LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

DATE   June 19, 2017

TO   Measure A Steering Committee

FROM   Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD)

SUBJECT   Overview of Measure A Competitive Grant Programs

This memorandum provides information that will be used to discuss the structure and general policies of Measure A's Competitive Grants programs. It contains the following sections:

The overarching competitive grant policies that are the focus of this memo include grant award size, eligible agencies, qualifying expenses, funds for planning and design, grant application and selection process, and grant cycles. This memo provides a high-level discussion of these topics and any recommendations that result from the discussion of this memo will be used to develop a second memorandum that presents a finer level of detail on application requirements, application evaluation and award of funds.

While this memo identifies goals and evaluation criteria for the different competitive grant categories, RPOSD recognizes that addressing park need in the distribution of Measure A funds, consistent with the Park Needs Assessment, is an important goal across all grant programs. The subject of need-based distribution of park funding, including proposed approaches for addressing High and Very High Need study areas through allocations and competitive grant funding processes, will be addressed in greater detail in subsequent memoranda and meetings.

Steering Committee Review Guidance

The Steering Committee should use this memorandum to inform its thoughts and opinions about the Competitive Grants program, which will be discussed at the June 29 meeting. This memorandum lays out potential larger picture guiding principles and policy options that, once refined, will steer the development of the Competitive Grants program. RPOSD has not made any final decisions about the Competitive Grants program and is seeking Steering Committee guidance to move forward.

While reviewing this memorandum, the Steering Committee should consider the following questions:

- Do you agree that funds should be designated for planning and design grants?

- Do you agree with the recommended approach for grant award size limits? If not, what approach do you suggest? If so, are the grant award size limits appropriate?

- Does the memorandum capture the appropriate range of eligible applicants?   If not, what applicant types should be added or removed?

- Are the caps placed on the qualifying expenses appropriate? If not, what is a more appropriate cap?

- Which of the three proposed pre-application processes do you prefer?

- Do you think the proposed evaluation criteria categories match the goals of Measure A? If not, what other criteria categories should be considered? Which should be eliminated?

- Does the proposed composition of the grant selection committee represent an appropriate range of interests and specialties?

- How should grant funding cycles be administered?

Section One:
Park Projects Background

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1.0   Park Projects Background

In order to develop competitive grant programs that will effectively serve the ongoing and future needs of the County as a whole, it is important to understand the existing needs and priorities. By reviewing priority projects submitted by local agencies during the 2016 Countywide Parks Needs Assessment (PNA), it is possible to anticipate what types of projects are in highest demand and their associated costs. This information will help inform the discussion of grant award maximums and grant program structure.

The most frequently prioritized project type documented in the PNA was park infrastructure, followed by land acquisition and community recreation centers. The chart below summarizes the most frequently prioritized project types and reports the average cost of a project of this type.

Project Type	Number of Projects	Average Project Cost	Total Cost
Park Infrastructure	409	$5,900,000	$1,894,553,000
Land Acquisition	182	$8,400,000	$1,528,000,000
Community Recreation Center	126	$6,300,000	$632,400,000
Restrooms	91	$820,000	$33,572,000
Trails	84	$775,000	$65,019,000
Picnic Shelters	78	$265,000	$20,634,000
Multipurpose Fields	72	$2,500,000	$182,296,000
Dog Parks	71	$740,000	$52,265,000
Fitness Zones	69	$72,000	$4,928,000
Pools/Aquatic Centers	47	$7,700,000	$361,050,000
Splash Pads	43	$770,000	$33,000,000
Skate Parks	36	$800,000	$28,675,000
Soccer Fields	34	$2,500,000	$85,900,000
Gymnasium	28	$11,100,000	$311,600,000
Senior Center	23	$13,200,000	$303,600,000

1.1   PROJECT TYPE DEFINITIONS

The following list is intended to provide a snapshot of examples for each project type and does not include all projects that may have been classified within each category.

- **Park Infrastructure:** May include walkways, parking lots, park furniture, drainage and irrigation, lighting systems, and vegetation.

- **Land Acquisition:** May include cost of land and associated fees such as appraisal fees, attorney fees, and brokerage fees.

- **Community Recreation Center:** A facility providing indoor recreational amenities, programs, and services.

- **Restrooms:** Permanent structures with running water and open access to park users.

- **Trails:** Multi-use trails and pathways within a park or providing regional connectivity.

- **Picnic Shelters:** Areas that provide tables, seating, and roof coverage.

- **Multipurpose Fields:** Fields that can be adapted to accommodate a variety of sports or general play activities.

- **Dog Parks:** Facilities that provide designated, fenced areas for dogs to play and interact.

- **Fitness Zones:** Equipment designed to provide technology similar to gyms and fitness centers, with the goal of increasing physical activity and fitness.

- **Pools/Aquatic Centers:** Indoor or outdoor swimming pools and associated buildings, such as restrooms and locker rooms

- **Splash Pads:** Provides water play for young children and has little or no standing water.

- **Skate Parks:** Provides elements to be intentionally used for skateboarding.

- **Soccer Fields:** Sports fields used primarily for the sport of soccer.

- **Gymnasium:** Multi-use recreational facility often used for basketball, fitness classes, and other indoor sports and recreational activities.

- **Senior Center:** Indoor recreational facility that provides amenities and programs to be used specifically by seniors.

Section Two:
Category 3 & 4 Competitive Grant Categories and Available Funds

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2.0   Category 3 and 4 Competitive Grant Categories and Available Funds

Competitive grants are available in Category 3 and Category 4. For the purposes of this memorandum, estimates for the annual amount available in each of the categories are based on an estimated total available revenue of $96 million per year, as presented during the May Steering Committee meeting.

