Alternative Funding Opportunities

Our Experience on the Robbins Stormwater Park Project

February 21, 2018
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
IAFSM Stormwater Funding Seminar

Jack Chan/Annie Wright
Outline

- Evolution of the Robbins Park Project
- A New Approach in Stormwater Infrastructure Investment
- Searching for Alternative Funding Opportunities
- Tips on Applying for Grants and Assistant Programs
100-Year Storm Event Inundation Area
Flooding impacting > 140 acres (~20% of total land in Robbins or 0.22 sq. miles)
Previous Work and Challenges

- Traditional “hole-in-the-ground” solutions
  - High cost ~ $6 Million
  - No added benefits beyond engineered flood control
  - Displace residents
  - Do not meet the needs of the Village
Continuous Flooding

Lack of investment & services

Vacant land

Lack of sports fields

Lack of major open spaces

Poor relationship to transit
Opportunities

“Let’s design a flood control solution that will maximize local assets and spur economic development.”
Job creation
Potential for transit-oriented development
Creation of recreational spaces
Connections to the regional resources
Community Engagement

Public meetings and workshops

1. No Relocation of Residents
2. Solve the Flooding
3. Respect and engage the historic legacy of Robbins
4. Attract new residents
5. Facilitate development of affordable housing and retail
6. Inspire job creation
7. Create space for youth sports and seniors
8. Engage nature through learning, fishing, walking, & rowing
9. Establish a strategy for maintenance and maximizing the value of land around the park
Vision:
A green-blue stormwater solution for Robbins which includes wetlands, lakes, parks and playfields

District 1 –
Creating Robbins Park
3 Development Districts

District 1 – Robbins Park
District 2 – Transit-Oriented Development District
District 3 – Industrial District
Technical Experts:
Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
Regional Transit Authority
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Chicago Botanic Garden
The Nature Conservancy
South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association

Funders/Influencers:
Cook County
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Illinois Housing Development Authority
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
The Nature Conservancy
South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association
Metropolitan Planning Council

Other Interested Partners:
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Chicagoland Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Argonne National Lab
Illinois Association of Park Districts

Stewards/Workforce:
U.S. Department of Defense / Innovative Readiness Training Program

Morton Arboretum
Chicago Botanic Garden
OAI, Inc.

Land Holders:
South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority
Cook County Land Bank Authority
Housing Authority of Cook County
OpenLands

Stakeholder Engagement

Core Group for Infrastructure and Pre-Development Leadership:
Village of Robbins
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Cook County
South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority
Metra

Potential Private Partners:
UIC’s Voorhees Center
Impact Engine
MacArthur Foundation
Grand Victoria Foundation
Chicago Community Trust
Rural Studio
Corvias
Owner of Robbins Power Center
Miller Canfield
Robbins Grants

- Chi-Cal Rivers Fund
- CMAP’s Local Technical Assistance Grant
- Chicago Community Trust
- Innovative Readiness Training Grant
- FEMA’s Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant
Chi-Cal Rivers Fund Grant

Robbins Centennial Boat Launch
Phase I - Robbins Stormwater Park
CMAP LTA Grant
Innovative Readiness Training Grant
FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant
GRANTS
WHERE TO LOOK, HOW TO APPLY
Beginning your search
Questions for evaluating grants

- Are you eligible to apply?
- What are the overall program goals?
- What kind of projects have they previously funded?
- Will your project fit, or is it a stretch?
- Are matching funds required? How much? Do they need to be committed?
- Will award date fit with your project timeline?
- What type of reporting is required?
- Do you need letters of support?
Balancing Act

- Amount of work put into an application vs. Award amount
- Amount of reporting required vs. Ability to manage reporting
- Amount you are seeking vs. Overall budget of grant
So you’ve found some grants. Now what?

