

MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To: Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney
Subject: Climate Resiliency Planning Grant

Date: December 8, 2022

Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is to consider authorizing the District Administrator to apply for a MN Pollution Control Agency’s Climate Resiliency Planning Grant. If the grant is awarded, to then authorize the District Administrator to enter into a grant agreement for the same.

This grant program was offered for the first time last year; this year will be the second round offered. CLFLWD previously partnered with Brown’s Creek WD, Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD, and Middle St. Croix WMO to submit a joint grant application to the first round of this program last year. Unfortunately, the application was not selected for funding likely due to the study areas not including much overlap with MPCA’s Environmental Justice Areas of Concern map. Though our District doesn’t have any overlap with this map, it still services several small rural communities that are vulnerable to climate change impacts. As such, staff recommends it is worth reapplying to the program for its second round. Staff reached out to the same WD/WMO partners again this year and found that each organization seems to be at a different place in their floodplain planning. Staff recommends CLFLWD submits this grant application on its own.

The proposed grant application will request funding for Emmons & Olivier Resources technical assistance, as well as Freshwater Society and District staff time to do community engagement. Though we are not planning to submit a joint application again this year, our community engagement efforts will still be coordinated with overlapping entities (e.g., Rice Creek WD in the City of Forest Lake and Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD in the City of Scandia). In the meantime, since our first application to this grant program almost a year ago, the District allocated local funding (financed by the zero interest Clean Water Partnership loan) to perform some of the technical work needed for this effort. This work entailed flood hazard mapping to identify areas of projected flooding as a result of a heavy rain event. The remaining technical work that needs to be done will involve overlapping social vulnerability to identify the areas of the District at the cross section of flood hazard and social vulnerability. The District has engaged its communities on this topic in the past and will need to continue that engagement to further narrow down priorities and implementation activities.

The estimated grant request is in the ballpark of \$40,000. The minimum required match is 10% of the grant amount. The District Administrator has the authority to apply for and enter into contracts for grants less than \$40,000. The grant application is still underway, but it may slightly exceed \$40,000. The grant deadline is January 12th.

Recommended Action

Proposed Motion: Manager _____ moves to authorize the District Administrator to submit an application to the MPCA Climate Resiliency Planning Grant and execute the grant agreement, if awarded. Seconded by Manager _____.