Grant Category	Percent of Available Funds	Estimated Dollar Amount
Category 3	13%	$12,333,015
Category 4	13%	$12,333,015

2.1   CATEGORY 3: NATURAL LANDS, OPEN SPACES AND LOCAL BEACHES, WATER CONSERVATION, AND WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

In general, Category 3 grant projects should improve and protect open space, watersheds, and water resources. Thirteen percent of Measure A funds, estimated at $12,333,015 annually, is allocated for Category 3 projects as shown in Figure 1. Measure A provides that the County Department of Beaches and Harbors (DBH) shall receive up to 25 percent of the total Category 3 funds, estimated at $3,083,253 annually. The funds to DBH will be treated as an annual allocation. The remaining funds will be distributed on a competitive basis as described below. Pursuant to Category 3 of Measure A, priority will be given to projects offering the greatest regional benefit, or serving the greatest regional need.
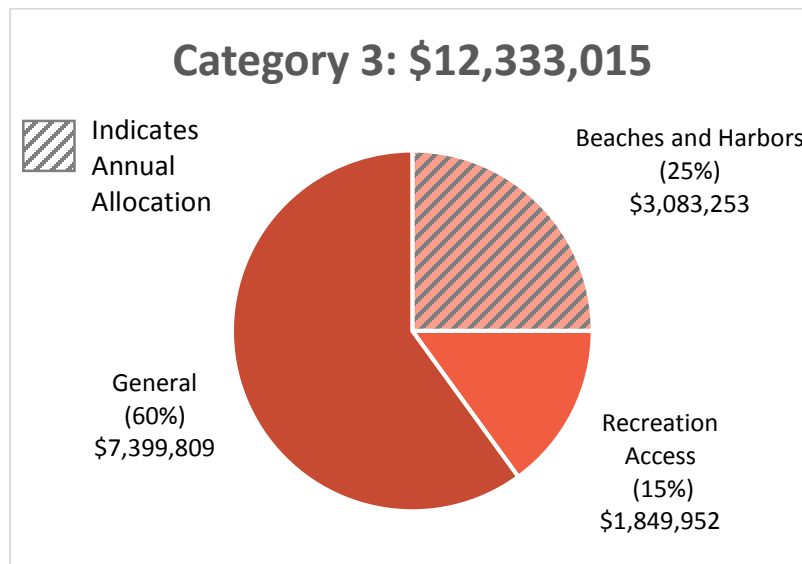
Figure 1. Category 3 Funds

2.1.1   RECREATION ACCESS – ESTIMATED ANNUAL AMOUNT: $1,849,952

Measure A allows for up to 15 percent of Category 3 funds to be awarded to recreation access programs, using a competitive grant process. These programs shall increase the ability of residents to access public lands, park facilities, and park amenities. Projects/programs include education, interpretive services, safety information, transportation and other activities that increase the accessibility for County residents, especially those in high-need and very high-need areas.

Eligible recreation access projects could include:

- Programs that offer transportation from areas of high and very high-need to beaches, regional parks, cultural facilities or natural parks.
- Projects that offer educational or interpretive programs in areas of high and very high-need and encourage use of beaches, regional parks, cultural facilities or natural parks.
- Projects that provide temporary pop-up recreational or interpretive programs, especially in areas of high and very high-need.
- Trails or walking paths connecting neighborhoods to parks and open space.
- Interactive wayfinding.
- Projects or programs that increase pedestrian and bicycle travel in park facilities and surrounding public land.

2.1.2 GENERAL NATURAL LANDS, OPEN SPACES AND LOCAL BEACHES, WATER CONSERVATION, AND WATERSHED PROTECTION GRANTS

The remaining 60 percent of Category 3 funds, estimated at $7,399,809 annually, shall be granted competitively to projects that plan, acquire, develop, improve, and/or restore multi-benefit park projects. Multi-benefit parks and open spaces are characterized by having more than one function and contribute to multiple program goals. The ultimate goal of these projects shall be to promote, improve, or protect the following, with priority given to projects providing the greatest regional benefits or serving the greatest regional need:

- Clean, local water supplies
- Natural habitat
- Watersheds
- Park space
- Open space
- Beaches

Eligible projects could include:

- Riparian corridor improvements
- River and stream parkway development
- River and stream clean up, access and community development
- Lake clean up, access and community development
- Beach and coastal watersheds clean-up, access and community development
- Natural lands, wildlife corridors, and watershed protection
- Recreational facilities, public property and rights of way, flood control infrastructure, and other easements
- Natural and cultural resource interpretive programs and nature education activities
- In addition, other projects not specifically referenced in Measure A could include:
- Water district or flood control agency lands where trails are located adjacent to flood protection channels and trailhead parks
- Flood protection basins that can serve as areas for active or passive recreation

2.2 CATEGORY 4: REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, MULTI-USE TRAILS AND ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM

In general, Category 4 grant projects should improve and protect regional recreational facilities, trails and accessibility projects. Thirteen percent of the Measure A funds is allocated for Category 4 projects. Measure A provides that the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) shall receive up to 25 percent of the total Category 4 funds, estimated at $3,083,254 annually as shown in Figure 2. A specific process to distribute funds to DPR will be developed and discussed at a later date. The remaining funds will be distributed on a competitive basis as described below. Greater priority will be given to trail and accessibility projects that provide connections as described in 5(b)(4)(B).
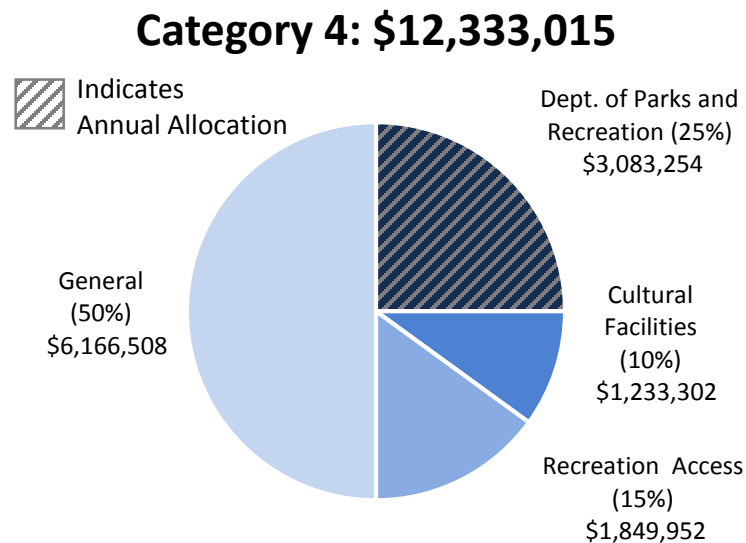
Figure 2. Category 4 Funds

2.2.1 RECREATION ACCESS

Measure A allows for up to 15 percent of Category 4 funds to be awarded to recreation access programs, using a competitive grant process. These programs shall increase the ability of residents to access public lands, park facilities, and park amenities. Projects/programs include education, interpretive services, safety information, transportation and other activities that increase the accessibility for County residents, especially those in high-need and very high-need areas.

