



Date: November 19, 2019

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: W. Bowman Ferguson, Deputy City Manager
From: Jina B. Propst, Interim Director, General Services Department
Subject: Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund Grant Acceptance

Executive Summary

The Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund has awarded a \$300,000 grant to the City of Durham and six other project partners (Durham County Soil & Water Conservation District, Durham Public Schools, Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Rebuilding Together of the Triangle, and The Conservation Fund) for the purpose of Building Neighborhood Resilience in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed. The grant will be supplemented by an additional \$160,000 of cash and in-kind matching funds from project partners for a total project allocation of \$460,000 for sustainability efforts in our community. Project partners will work in underserved neighborhoods to improve stream health, expand tree canopies, and lower energy and water bills for residents, incorporating an innovative green jobs training program (BETC- bionomic educational training center) based at Southern High School.

Recommendation

The General Services Department recommends that City Council accept the Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund grant; adopt the grant budget ordinance; and authorize the City Manager to execute a grant agreement in the amount of \$300,000.

Background

In June 2019, the General Services Department submitted a Letter of Intent on behalf of the City of Durham for a grant from the Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund. The City was invited to the final round for grant consideration and that application was submitted in October 2019. In November 2019, the City was one of five cities in the Southeast to be awarded a grant from the program.

The primary goals of the grant are to address climate change by reducing stormwater runoff, streambank erosion and flooding in low-income neighborhoods in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed of Durham, and improving energy and water efficiency in homes in these same neighborhoods. An important secondary goal is to provide disadvantaged students with an opportunity to learn green infrastructure job skills. The two-year grant will support the City's goals of equitable engagement in underserved communities, green job training and development, cost of living reduction for low-income residents, and improving water quality in our streams.

The grant will fund installation of stormwater mitigation measures such as downspout disconnections, cisterns, and rain gardens on homes and properties in low-income neighborhoods, as well as planting trees and stabilizing streambanks along streams that are vulnerable to erosion and flooding. It will weatherize homes in those same neighborhoods, install water-saving devices, and provide homeowners with information about available

incentives for further energy savings. It will also provide training to residents and landscapers on green infrastructure measures.

Project Indicators	
Green infrastructure measures installed	35-40
Trees planted as buffers and tree canopy enhancement	200-300
Homes weatherized	20
Water-saving devices installed	60
Teachers and students impacted	80
Durham community members engaged	500

Issues and Analysis

The project brings together government and nonprofit partners to develop replicable solutions to increase the comfort, health, and quality of life for the watershed’s most vulnerable residents. The City has made the implementation of the 2018 Roadmap to Sustainability one of its top priorities and this funding will support many of the initiatives in that plan, including:

- Establish public partnerships to install green infrastructure practices that increase biodiversity and improve water quality.
- Expand forestry programs aimed at increasing the jurisdiction’s tree canopy through active planting, care and management in partnership with local businesses, civic groups and nonprofit organizations.
- Participate in talent development, STEM education and work-based learning internship programs and events.

Alternatives

The City Council could choose not to adopt the proposed grant budget ordinance and the City would not accept the grant from the Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund.

Financial Impact

The grant of \$300,000 does not require a financial match from the City. The grant will be supplemented by an additional \$160,000 in matching funds from project partners (cash and in-kind) for a total project allocation of \$460,000 for sustainability efforts in our community. The General Services Department will provide in-kind staff time and serve as the Project Manager.

Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund grant:	\$300,000.00
Estimated Program Income	
Durham County	50,000.00
Rebuilding Together of the Triangle	35,000.00
City-County Interlocal Agreement	30,000.00
City of Durham	25,000.00
Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association	20,000.00
Total	\$160,000.00

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

Not applicable.

Attachments

Exhibit A - FY 2020-21 Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund Grant Budget Ordinance

Exhibit B - Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund Grant Award Contract

Exhibit C - Grant Application

Exhibit D - Ellerbe Creek Map and Grant Target Area