Review** – The planning grant program was developed based on feedback from the previous year’s acquisition and development grantees.

I. GRANTS-FOR-BLOCKS SAVANNAH, GA

Overview

Savannah’s Grants-for-Blocks Program is sponsored by the community Planning & Development Department, and funds micro grants up to \$500 for neighborhood groups to improve their neighborhoods. Applications have grown by 240 percent since inception. Initial applications were focused on beautification while current applications focus more heavily on developing programs. Locally run programs enjoy unheard-of support states, and services initiated by residents show increased participation in comparison with those initiated and run by the city’s Community Services agency. The small grant amounts and annual continuation of the program helps to build ongoing resident engagement and support for public space overtime.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Application Criteria** – Resident Application Reviewing committee with two representatives from each submitted proposal who do not review their own community’s proposal. Steering Committee to discuss aspects of community development.

- **Award Amounts** – Mini grants of up to \$500 encourage residents to create groups to improve their neighborhood. Resident lead programs funded by these mini grants are highly successful.
- **Program Review** – Building relationships over time to evolve funding from beautification to ongoing program development.

J. PARKS & PEOPLE FOUNDATION, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Overview

Baltimore’s Parks & People Foundation’s grant program aims “to encourage community involvement in parks and environmental improvement.” The program awards funds of \$250 to \$1,000 to targeted communities which are underserved or needy and which do not usually have access to greening programs. The program has simple applicant requirements such as being a community based organization which has a bank account. Applicants are required to work with a Parks & People Foundation staff member in the planning of their project. The Foundation also offers a contingency award to those applicants who are not funded, outlining adjustments to the application needed to receive the funding.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Application Criteria** – Contingency award to applicants who make improvements to their application as outlined by the approving committee.
- **Technical Assistance** – One-to-one grantor staff assistance for the planning and implementation of projects.
- **Award Amounts** – Small award amounts

K. RIVERS TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Overview

As the community assistance arm of the National Park Service, this program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor projects across the nation by offering technical assistance to a variety of organizations. Staff provides free, on-location facilitation and planning expertise, helps define project visions and goals, engage with collaborative partners and stakeholders, and develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project. Outreach and technical assistance is provided at each step of the way from workshops to focused outreach. After receiving applications from the same partners year after year, the Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program changed its outreach strategy to include more targeted outreach to communities they had not engaged with before.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Course Correction-** Recognizing that the same applicants applied year after year, the program changed outreach strategies to reach new potential applicants.
- **Technical Assistance-** Workshops and focused outreach and one representative per state as applicant point of contact.

L. STRONG, PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE

Overview

The SPARCC has a strong technical assistance aspect of their grant program. SPARCC is a three-year, \$90 million initiative co-funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the Ford Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation. SPARCC will empower communities and bolster local groups and leaders in their efforts to ensure that as major new investments are made in infrastructure, transit, housing, health, and climate change, they are used to make communities places where everyone benefits and thrives. Through this program, ten cities were invited to apply in the final round (originally there were about 80 cities from around the Country). Out of the ten cities that were invited to apply in the final round, six cities were selected, and received \$15,000 to work on their proposals as well as eight hours of consulting time for free. In addition to funding and consulting time to work on proposals, there were webinars on how to effectively fill out applications. SPARCC also engaged in community meetings, and organized and led a national conveying meeting in Washington DC. As part of the technical assistance, consultant firms, familiar with the subject area of the grant gave feedback on proposals, such as areas that could be approved on before the final package was due. As part of the larger initiative, each city is receiving \$1 million dollars for their core programming. Additional funding will be awarded for technical support, including paying community members to attend meetings.

Potential Considerations for Measure A

- **Technical Assistance –** Webinars on how to effectively fill out applications, proposal consultation and proposal feedback from consultants familiar with each projects subject area.
- **Planning Funds –** The program awarded funds to applicants to be used to work on their proposals. This type of funding, coupled with technical assistance, encourages organizations with limited capacity to apply.
- **Outreach –** The program allots funding to pay community members to attend public meetings. This reduces one of the barriers that can prevent community members from attending meetings.

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