

REGIONAL WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Worksheet

PRESENTATION DATE: April 15, 2021 **LENGTH:** 30 minutes

PRESENTATION TITLE: Investment and Innovation grants pilot evaluation and future of the program

DECISION TYPE: Advisory

RELATED REGIONAL WASTE PLAN GOALS: Goals 8, 9, 15

PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- On March 18, staff provided the RWAC with background and context on the Investment and Innovation grant program pilot and key findings from an evaluation of the pilot.
- This meeting will solicit RWAC input on two questions: (1) Would the I&I program continue to add value to the region if it were to continue beyond the pilot phase? (2) If the I&I program continues, should its racial equity goals be elevated by establishing minimum equity performance targets for each grant or for the program as a whole?

ACTION REQUESTED

- This item is advisory.

BACKGROUND

- The Metro Council initiated the Investment and Innovation (I&I) program in 2018 as a three-year pilot to invest in efforts of private companies and non-profit organizations to (1) create, expand, preserve and broaden efforts that advance waste prevention, reuse, recycling and energy recovery in the greater Portland area, and (2) help foster economic opportunities and other benefits for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities.
- The I&I program is one of Metro's tools to help achieve the overarching objectives of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan to reduce the environmental impacts of materials throughout their life cycle and to advance racial equity.
- During the pilot the program awarded over \$8.7 million in 41 grants. Capital grants up to \$712,500 are funding infrastructure improvements and equipment. Program grants up to \$75,000 are funding costs associated with new or expanded programming.
- Metro has conducted an evaluation of the individual and cumulative outcomes of these grants, with respect to both environmental and racial equity impacts. The evaluation focused on how well the program is advancing Regional Waste Plan objectives. The short attached *Impact Summary Report* highlights key environmental and racial equity findings from the evaluation. The full evaluation report (link at bottom) provides more detail on the specific Regional Waste Plan goals and actions advanced through the program, quantifies project impacts, and identifies lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

- A key finding in the evaluation is that the racial equity impacts of the individual grants varied wildly. Equity-related criteria were included in the rubric used to develop solicitations and evaluate proposals. However, the criteria were intentionally broad during the pilot, and specific outcomes were not established that applicants would need to meet to receive an I&I grant. Rather, applicants were required to demonstrate how their projects would advance racial equity, and the grant review committee considered the proposed strategies in making their funding recommendations.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Would the I&I program continue to add value to the region, if it were to continue beyond the pilot phase?
- If the I&I program continues, should its racial equity goals be elevated by establishing minimum equity performance targets for each grant or for the program as a whole?

NEXT STEPS

- Staff will include input from RWAC in its presentation to Metro Council on April 20, and will report back to RWAC after the Council work session.

ATTACHMENTS/LINK TO FULL EVALUATION REPORT

- Investment and Innovation program pilot Impact Summary report
- Due to its size, the full evaluation report is not attached but is available in the Related Files section of the program website: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-partners/grants-and-resources/investment-and-innovation-grants>