Similar to eligible recreation access projects for Category 3 funds, Category 4 projects could include:

- Programs that offer transportation from areas of high and very high-need to beaches, regional parks, cultural facilities or natural parks.
- Projects that offer educational or interpretive programs in areas of high and very high-need and encourage use of beaches, regional parks, cultural facilities or natural parks.
- Projects that provide temporary pop-up recreational or interpretive programs, especially in areas of high and very high-need.
- Trails or walking paths connecting neighborhoods to parks and open space.
- Interactive wayfinding.
- Projects or programs that increase pedestrian and bicycle travel in park facilities and surrounding public land.

2.2.2   COUNTY CULTURAL FACILITIES

Measure A allows for up to 10 percent of Category 4 funds, estimated at $1,233,302 annually, for County Cultural Facilities, defined as a building owned and/or operated by the County of Los Angeles which is be used for the programming, production, presentation, and/or exhibition of natural history and any of the arts and/or cultural disciplines. These facilities display regional, ecological, zoological, geological, archaeological, anthropological, paleontological and cultural sites of Countywide significance.

Eligible cultural projects could include:
- Cultural exhibits or facilities that complement existing museums and/or education centers.
- Historically accurate and culturally sensitive interpretive features and environmental education.
- Museums and/or cultural Facilities that highlight archeological, anthropological and paleontological features of countywide significance.
- Facilities that support music, dance, theatre, creative writing, literature, architecture, painting, and other visual arts.

2.2.3   GENERAL REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, MULTI-USE TRAILS AND ACCESSIBILITY GRANTS

The remaining 50 percent of Category 4 funds, estimated at $6,166,508 annually, shall be granted to projects that acquire, develop, improve and/or restore regional recreational facilities and multi-use trails, with priority given to trail and accessibility projects as described in 5(b)(4)(B). A multi-use trail accommodates two-way non-motorized travelers including pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers and skaters and is usually physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space, buffer area or barrier.

Eligible projects could include:
- Regional parks, facilities, museums, environmental education and other cultural facilities.
- Multi-use sports facilities, including golf facilities and other community recreational facilities such as senior centers or teen centers.
- Multi-use trail connectivity for existing and future park facilities including connection to maintained Class I bike path facilities.
- Multi-use trail and path projects that provide hiking, equestrian, bicycle and other opportunities including ADA access.
- Regional ecological, zoological, geological, archeological and cultural site projects.

In addition, other projects not specifically referenced in Measure A could include:
- Bike rest stops and stations with lockers and repair areas.
- Public art installations housed in cultural facilities or featured as an element of the multi-use trail.

2.3   SUMMARY OF CATEGORY 3 AND CATEGORY 4 COMBINED FUNDS

Measure A potentially allows for the flexibility to combine available funds across categories to fund projects and programs that meet the goals of multiple categories. If funds for Category 3 and 4 are combined, the total estimated amount available is $24,666,030. Of these funds, approximately $13.5 million is available for general competitive grants, as shown in Figure 3. The bonding possibilities of these funds will be discussed in a subsequent memo.

Category 3 and 4 Combined: $24,666,030
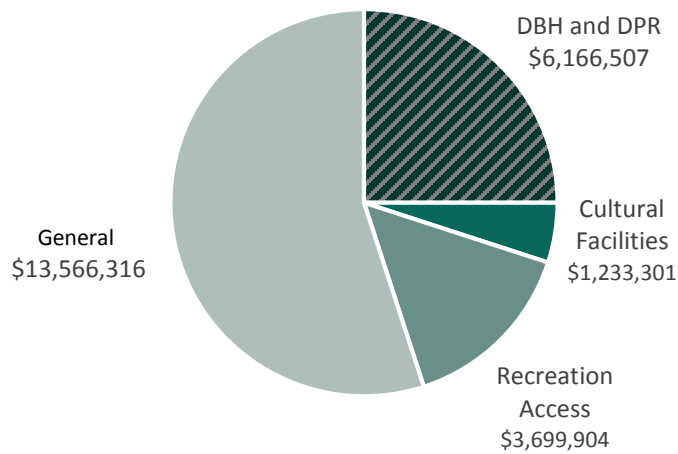
Figure 3. Category 3 and 4 Combined Funds

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Section Three:
Category 3 & 4 Competitive Grant Policies

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3.0   Competitive Grant Policies

The following section addresses six high level policies that will help establish RPOSD's formal competitive grant process for Category 3 and Category 4. The suggestions below will be discussed at the June 2017 Steering Committee meeting and revised for inclusion in the Draft Grant Guidelines.

3.1   FUNDS FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN

RPOSD recommends that a percentage of the general competitive grant funds from Category 3 and Category 4 be designated for planning and design projects. Planning and design projects are essential to the development of capital projects and many agencies lack resources to complete effective planning and design projects. These grants would be competitive, with two areas of focus: planning projects that do not directly result in a built project; and planning and design projects which do lead directly to a built project. Example projects are listed below.

Planning:
- Park or Trail Master Plans
- Open Space and Restoration Plans
- Capital Improvement Plans
- Community Outreach
- Feasibility Studies
- Technical Studies

Design:
- Park and Trail Design
- Stormwater Management Design
- Landscape Design
- Wayfinding and Signage Design
- Open Space and Restoration Design
- Capital Improvement Design

3.2   GRANT AWARD SIZE

The size of grants awarded through Measure A's competitive grants processes should be regulated by a maximum cap and a minimum floor. Creating a maximum award size ensures that there are sufficient funds to distribute to multiple grantees, and encourages grantees to secure funding from multiple sources. Establishing a minimum competitive grant amount will help avoid small projects that are challenging to administer. It is anticipated that smaller projects will be funded through each Study Area's annual allocation funds from Category 1 and Category 2 (if applicable).

