



Board Summary Report

Date: July 6, 2020
To: Board of County Commissioners
Through: Shannon Carter, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations Director
From: Sandy Bottoms, Grants Program Administrator
Subject: 2020 Open Space Grant Award Recommendations

Direction/Information

Open Spaces staff will provide information regarding the 2020 Open Space grant cycle and present the BoCC with staff/OSTAB joint award recommendations.

Request and Recommendation

Request BoCC consideration of the staff/OSTAB joint recommendation to fund 7 standard grants, 4 small grants, and 4 planning grants totaling \$3,433,649, as presented in the attached 2020 Open Space Grants ranking sheet.

Background

In accordance with the Arapahoe County Open Space Resolution, 12% of Open Space Sales and Use Tax revenue is invested in Arapahoe County communities through a grants program. Each year incorporated municipalities and special districts that provide outdoor recreation services are invited to submit proposals for eligible open space, park, and trail projects. An evaluation team made up of OSTAB members and County staff review the grant applications and make recommendations to the BoCC regarding the approval, conditional approval, or denial of each application. Since 2005, the County has invested \$40 million in grant funding in 218 projects across the County.

On September 30, 2019, the BoCC approved an allocation of \$4 million for the 2020 Open Space Grant cycle.

The grant categories for 2020 are as follows:

- Standard Grant Awards: \$100,001 to \$500,000, 25% total project cost minimum cash match
- Small Grant Awards: \$1,000 to \$100,000, 10% total project cost minimum cash match
- Planning Grant Awards: \$1,000 to \$100,000, 10% total project cost minimum cash match

Links to Align Arapahoe

Optimize Use of Financial Assets
Improve Park, Trail, and Open Space Opportunities
Improve Communication and Stakeholder Input
Improve Customer Experience
Enhance Quality of Life

Discussion

By the application deadline of April 24, 2020, 9 agencies submitted a total of 15 eligible grant proposals (7 standard grants, 4 small grants, and 4 planning grants) requesting a total of \$3,433,649, with total matching funds of nearly \$2 million.

After an initial staff review to confirm eligibility, a team of evaluators consisting of six OSTAB members and five County staff members reviewed the applications, conducted optional independent project site visits, submitted questions for written responses from grant applicants, participated in an evaluator meeting, and individually ranked each grant proposal. Ranking criteria included project scope, need and urgency, matching funds provided, the applicant's ability to complete the project on time and within budget, supporting documentation, and the applicant's capacity to maintain the completed project site. Finally, individual evaluator rankings were averaged to produce a final ranking (attached).

Based on the final ranking and available funding, the evaluation team recommends funding all 15 proposals, totaling \$3,433,649. The 2020 grant cycle is unusual in that the allocated funding of \$4 million exceeded the total requests, and more small and planning grant requests were received than is typical (resulting in a lower overall request total). All proposed projects are eligible and worthy of funding. The unspent allocation of \$566,351 will roll forward in the grants fund balance to support future grant cycles.

Grant awards totaling \$3,433,649 are recommended for the following projects:

Standard Grants:

- \$350,000 to City of Englewood for **Romans Park Improvements Phase II**
- \$500,000 to City of Aurora for **Plains Conservation Center Phase I Master Plan Improvements**
- \$500,000 to City of Aurora for **Canterbury Neighborhood Park Renovation**
- \$410,775 to South Suburban Park & Recreation District for **Writer's Vista Park Improvements**
- \$253,564 to City of Littleton for **Slaughterhouse Gulch Park Trail Connection**
- \$487,500 to Town of Bennett for **Bennett Regional Park and Open Space Fishing Pond**
- \$325,000 to South Suburban Park & Recreation District for **Foxhill Park Improvements**

Small Grants:

- \$68,400 to City of Sheridan for **River Run Trailhead Connection**
- \$90,000 to City of Greenwood Village for **Westlands Park Pickleball Courts**
- \$28,000 to Arapahoe Park & Recreation District for **Peakview North Park Basketball Court Resurfacing**
- \$100,000 to Arapahoe Park & Recreation District for **Willow Trace Park Playground Improvements**

Planning Grants:

- \$97,110 to City of Littleton for **Jackass Gulch Restoration and Stabilization Design**
- \$90,000 to City of Littleton for **Superchi Parcel at Reynolds Landing Planning**
- \$33,300 to Arapahoe Park & Recreation District for **Fox Hill Park Improvements Master Plan**
- \$100,000 to Cherry Creek Vista Park & Recreation District for **Peakview Park Renovation Planning**

Alternatives

Approval, conditional approval, or denial of each grant project.

Fiscal Impact

12% of annual revenue from the Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax is dedicated to funding grants pursuant to the County Open Space Resolution. The fund balance exceeds the recommended award amount.

Concurrence

On June 22, 2020, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) and Open Spaces staff discussed the results of the grant evaluation process and made a joint recommendation to the BoCC (attached).

Attorney Comments

None

Reviewed By

Sandy Bottoms, Grants Program Administrator
Brett Collins, Grants and Acquisitions Manager
Shannon Carter, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations Director
Tiffanie Bleau, Assistant County Attorney
Todd Weaver, Finance Director

Attachments

2020 Open Space Grants Ranking Results and Funding Recommendations
OSTAB Recommendation