



Agenda Action Form Overview

The Durham County Matching Grants Program is seeking funding approval for the 2020-21 program applicants. The Durham Open Space and Trails Commission (DOST) recommends approval of 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 20, 2021.

Background/Justification

The Durham County Matching Grants Program for Open Space and Real Estate projects is now in its 30th 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 FY 20-21 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 116 wide ranging community projects with a total value of over 6 million dollars using \$1.9 million in county matching funds. Applications are initially reviewed by the Matching Grants Committee of DOST, and are then recommended for approval by DOST prior to coming to the Board of County Commissioners.

The 2020-21 cycle of the Matching Grants Program included 7 applications totaling \$190,692 in requested funding. The Matching Grants Committee of DOST reviews the applications, and they have recommended four applications this cycle, for projects totaling \$77,175. The projects are wide ranging, and geographically spread across Durham (see starred locations on attached map).

The Program has a new initiative this grant year that allows qualifying projects within priority focus areas to apply for up to \$5,000 using a simplified application with a reduced applicant match of 25% (i.e the county matching funds are 75%). The Priority focus areas were designed to encourage projects within communities with lower socioeconomic backgrounds and provide a greater amount of county matching support. The focus areas were determined based on census tract income, and provide a simplified application, lower organization requirements, and a 75% county \$\$ match instead of 50%. One application (Maureen Joy Charter School) was received under this new priority initiative, and it was recommended for funding.

Project Summaries

1. Beth El Synagogue: \$20,000 County Funds awarded; organization match: \$332,000
Project Address: 1004 Watts Street, Durham, 27704

Beth El Synagogue is looking to install a nature-based playground in publicly accessible outdoor space. The philosophy behind the play space is "something different." Kids are used to the standard playground equipment and Beth El would like to take this unique opportunity to design



a safe, non-prescriptive, accessible, nature-based, imagination-inspired area. The design is based on design charrettes and discussions that included local landscape architecture firm CLH Designs, parents of different aged kids, focus groups of Beth El kids, experts in children with autism and play, and a K-12 sustainability professional. The proposed design is environmentally responsible, utilizes the natural topography and creates play areas for kids that capitalize on their creativity and imagination. There are places for quiet play/reflection, group play and teamwork.

2. El Futuro: \$25,000 County Funds awarded; organization match: \$67,591
Project Address: 2020 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, 27707

El Futuro is looking to build on the momentum of community engagement and transformation sustained over the last two years to complete the preservation, beautification, and recreational opportunities of a larger portion of the open space located around their clinic at the Lakewood Shopping Center. In this next phase of the project, they will preserve an additional open space area (the grown-over, steep hill that sits behind the clinic and leads to the adjacent, low-resource neighborhoods) and develop more recreational opportunities to encourage continued and increased community use among a wide variety of audiences and neighborhood members. The proposed activities will build on the therapeutic goals of the space for both children and adults through the development of a sensory garden, walking meditation path, and a back-hill terraced vegetable and pollinator garden space. This open space recreational area will be available to all segments of the Durham community, while creating a therapeutic green space in the middle of an urban neighborhood.

3. Urban Community AgriNomics (UCAN): \$30,175 County Funds awarded; organization match :\$55,500
Project Address: 2080 Saw Mill Parkway, Durham, 27712

Urban Community AgriNomics (UCAN) Catawba Trail Farm (CTF) vision is to provide Durham County residents with a rural community agriculture and historical center that includes farming, trails, open spaces and more. It includes cleared land, a community garden and infrastructure. In establishing Catawba Trail Farm UCAN are giving new life/reclaiming a farmstead with over 70 years of neglect. With this grant, they will complete the repairs needed to the Catawba Indian trading path that runs through the farm and intersects with a tributary of the Little River. They will place markers to identify native NC plants, trees, birds or other natural interests. Unique to this property is the oldest marked gravesite in Durham County, William Johnston and five of his children. They plan to acknowledge this gravesite and its historical relevancy through preservation and protection with assistance from the community. The site will be enclosed with period fencing, i.e. wrought iron. Since most of the buildings on the property were beyond restoration, funds will be used to replace a shelter for storage, a shelter attached to the Intergenerational House (a repurposed corn crib) and the acquisition of a building suitable for small convening, i.e. training.



Priority Focus Grants

4. Maureen Joy Charter School: \$2,000 County Funds awarded; organization match :\$656.25
Project Address: 107 South Drive Street, Durham, 27703

Maureen Joy Charter School would like to complete its Field of Joy by installing soccer goals and player benches. The Field of Joy as it has been commonly referred is an open field located directly behind the school. This field is currently being used for recess, P.E. Classes and after-school activities for approximately 640 students. The school does not have a gym, and any property improvements that can be provided to enhance the play area and potential intramural sports for students is a welcome opportunity.

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 2020 and the application deadline was November 18th.

Fiscal Impact

Funding requests equals the \$77,175 allocated to the program for FY 2020-21. No additional funding is needed.

Recommendation

The County Manager recommends that the Board approve the organizations and amounts for the 2020-21 Matching Grants Cycle totaling \$77,175.