To determine the suggested maximum grant award amount, RPOSD began with the premise that no single grant award should exceed 5% of the total revenue, or approximately $5,000,000. Reviewing this limit against the cost estimates generated during the PNA revealed that a large group of projects was clustered around the $2,000,000 cost estimate mark, and another larger group clustered in the $7,000,000 range. Approximately 71% of all projects prioritized during the PNA were estimated to cost $2,000,000 or less, and 88% of projects were estimated to cost $7,000,000 or less. Therefore, a maximum grant award of $7,000,000 is recommended, as this amount will increase the number of projects that can be fully funded

by competitive grants, while balancing the need to make sure that funding is distributed to multiple agencies.

To determine the minimum grant award amount, RPOSD evaluated the number of projects prioritized by the PNA, the associated cost estimates, and the estimated Category 1 and 2 allocations for all Study Areas. Because Study Areas will be using their allocations for a number of projects on an annual basis, RPOSD believes that Study Areas could comfortably spend up to 50% of their annual allocation on a larger project. RPOSD found that 97 projects from the PNA had an estimated cost of $50,000 or less, and that 57 Study Areas are estimated to receive less than $100,000 in Category 1 and 2 allocations. Balancing the desire to fund as many projects as possible with the administrative challenges of small dollar grant awards, RPOSD recommends a minimum grant amount of $50,000.

These grant award size limits will allow RPOSD to award grants in a manner that distributes the funds to many recipients in an effective manner. For example, with these limits in place, RPOSD could fund the following from the $13.5 million available as general competitive grants:

> 25 grants of $100,000 (total=$2.5 million)
> 5 grants of $1 million (total=$5 million)
> <u>2 grants of $3 million (total=$6 million)</u>
> TOTAL = $13.5 million

3.3   ELIGIBLE AGENCIES

Both public agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for competitive grants in Categories 3 and 4. Program managers at RPOSD will be available to assist agencies and organizations in determining their eligibility for any particular grant, and any necessary steps required to obtain eligibility. Preliminary guidelines are listed below.

3.3.1   PUBLIC AGENCIES

Qualifying public agencies include any governmental agency, special district, or joint power authority that is authorized to acquire, develop, improve and restore real property for beach, wildlife, park, recreation, community, cultural, open space, water quality, flood control, or gang prevention and intervention purposes. Additional considerations for eligibility are listed below:

- RPOSD funded open grants
- Fiscal good standing
- History of completed projects

3.3.2   NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITH LAND TENURE

Nonprofit organizations who own land or park facilities or have existing agreements to operate and maintain facilities may apply independently for competitive grants or may pair with a governmental agency. Qualifying nonprofit organizations must have a mission related to one or more of the following focus areas:

- 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

Additional Requirements:
- Proof of land tenure
- Proof of good tax standing (IRS Form 990)
- Verification of organization's purpose, programs and results, financials, and operations

3.3.3   NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITHOUT LAND TENURE

Nonprofit organizations without land tenure are also eligible to apply for competitive grants but must do so in partnership with the land owner or governing agency. Organizations must adhere to the focus areas listed in Section 3.2.2 and should consider the following guidelines:

- Establish a written agreement with the land owner or governing agency, allowing them to receive and use funds for park projects.
- The process and requirements of developing this written agreement should be identified by the governing agency.
- The establishment of any agreement may or may not require approval by City or Neighborhood Councils and nonprofit organizations should allow ample time for unexpected administrative delays that may impact grant application deadlines.

Additional Requirements
- Proof of written agreement with land owner or governing agency
- Proof of good tax standing (IRS Form 990)
- Verification of organization's purpose, programs and results, financials, and operations

3.3.4   SCHOOLS WITH JOINT-USE AGREEMENTS

Schools with joint-use agreements are eligible to apply for competitive grants under the following circumstances:

- Proof of joint-use agreement that allows for public use and access of the site.
- Joint-use agreement must be in place for a minimum number of years from the date of application.
- Joint-use agreement must include the use of both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Joint-use agreement must allow third parties to operate programs.
- If there are fees for site use or participation there may be no differential fees that allow one group to receive a lower fee due to their membership, affiliation, place of residence, etc.

3.4   QUALIFYING EXPENSES

A portion of funds received from competitive grants may be used to support project administrative costs such as administration, planning, and community outreach and engagement. Qualifying administrative costs range from staff time, consultant fees, and may not exceed 25 percent of the awarded amount.

Community engagement costs include those necessary to provide ongoing updates of the project to community members within a half mile of the project, the larger community within the Study Area, or to those who are served if it is a regional project. Qualifying outreach and engagement costs may not exceed 5 percent of the awarded amount.
The remaining 70 percent of awarded amount must be used for development and acquisition costs.

3.5   GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

This section describes the competitive grant pre-application process, evaluation criteria, and selection committee structure. This initial overview of the process presents a variety of proposed approaches that should be evaluated for feasibility, keeping in mind the organizational capacity of grant-seeking organizations, especially those in high and very high-need areas. The selected approaches will inform the specific application process, which will be addressed in a subsequent memorandum.

3.5.1   PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

A pre-application process can benefit agencies seeking grants by providing an opportunity to receive feedback on the competitiveness of their proposed project. The process can also add a challenging additional step for agencies with limited capacity. RPOSD is considering several approaches to a pre-application process, with the goal of maximizing utility of the step for agencies, without creating an additional burden for them. Four suggested approaches are outlined below.

Approach 1. Letter of Interest and Formal Invitation
> In this approach, grant-seeking organizations would be required to submit a letter of interest. These letters would be reviewed and eligible projects would be invited to complete an application for their project.

