



### **Agenda Action Form Overview**

The Durham County Matching Grants Program is seeking funding approval for the 2019-20 program applicants. The Matching Grants Committee of the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission received four applications towards development of new recreational initiatives in Durham County. The projects were recommended for the County's approval by the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission at its meeting on January 15, 2020.

### **Background/Justification**

The Durham County Matching Grants Program for Open Space and Real Estate projects is now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year. The grant program provides matching funding for local non-profits to pursue projects that protect open space or provide recreational opportunities for citizens of Durham County. The projects must be open to the public. The program is annually funded from the County's operating budget, which for FY19-20 totaled \$77,175. The program requires a 50% match from applicants, which can include a cash match as well the value of volunteer labor towards producing the project. Over the life of the program, the Durham County Matching Grants program has supported 112 wide ranging community projects with a total value of over \$6,467,765 using \$1,918,120 in county matching funds.

The 2019-20 cycle of the Matching Grants Program received four applications this cycle, for projects totaling \$76,700. The projects are wide ranging, and geographically spread across Durham (see starred locations on attached map).

#### **1. Ellerbe Creek Watershed: \$30,000**

ECWA is seeking funding to move ahead with Phase 5, Stream Restoration, of the 2020-21 Concept Plan. The DOST Grant will accomplish the following:

- Complete final design and major permitting of the Strayhorn Branch Stream Enhancement and Floodplain Reconnection project, which was recommended in Durham's Ellerbe Creek Watershed Management Improvement Plan (2010). Strayhorn Branch is a tributary draining 117 acres that enters South Ellerbe Creek at ECWA's Pearl Mill Nature Preserve. The confluence area is experiencing significant incision and bank instability, is three feet below the surrounding elevation, and continues to erode during every storm event, sending additional sediment into the creek.
- Purchase a conservation easement on a small portion of privately-owned land (.5 acres).
- Implement a short trail leading to South Ellerbe Greenway users toward a viewpoint of the Strayhorn Branch floodplain forest.
- Implement temporary (2 year) interpretive signage, update the Pearl Mill Concept Design Plan, and implement permanent interpretative signage at the end of the grant period.

#### **2. El Futuro: \$35,000**

Last year, with support from the Triangle Community Foundation and other donors, El Futuro began a two phase project to beautify the neglected area adjacent to their building in the Lakewood



Shopping Center. El Futuro is seeking funding for Phase II of a beautification project. The Phase 2 funding will complete the project. The work will involve installing a recycling stream with rocks and boulders along the edges to serve as a children's play scape. This will complement the completed phase 1 project of a bubbling water feature, public garden with seasonal produce, fruit trees, a bench, and a deck area toward the back of the green space creating an ideal location for community events and outdoor meetings.

3. Maureen Joy Charter School: \$5,000

Maureen Joy Charter School was previously awarded a matching grant in the amount of \$15,000 by Durham County. Costs to the project have increased due to design and permitting costs that were not originally captured during the initial bid submission. Additional funds are being sought to install an outdoor paved play/basketball court in the field behind the school.

4. Durham Parks Foundation: \$6,700

This is a continuation of the DOST funded habitat restoration project at West Point on the Eno Park. In 2018 Durham Parks Foundation (DPF) initiated this project with the funding of the design and construction of the Environmental Education Pavilion, located near the Amphitheatre in the northern portion of the park.

The 2020 phase for this multi-year project will include:

- Formalizing walkways through the first section of prairie to the astronomy pad with Chapel Hill gravel trails
- Adding seating, two swings, accessible benches, hammock stands and several boulders to the area by the Environmental Education Pavilion for birdwatching and passive recreation.
- Installing climbing pollinators along the fence line and supplementing the demonstration garden, including plant identification signs.

**Policy Impact**

The attached Matching Grant Summary supports Goal 2 “Health and Well-Being for All” by increasing the quality of life in Durham County, as well as Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship and Community Prosperity”.

**Procurement (Acquisition) Background**

The Matching Grants Program is a competitive grant program with staffing provided by the Open Space and Real Estate Division. The grant cycle was advertised beginning in late summer 2019 and the application deadline was November 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Fiscal Impact**

Funding requests equals \$475 under the \$77,175 allocated to the program for FY 2019-20. No additional funding is needed.

**Recommendation**

The County Manager recommends that the Board approve the organizations and amounts for the 2019-20 Matching Grants Cycle totaling \$76,700