- Decide who should be the recipient: Your agency, or a non-profit partner?
- Managing timelines: Project and Grants
- Can your project timeline be flexible? If not, funding by grants will be difficult.
- Manage residents’ expectations regarding the timeline
- Find backup grants/funding

ORGANIZE!!!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
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<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title:</td>
<td>Foundation:</td>
<td>Deadline(s):</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>Link:</td>
<td>Amount Available/Requested:</td>
<td>Park, TOD or Green Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Great Rivers</td>
<td>The Chicago Community Trust</td>
<td>5/31/2017</td>
<td>Community-led proposals across four of the Trust’s funding arenas: sustainable development, economic development, public health, and arts and culture.</td>
<td><a href="http://ret.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/OurGreatRiverRFP-Jan17.pdf">http://ret.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/OurGreatRiverRFP-Jan17.pdf</a></td>
<td>$25,000 to $100,000, with the possibility for renewal.</td>
<td>TOD or Green Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Conservation Fund</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>7/3/2017</td>
<td>Acquiring and developing land and water outdoor recreational areas and facilities. This helps local agencies preserve, develop, and ensure accessibility to outdoor recreation resources.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/AES/Page/Grant-Administration.aspx">https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/AES/Page/Grant-Administration.aspx</a></td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet Me at the Park</td>
<td>NRPA &amp; The Walt Disney Company</td>
<td>6/29/2017</td>
<td>Improve access to outdoor parks</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nropa.org/disney">http://www.nropa.org/disney</a></td>
<td>$11,000 to $50,000</td>
<td>Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Planning Program</td>
<td>RTA (Regional Transportation Authority)</td>
<td>6/2/2017 Letter of Support 6/29/2017 Application</td>
<td>Balanced, coordinated and integrated approach to community and transit planning that benefits local communities while maximizing the use of the RTA.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.rtachicago.org/index.php/plans-programs/grants-projects/community-planning/eligible-projects.html">https://www.rtachicago.org/index.php/plans-programs/grants-projects/community-planning/eligible-projects.html</a></td>
<td>Project budgets are set by the RTA during the project selection process based on the project scope and previous experience with similar projects and in consultation with the applicant. The &quot;not to exceed amount&quot; is the &quot;not to exceed amount&quot;. Please remember that we do not provide funds or fundraise for your project but we can help develop a funding strategy to include grant</td>
<td>TOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Lands Acquisition &amp; Development and Land &amp; Water Conservation Programs</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>7/2/2017</td>
<td>Local units of government can apply for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/AES/Page/OpenSpaceLandsAcquisitionDevelopment-Grant.aspx">https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/AES/Page/OpenSpaceLandsAcquisitionDevelopment-Grant.aspx</a></td>
<td>$750,000 max</td>
<td>Park</td>
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Matching funds- Don’t Panic!

- Design contract costs count
- Value of land counts
- Staff time spent on project can count
- Make sure not to use federal funds to match federal funds- it’s generally not allowed.
Establishing trust with funders

- Don’t apply just to apply
- Follow-up with applications
- If your application and reporting are strong, they may come to you with opportunities in the future

After Award

- Complete required reporting
- Continue to review your application promises. Are you keeping them? If not, tell the funder why.
Approaching foundations

- Do your homework. Know their funding priorities
- Have your “ask” ready:
- Know exactly what you want them to fund
- Know how much to ask for
- Emphasize how the project fits with their funding priorities

Follow up afterwards- thank them for their time, ask next steps
When you don’t get the award

- Ask for feedback, if possible. You may be invited to reapply next round.
- Learn your project (or proposal)’s weaknesses so they become strengths next time.
- This is why we find backups!
If possible, have a writer work on your proposals.

Remember, you are telling a story.

Tie your project in with the funder’s goals.

Don’t repeat yourself. Know what you want to say, review the application and decide where you want to say it.

Give yourself enough time to create a successful proposal. Don’t rush to make a deadline and blow your chance with a funder.

Review, review, review! Typos and grammatical errors are embarrassing.
QUESTIONS?

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