Approach 2. Informal Letter of Interest
> In this approach, grant-seeking organizations would have the option of submitting an informal letter of interest to RPOSD. These letters would be reviewed by RPOSD staff, and agencies would receive written guidance and suggestions for crafting a strong application for the project. No invitation to submit applications would be issued and the application process would be open to all, including organizations that chose to forego the optional informal letter of interest.

Approach 3. Staff Guidance
> In this approach, a similar, but less formal process would provide grant-seeking organizations with feedback on their potential project. Grant-seeking organizations would submit written questions by an established deadline and responses would be posted publicly. Organizations with project or agency-specific questions could qualify for a telephone or in-person consultation with a RPOSD staff member, who would provide

guidance and suggestions for submitting an application for the project. As with Approach 2, the application process would be open to all.

Approach 4. Open Application Process

In this approach, no separate pre-application process would be required or offered. Grant applications would be submitted without guidance from RPOSD.

3.5.2 GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grant applications will be scored using a point-based system. All competing applications will accrue points based on various criteria. Suggested criteria are categorized and listed below. The associated scoring system will be defined once the criteria are established. It is anticipated that some criteria will apply to all competitive grant categories, and some will not.

Criterion 1: Level of Need

Level of need is based on 2016 Countywide Parks Needs Assessment determination. Study areas that did not participate in the Needs Assessment will receive 0 points for this criterion. Study areas with a higher documented level of need will receive more points, and study areas with a lower need level will receive fewer points.

Criterion 2: Public Safety

Projects committed to improving safety conditions through the provision of safe equipment and facilities and the reduction or prevention of crime will receive more points than projects that do not improve safety conditions.

Criterion 3: Water Conservation Measures

Projects committed to protecting water resources including stormwater, drinking water, lakes, rivers, and creeks will receive more points than projects that do not protect water resources.

Criterion 4: Community Involvement

Applicants who have conducted outreach to interested parties will receive points for community involvement.

Criterion 5: Accessibility

Projects that ensure universal accessibility, especially for seniors and those with disabilities, will receive higher scores than those that do not.

Criterion 6: Organizational Capacity

Applicants with limited staff and financial resources needed to successfully complete a project will receive fewer points than those that have sufficient staff and resources.

Criterion 7: Young Adult and Veterans

Projects that support efforts to provide education and training to young adults and veterans, including those receiving funding from Category 5 will receive more points than those that do not.

Criterion 8: Matching Funds

> Projects that use Measure A funds to match other funding sources, including annual allocations, will receive more points than those that do not.

Criterion 9: Sustainability

> Projects committed to protecting and enhancing open space, natural areas, and waterways or preserving the urban canopy and promoting tree planting and health will receive more points than those that do not.

Criterion 10: Project Feasibility

> Projects that have completed initial feasibility studies, or identified potential issues that could hinder project completion will receive more points than those that have not.

Criterion 11: Creative Spacemaking

> Projects that seek to develop and enhance urban gardens, pocket parks, pop-up facilities, and other small-scale greening projects, particularly in dense and/or high and very high-need areas will receive more points than those that do not.

Criterion 12: Health and Wellness

> Projects that promote healthy communities through active recreation, health and fitness programs, and food health education will receive more points than those that do not.

3.5.3   GRANT AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

A grant award selection committee will be formed to ensure that all grant applications are reviewed by subject matter experts who are well versed in general grant programs as well as specific grant themes. In order to avoid bias or unfair influence, representatives may not serve on the committee if they or their respective organization is seeking funding during the respective grant cycle. Committee members may rotate terms so that their organizations will have the opportunity to apply for funding. Committee members may include:

- RPOSD program managers
- Representatives from non-profit organizations
- Academic, technical, and practicing subject matter experts
- Public agencies: Dept. of Public Health; Dept. of Parks and Recreation; Dept. of Public Works, etc.

3.6   GRANT CYCLES

There are several approaches that may be utilized when inviting grant-seeking organizations to apply for funds. The following approaches should be evaluated for feasibility, keeping in mind the variety of project types reviewed in Section 1, as well as the organizational capacity of grant-seeking organizations, especially those in high and very high-need areas. A specific process will be developed to support the grant cycle recommended by RPOSD and adopted by the Board, and will be addressed in a subsequent memorandum.

Approach 1. No Grant Cycles

> The first approach would invite grant-seeking organizations to apply for funding through Categories 3 and 4, without establishing grant cycles which place parameters on each

application. Projects would need to meet the goals outlined for each grant category as described in Measure A, and would not be categorized into any further subsets.

Approach 2. Thematic Grant Cycles

The second approach would establish thematic grant cycles for Categories 3 and 4, providing a systematic process for categorizing grant applications and encouraging the submittal of applications for projects with a given focus on a set schedule. This would allow applicants to plan for future grant opportunities while ensuring that projects are evaluated against similar projects. Grant cycles would be identified and publicized on a grant calendar which would allow applicants to anticipate and choose the year in which their project is most competitive. Five different options for thematic grant cycles are suggested below:

Theme Option 1. Resource/Infrastructure Type

This option is structured around the type of resource or infrastructure that projects would seek to introduce or improve. Applicants should choose the category they believe they are most competitive in. This option would contain three categories, creating a three-year grant cycle:

Year One: Natural Resources
Example projects: Improvements to riparian corridors, stormwater capture, stream clean up, open space acquisition
Year Two: Health and Safety
Example projects: Security lighting, ADA compliance, active recreation
Year Three: Infrastructure
Example projects: Parking lots, Tree planting, Trailheads

The matrix below suggests which categories the most frequently prioritized projects from the PNA could potentially apply in. However, any project could apply in any category, based on the specifics of the project.

