

An Evaluation of the Neighborhood Matching Fund 1999-2008



December 2009



Cal Anderson Park

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The Fremont Troll, Chinatown-ID Dragon Poles, Rainier Valley Cultural Center, Greenwood Park

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008 and 2009, the Department of Neighborhoods assessed the impact of the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) Program to determine strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement.



Queen Anne Farmers Market

Background

The program was founded in 1988 in response to calls from neighborhood leaders for support for resident-led efforts. The Seattle City Council adopted a resolution in 1987 to create a partnership between the City and its neighborhoods in order to provide opportunities and resources for community members to become empowered to engage in community-building and civic engagement activities. Today, the NMF supports:

- Projects which feature high community participation and self-help, wherein the beneficiaries of the proposed project are part of shaping and implementing the project.
- Grassroots, neighborhood-based projects across the City of Seattle.
- Grassroots, neighborhood-based organizations or organizations that advocate for the interests of people of color.
- Projects that have a match of volunteer or professional services, donated materials, and/or cash resources.
- Projects with distinct products, rather than ongoing services.
- Neighborhood improvements, planning, organizing and public school/ neighborhood partnership projects which have a public benefit.

The resolution emphasizes the needs of low-income communities by requiring that “at least 51% of the total funds available in each funding cycle will be awarded to projects providing a direct benefit to low-moderate-income people in the City of Seattle” and provides the framework for the program.

Program Overview

Today, the Neighborhood Matching Fund is comprised of four core funds:

- Outreach and Development Fund, including Small Sparks;
- Tree Fund;
- Small and Simple Projects Fund; and
- Large Projects Fund.

Program management and project development services include outreach, technical assistance, and program administration activities.

A cornerstone of the NMF program is the community match requirement. For each project, the NMF awardee must match the value of the cash award by securing contributions of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services and/or cash. This match requirement establishes a strong level of community accountability and ownership for funded projects.

Over the last two decades, the impact of the Neighborhood Matching Fund has been vast. NMF projects have promoted neighborhood planning, community organizing, physical improvements, race and social justice, climate protection, youth initiatives and school-community partnerships. These 20 years of community-driven projects represent:

- \$42 million in NMF awards through 3,500 projects;
- \$64 million of community match (including volunteer labor, donated materials and professional services); and
- 65,000 volunteers who donated over 400,000 hours.

Budget

The Neighborhood Matching Fund expenditure budget is distinctive because it is a pool of dollars awarded to community members rather than a pool focused on organizations or businesses. Because NMF projects, depending on their complexity, budget and scope, can take variable timelines to complete, NMF is set up like a capital fund, with dollars that revolve or are carried over from year to year. The total NMF budget managed and overseen by the department in a given fiscal year is a combination of NMF funds carried from prior years and new annual appropriations through the City’s Adopted Budget. The NMF Budget is therefore administered separately from the General Fund budget within the Department of Neighborhoods.

Adopted Budget 1999 – 2008

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
\$ 3,750, 000	\$ 3,750,000	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 3,700,000

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
\$ 3,555,429	\$ 3,551,119	\$ 3,270,911	\$ 3,595,694	\$ 3,796,389

Funding was increased significantly in 2000-2001 while the City's budget as a whole was in a growth period. Reductions were made when budget shortfalls occurred during the 2003 recession.

Staffing

In 2008, there were seven permanent full-time positions in the NMF Program and two part-time staff for a total of 8.2 FTE. In addition NMF funds two staff in collaborating departments for technical review; 1.0 FTE in the Department of Parks and Recreation and 0.5 FTE in the Department of Transportation.

With time-limited funding for launching new efforts, two temporary Project Managers supported work under special City initiatives related to the NMF Program: Climate Action Now and Youth Violence Prevention. Additional work hours to an existing, half-time position in another department program called Involving All Neighbors shared NMF project work in 2008.

NMF operating funds also partially support the amount of time spent on the Neighborhood Matching Fund program by the Department Deputy Director and an Administrative Assistant.



Duwamish River Fest



Conclusion and Recommendations

Three issue areas emerged from the analyses of qualitative and quantitative program data: Customer Service; Systems Management; and Resource Allocation.

Because the Neighborhood Matching Fund is purposefully meant to be community-driven, the projects that NMF has supported over the years range widely, from planning activities to production of neighborhood gatherings to environmental initiatives. The strengths of the program are multiple. Its community-driven focus builds leadership in community members, and its match component encourages deep engagement among constituents. The breadth of the funds offers many points of access, providing, in numerous cases, important seed funding that these projects would be challenged to find elsewhere. The program's strong reputation lends these projects credibility that they can leverage when seeking other funding and resources.

