

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 06/27/23

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 23-0541

LOG NAME: 08ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

SUBJECT

(CD 8 and CD 11) Ratify Application for and Authorize Acceptance of, if Awarded, the Environmental Justice Government-to-Government Program Funds in the Amount Up to \$1,000,000.00, Authorize the City Manager to Execute All Applicable Grant Contracts Including Renewals and Amendments and Adopt Appropriation Ordinance for the Purpose of Funding Projects that Lead to Measurable Environmental or Public Health Results in Communities Disproportionately Burdened by Environmental Harms and Risks

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Ratify application for and, authorize acceptance of, if awarded, the Environmental Justice Government-to-Government Program Funds in the amount up to \$1,000,000.00;
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable grant contracts including renewals and amendments; and
3. Adopt the attached appropriation ordinance increasing estimated receipts and appropriations in the Grants Operating Federal Fund, subject to the receipt of the grant, in an amount up to \$1,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding projects that lead to measurable environmental or public health results in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms and risks.

DISCUSSION:

March 30, 2023, the city was notified about the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice grant funding opportunity for up to \$1,000,000.00, with a grant application deadline of April 14, 2023. In order to meet the deadline, a cross departmental team from Diversity and Inclusion, Fort Worth Lab, and Code Compliance, secured community Letters of Support and completed the grant application for submission April 14, 2023 preceding this M&C.

Funded through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G) program provides to support government activities that transform overburdened and/or underserved communities into healthy, thriving communities. This program will allow eligible entities to work collaboratively with underserved communities to understand, promote and integrate approaches to provide meaningful and measurable improvements in those communities.

If awarded, funds will be allocated to a geographic area of focus defined by Miller Ave., Highway 287, Highway 820 and Mansfield Highway to include the Echo Heights Neighborhood and the industrial growth center nearby. The intent of the project is to coordinate with stakeholders and community partners to develop a specific plan with an environmental justice focus to create specific action items. Specific, actionable items will be developed through facilitated community and stakeholder conversations and outreach. Once the area-specific plan is developed, remaining grant funds will be used to implement planned actions, where possible and feasible. Prioritization of action items is intended to be set by the community and stakeholders. Staff anticipate that, if awarded, dedicated funding will help to build neighborhood capacity and strong working relationship and serve as a framework which underscores the importance of coming together as a community to support all residents.

Critical to project success is the inclusion and engagement of partners across the community. Letters of support have been received from all three Chambers of Commerce, Southeast Fort Worth, Inc., Sun Valley Public Improvement District (PID #15) Tarrant County Public Health, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – Region IV (DFW), and Texas Christian University – The Institute for Environmental Studies. The nonprofit organization, Community Frontline, has also agreed to support the project as the community-based nonprofit organization (CBO) partner. Funding allows for up to three years for implementation; staff anticipate plan development within Year 1 and continued collaborations for implementation in Year 2 and Year 3. If awarded, receipt of grant funding can be expected on December 1, 2023 which may include adding temporary FTE's to support the implementation during the life cycle of the grant funding; a specific work plan would be implemented immediately.

Specific activities and action items include, but are not limited to:

- Public education
- Facilitating the engagement of disadvantaged communities in State advisory groups, workshops and rulemakings and other public processes
- Community revitalization planning addressing local pollution and green space
- Environmental Justice partnership building that engages disadvantaged communities in Local, State and Federal public processes, such as advisory groups, workshops, and rulemakings
- Research that is incidental to the project design

Several project outcomes are anticipated. Outcomes will include the deliverables of a specific action plan and implementation of key action items. Beyond these outcomes, it is also hoped that the project will build trust, create strong community capacity, inspire relationships, promote advocacy for all stakeholders, and serve as a model for similar environmental justice planning projects across the nation.

This project includes several departments and is led through a collaboration between Diversity & Inclusion, the Fort Worth Lab (formally Planning and Data Analytics) and Code Compliance departments. If the grant is not awarded, the work detailed in this M&C will not be supported by existing departments.

The project is included in COUNCIL DISTRICT 8 / COUNCIL DISTRICT 11 / Prior COUNCIL DISTRICT 8.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This contract will be with a governmental entity, state agency or public institution of higher education: United States Environmental Protection Agency

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that upon approval of the above recommendations and adoption of the attached appropriation ordinance, funds will be available in the current operating budget, as appropriated, in the Grants Operating Federal Fund. The Diversity and Inclusion Department (and Financial Management Services) will be responsible for the collection and deposit of funds due to the City. Prior to an expenditure being incurred, the Diversity and Inclusion Department has the responsibility to validate the availability of funds. This is a reimbursement grant.

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