Project Type	Natural Resources	Health and Safety	Infrastructure
Infrastructure	x	x	X
Land Acquisition	x	x	
Community Rec. Center		x	X
Trails	x	x	X
Picnic Shelters		x	X
Multipurpose Fields	x	x	X
Dog Parks	x	x	
Fitness Zones		x	X
Restrooms		x	X
Pools/Aquatic Centers	x	x	
Splash Pads	x	x	
Skate Parks		x	X
Soccer Fields	x	x	
Gymnasium		x	X
Senior Center		x	X

Theme Option 2. Facility Type

This option would call for applications based on the type of facility that the project aims to create or improve. This option would contain six categories, creating a six-year grant cycle:

Year One: Sports Facilities
Example projects: Sports fields/courts, multisport complexes, gymnasium
Year Two: Play Facilities
Example projects: Playgrounds, dog parks, recreation centers, splash pads
Year Three: Swimming and Water Facilities
Example projects: swimming pools, beach projects, stream clean up
Year Four: Trails and Open Space Facilities
Example projects: Trailheads, trail improvements, nature centers
Year Five: Infrastructure
Example projects: Walkways, parking lots, restrooms
Year Six: Buildings and Cultural Facilities
Example projects: Senior centers, recreation centers, cultural facilities, concession stands

The matrix below suggests which categories the most frequently prioritized projects from the PNA could potentially apply in. However, any project could apply in any category, based on the specifics of the project.

Project Type	Sports	Play	Swimming and Water	Trails and Open Space	Infrastructure	Buildings and Cultural Facilities
Infrastructure	x	x	x	x	x	x
Land Acquisition	x	x	x	x		x
Community Rec. Center		x			x	x
Trails	x	x		x	x	
Picnic Shelters		x		x	x	
Multipurpose Fields	x				x	
Dog Parks		x			x	
Fitness Zones		x			x	
Restrooms				x	x	x
Pools/Aquatic Centers	x	x	x		x	
Splash Pads		x	x		x	
Skate Parks	x	x			x	
Soccer Fields	x				x	
Gymnasium	x					x
Senior Center		x				x

Theme Option 3. Project Stage

This option would organize competitive grants based on the stage of project. There would be five categories in this option, creating a five-year grant cycle:

Year One: Planning Stage
Example projects: Parks master plans, capital improvement plan
Year Two: Design Stage
Example projects: Park design, facility design
Year Three: Land Acquisition
Example projects: Open space acquisition, parkland acquisition
Year Four: Construction
Example projects: Construction of new parks, trails, open space, new/improved amenities
Year Five: Programs
Example projects: Active transportation, recreation access, education and food health

Theme Option 4. Project Type

This option would provide grants based on the specific type of project. There would be three categories in this option, creating a three-year grant cycle:

Year One: Repair or replace existing amenities
Example projects: Resurface basketball courts, repair walkways, upgrade lighting
Year Two: Add new amenities to existing facilities
Example projects: Add playground, add swimming pool, add equestrian trails
Year Three: Build new park or specialty facility
Example projects: Build new park, build new recreation center, build new multi-use trails

Theme Option 5. Cost Brackets

This option would award grants based on the requested dollar amount, with several funding brackets possible. Brackets are based on the *requested* funding amount, *not* the total project cost. Projects with similar financial needs would thus compete against each other. No parameters are placed on the type of projects permitted to apply in each bracket, so long as the requested dollar amount is appropriate.

The bracket limits are suggested based on the cost estimates generated during the Park Needs Assessment and the suggested minimum and maximum grant award amounts. These brackets, if applied to the projects estimated to cost under $7 million in the Park Needs Assessment, result in approximately 550 projects in each bracket. Grants could be awarded in all brackets annually.

Year One: All cost brackets
Bracket 1: Grants between $50,000 and $400,000
Bracket 2: Grants between $400,000 and $1 million
Bracket 3: Grants between $1 million and $7 million

Approach 3. Paired Thematic Grant Cycles

Since the most competitive applications will present multi-benefit projects, there will likely be overlap between the projects submitted each year under the grant cycle themes discussed above. To help narrow the scope of projects submitted each year, a third approach, presented below, would pair two grant cycle theme options and would result in a more specific grouping of projects submitted. For example, Theme Options 1 and 2 could be paired to create 6 annual grant groupings, per the example below.

Year One: Water Resources + Facility Type
> *Group 1:* Water Resources with Sports focus
> *Group 2:* Water Resources with Play focus
> *Group 3:* Water Resources with Swimming and Water focus
> *Group 4:* Water Resources with Trails and Open Space focus
> *Group 5:* Water Resources with Infrastructure focus
> *Group 6:* Water Resources with Buildings and Cultural Facilities focus

Year Two: Health and Safety + Facility Type
> *Group 1:* Health and Safety with Sports focus
> *Group 2:* Health and Safety with Play focus
> *Group 3:* Health and Safety with Swimming and Water focus
> *Group 4:* Health and Safety with Trails and Open Space focus
> *Group 5:* Health and Safety with Infrastructure focus
> *Group 6:* Health and Safety with Buildings and Cultural Facilities focus

Year Three: Infrastructure + Facility Type
> *Group 1:* Infrastructure with Sports focus
> *Group 2:* Infrastructure with Play focus
> *Group 3:* Infrastructure with Swimming and Water focus
> *Group 4:* Infrastructure with Trails and Open Space focus
> *Group 5:* Infrastructure with General Infrastructure focus
> *Group 6:* Infrastructure with Buildings and Cultural Facilities focus

The three distinct approaches to grant cycles outlined above each have merits and shortcomings. A summary of the pros and cons of each approach is presented below, to aid in the evaluation of each approach and how it may contribute to achieving the goals of Measure A.

	Pros	Cons
No Grant Cycles	• Includes a wide variety of projects • No waiting for suitable grant theme to open – any project can apply in any year	• Projects submitted in any given year may differ substantially from each other, creating challenges during the evaluation stage • Flexibility may create confusion and increase need for technical assistance
Single Theme Grant Cycles	• Supports an apples-to-apples comparison of applications by ensuring all projects support a broad theme • Themes may naturally group projects with similar costs	• The number of years in a grant cycle could create long gaps before agencies can apply • Flexible theme may have too much overlap from year to year
Paired Theme Grant Cycles	• Specific grant groupings allow for comparison of most similar projects	• Unique projects may not fit into narrowly defined grant groups • The number of years in a grant cycle could create long gaps before agencies can apply

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Section Four:
Category 5 Competitive Grant Categories and Available Funds

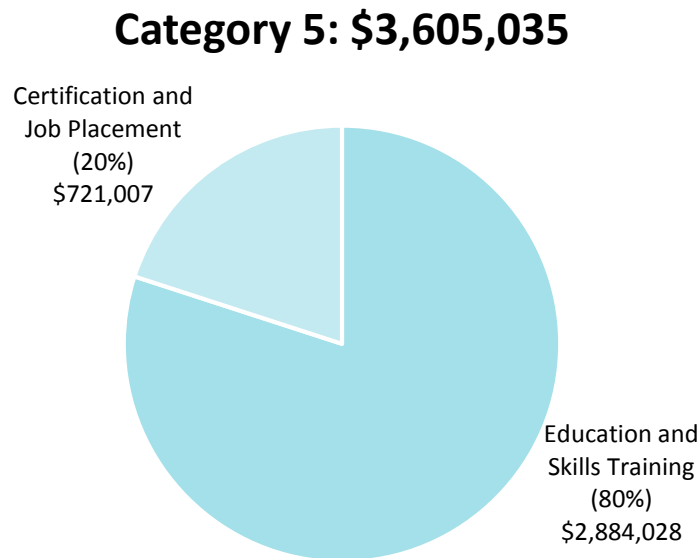LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT MEASURE A

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4.0   Category 5 Young Adult and Veteran Job Training and Placement Opportunities

Category 5 grants provide funds to organizations within the County, that ultimately move young adults and veterans toward careers in Parks and Recreation. Specifically, grant-seeking organizations should provide education, training, and career development to young adults, aged 18-25, or veterans, to implement park projects and create pathways toward careers in the Parks and Recreation field. Up to 3.8 percent of the Measure A funds, estimated at $3,605,035, are allocated for Category 5 projects and will be awarded competitively. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of Category 5 available funds.

Category 5: $3,605,035

Certification and
Job Placement
(20%)
$721,007

Education and
Skills Training
(80%)
$2,884,028

Figure 4. Category 5 Funds

4.1   CERTIFICATION AND JOB PLACEMENT

Measure A allows 20 percent of Category 5 funds, approximately $721,007 annually, to be allocated to organizations within the County that provide certifications and placement services, or apprenticeship opportunities, for young adults, aged 18-25, or veterans, for jobs and careers in the Parks and Recreation fields.

Eligible services and/or programs could include:
- Arborist training and certification for tree planting and maintenance in parks
- Landscape architecture certification with emphasis on parks and recreation
- Sustainability/LEED accreditation with emphasis on parks and recreation facilities
- Apprenticeship programs
- Internship/entry level job placement

4.2   EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Measure A allows for no less than 80 percent of Category 5 funds, approximately $2,884,028 annually, to be allocated to organizations providing education, skills training, and career pathway development to young adults aged 18-25 or veterans, to implement projects in the field of Parks and Recreation.

Eligible programs could include:
- Trade schools that focus on skills needed to implement park projects
- Job skills classes that focus on education and training needed to implement park projects
- Internship/entry level job placement

Section Five:
Category 5 Competitive Grant Policies

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5.0   Category 5 Competitive Grant Policies

The following section addresses six high level policies that will help establish RPOSD's formal competitive grant process for Category 5. The suggestions below will be discussed at the June 2017 Steering Committee meeting and revised for inclusion in the Draft Grant Guidelines.

5.1   GRANT AWARD SIZE

As with Category 3 and Category 4 competitive grants, Category 5 grants should be regulated by a maximum cap and minimum floor to ensure that there are sufficient funds to distribute to multiple grantees.
For grants to provide education and skills training to implement park projects, RPOSD recommends that no single grant award should exceed half of the available funds, or approximately $1,400,000. RPOSD recommends a minimum grant award size of $50,000, due to the administrative challenges of small dollar grant awards.

For grants to provide certifications and placement services leading to careers in the Parks and Recreation field, RPOSD recommends no single grant award should exceed half of the available funds, or approximately $350,000. RPOSD recommends a minimum grant award of $50,000, due to the administrative challenges of small dollar grant awards.

These grant award sizes will allow RPOSD to award grants in a manner that distributes the funds in an effective manner. For example, with these limits in place, RPOSD could fund the following:

Grants to provide education and skills training to implement park projects:	*Grants to provide certifications and placement services for careers in Parks and Recreation:*
1 grant of $1,400,000	1 grant of $350,000
7 grants of $100,000	2 grants of $100,000
<u>14 grants of $50,000</u>	<u>3 grants of $50,000</u>
TOTAL = $2,800,000	TOTAL = $700,000

5.2   ELIGIBLE AGENCIES

Both public agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for competitive grants in Category 5. Program managers at RPOSD will be available to assist agencies and organizations in determining their eligibility for any particular grant and any necessary steps required to obtain eligibility.

Grant-seeking organizations applying for funding to provide education and skills training to implement parks project must:

- Verify that they provide education, skills training, and career path development to young adults (age 18-25) or veterans, to implement park projects.
- If an organization is a conservation corps, it must provide proof of certification from the California Conservation Corps.

Grant-seeking organizations applying for funding to provide certifications and placement services leading to careers in Parks and Recreation must:

- Verify that the agency provides certification and placement services or apprenticeships for young adults (age 18-25) and veterans, for jobs and careers in the Parks and Recreation field.

5.3   QUALIFYING EXPENSES

A portion of funds received from Category 5 competitive grants may be used to support administrative costs. Qualifying administrative costs include overhead costs such as program development and management, and may not exceed 25 percent of the awarded amount.

Remaining funds must be used for program implementation, participant fees, materials, and instructor fees.

5.4   GRANT APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

This section describes the competitive grant pre-application process, evaluation criteria, and selection committee structure. This initial overview of the process presents a variety of proposed approaches that should be evaluated for feasibility, keeping in mind the organizational capacity of grant-seeking organizations, especially those in high and very high-need areas. The selected approach will inform the specific application process, which will be addressed in a subsequent memorandum.

5.4.1   PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

A pre-application process can benefit agencies seeking grants by providing an opportunity to receive feedback on the competitiveness of their proposed project. The process can also add a challenging additional step for agencies with limited capacity. RPOSD is considering several approaches to a pre-application process, with the goal of maximizing utility of the step for agencies, without creating an additional burden for them. Four suggested approaches are outlined below.

Approach 1. Letter of Interest and Formal Invitation

In this approach, grant-seeking organizations would be required to submit a letter of interest. These letters would be reviewed and eligible projects would be invited to complete an application for their project.

Approach 2. Informal Letter of Interest

In this approach, grant-seeking organizations would have the option of submitting an informal letter of interest to RPOSD. These letters would be reviewed by RPOSD staff, and agencies would receive written guidance and suggestions for crafting a strong application for the project. No invitation to submit applications would be issued and the application process would be open to all, including organizations that chose to forego the optional informal letter of interest.

Approach 3. Staff Guidance

In this approach, a similar, but less formal process would provide grant-seeking organizations with feedback on their potential project. Grant-seeking organizations would submit written questions by an established deadline and responses would be posted publicly. Organizations with project or agency-specific questions could qualify for a telephone or in-person consultation with a RPOSD staff member, who would provide guidance and suggestions for submitting an application for the project. As with Approach 2, the application process would be open to all.

Approach 4. Open Application Process

In this approach, no separate pre-application process would be required or offered. Grant applications would be submitted without guidance from RPOSD.

5.4.2 GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grant applications will be scored using a point-based system. All competing applications will accrue points based on various criteria. Suggested criteria are categorized and listed below. The associated scoring system will be defined once the criteria are established. It is anticipated that some criteria will apply to all competitive grant categories, and some will not.

Criterion 1: Service to, or Recruitment from Areas of High and Very High Need

Level of need is based on 2016 Countywide Parks Needs Assessment determination. Study areas that did not participate in the Needs Assessment will receive 0 points for this criterion. Study areas with a higher documented level of need will receive more points, and study areas with a lower need level will receive fewer points.

Criterion 2: Sustainability

Programs that provide education, training, and/or certifications that support the protection and enhancement of open space, natural areas, and waterways or preserving the urban canopy and promoting tree planting and health will receive more points than those that do not.

Criterion 3: Water Conservation Measures

Programs that provide education, training, and/or certifications that support the protection and enhancement of water resources including stormwater, drinking water, lakes, rivers, and creeks will receive more points than projects that do not protect water resources.

Criterion 4: Accessibility

Programs that provide education, training, and/or certifications that support projects that ensure universal accessibility, especially for seniors and those with disabilities, will receive higher scores than those that do not.

Criterion 5: Organizational Capacity

Applicants with limited staff and financial resources needed to successfully complete a project will receive more points than those that have sufficient staff and resources.

Criterion 6: Matching Funds

Projects that use Measure A funds to match other funding sources, including annual allocations, will receive more points than those that do not.

5.4.3   GRANT AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

A grant award selection committee will be formed to ensure that all grant applications are reviewed by subject matter experts. In order to avoid bias or unfair influence, representatives may not serve on the committee if they or their respective organization is seeking funding. Committee members may rotate terms so that their organizations will have the opportunity to apply for funding. Committee members may include:

- RPOSD program managers

- Representatives from non-profit organizations

- Academic, technical and practicing subject matter experts

- Public agencies: Dept. of Public Health; Dept. of Parks and Recreation; Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs, etc.

5.4.4   GRANT PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Approach 1. Annual Grant Cycles

The first approach would invite grant-seeking organizations to apply for funding, without placing parameters on the types of qualifying projects. Applicants would be required to apply annually and grants would be awarded on an annual basis. Projects would need to meet the goals outlined for Category 5 as described in Measure A, and would not be categorized into any further subsets.

Approach 2. Thematic Grant Cycles

The second approach would establish thematic grant cycles, providing a systematic process for categorizing grant applications and encouraging the submittal of applications for projects with a given focus on a set schedule. This would allow applicants to plan for future grant opportunities, while ensuring that projects are evaluated against similar projects. The grant cycles would be publicized on a grant calendar which would allow applicants to anticipate and choose the year in which their project is most competitive. Potential themes for a three-year grant cycle are suggested below:

Year One*: Education*
Example projects: Educational seminars, Formal coursework, Tuition grants/stipends
Year Two: Training
Example projects: Apprenticeship programs, Certifications, Internships
Year Three: Career Pathways
Example projects: Placement services, Resume workshops, Professional mentoring programs

Approach 3. Multi-year Grant Cycles

The third approach would invite grant-seeking organizations to apply for funding once every three years (or other pre-identified cycle term) and would distribute funds through a phased approach over the course of the three-year cycle term. In addition to meeting the goals for Category 5, outlined in Measure A, organizations would be required to monitor, evaluate, and report to RPOSD the funded program's effectiveness. Distribution of second and third year funding would be contingent on the required reporting and program effectiveness. Additional reporting may be required for underperforming programs.

The three approaches to grant program structure outlined above each have merits and shortcomings. A summary of the pros and cons of each approach is presented below, to aid in the evaluation of each approach and how it may contribute to achieving the goals of Measure A.

	Pros	Cons
Annual Grant Cycle	• Includes a wide variety of projects • No waiting for suitable grant theme to open – any project can apply in any year	• Projects submitted in any given year may differ substantially from each other, creating challenges during the evaluation stage • Flexibility may create confusion and increase need for technical assistance
Thematic Grant Cycle	• Supports an apples-to-apples comparison of applications by ensuring all projects support a broad theme • Cycle may naturally group projects with similar costs	• Limits access to annual funding, which may be critical for programs with ongoing funding needs • The number of years in a grant cycle could create gaps before agencies can apply • Flexible theme may have too much overlap from year to year
Multi-year Grant Cycle	• Allows organizations to plan program budgets with more certainty • Reduces administrative burden of applying for grants annually	• New applicants would experience longer days delays between application periods • Required monitoring and evaluation may burden staff with limited capacity