While program strengths are many, there are also weaknesses that limit NMF's overall effectiveness and potential. Current program data offer sufficient quantitative reviews, but are unable to gauge increases and improvements in the emotional and mental connections that people have to the neighborhoods where they live, work and play – the social capital that is at the heart of the NMF.

Impacting this program (and many other community programs today) is a threat of dwindling funding. And yet, prospects for improving qualitative and longitudinal evaluation methods, technological tools, community-specific outreach, public recognition of NMF successes, and numbers and scopes of projects that transcend neighborhoods' physical boundaries all offer great opportunities to strengthen the program over time.

The following is a summary of recommendations for consideration to improve the Neighborhood Matching Fund program and build upon the strong foundation it has laid over the last two decades.



MacArthur Lane P-Patch Opening

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
Customer Service	Labor-Intensive Application and Reporting Processes, especially for new and emerging community groups	<p>C1. Streamline application, reporting and invoicing forms to create better ease of use for applicants and awardees.</p> <p>C2. Explore improved processes for groups with language and cultural barriers, such as oral applications.</p> <p>C3. Develop web-based applications and reporting systems.</p> <p>C4. Review and streamline Large Project Fund review process.</p>
	More and Effective Support Needed for Historically Underserved Communities	<p>C5. Partner with formal and informal community-/population-specific community-based agencies to deliver outreach materials and application trainings.</p> <p>C6. Partner with local fundraising, philanthropy and capacity-building organizations (Northwest Development Officers Association, Puget Sound Grantwriters Association, Philanthropy Northwest, Nonprofit Assistance Center, etc.) to co-sponsor meet-the-funder forums and other related programs.</p> <p>C7. Tailor trainings to outreach, cultural and language needs.</p> <p>C8. Provide translations of all program information.</p> <p>C9. Formalize options for administrative support for community groups through community-based organizations (Seattle Neighborhood Group) Nonprofit Assistance Center, etc).</p>

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
	Improved Outreach to Potential Applicants	<p>C10. DON should coordinate information about all City community grants, advise on best fits for project proposals, and provide referrals.</p> <p>C11. Provide more community trainings, related handouts and website information (tips, FAQs, etc.) so that applicants are more ready and better prepared by the time they enter into the application process.</p> <p>C12. Develop communications strategy to inform a broader public about access to the Funds.</p>
	Better Transparency about Review Criteria and Processes	C13. More consistently and thoroughly communicate review criteria and procedures – particularly as it pertains to the Large Projects Fund – at all appropriate communications opportunities (website, guidelines, application forms, trainings, outreach events, etc.).
	Train and Improve Consistency in Staff Support	<p>C14. Align staff strengths with community needs.</p> <p>C15. Conduct regular training of staff in customer service and workshop facilitation to provide equitable services across groups.</p>
	Coordination with other City Departments	C16. Improve coordination with City Departments requiring review/permitting to provide clarity on requirements and streamline timing issues for community volunteers.

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
Systems Management	Program Evaluation	<p>S1. Identify additional evaluation metrics that can assess not only the quantitative effects of NMF, but also the qualitative, social impacts, human service support, public safety improvements, economic development improvements that NMF investments help realize.</p> <p>S2. Develop internal data collection and management systems that better track the social impact of NMF community building to more fully assess the contributions of NMF.</p> <p>S3. Develop data collection methods that more specifically track the reach of community relationships (such as the amount and types of collaboration between projects and local businesses, relationships formed between community groups and funders, etc.) that arise as a result of NMF.</p> <p>S4. Identify additional evaluation tools – such as annual surveys to be completed by awardees – to measure full reach of NMF projects.</p> <p>S5. Conduct return on investment analysis for City funds leveraging private investment and on-going impacts on public safety, operations and maintenance costs.</p>
	Labor-Intensive Application and Reporting Processes	<p>S6. Update technological systems to include online applications, reporting and invoicing as well as to improve e-communications with potential applicants, current applicants and awardees.</p>
Resource Allocation	Staffing Levels / Workloads	<p>R1. Refocus staff job duties to provide support to new and emerging communities and other groups who do not have experience interacting with City departments.</p> <p>R2. Reallocate project assignments to individuals or teams who specialize in areas of expertise by project type, communities, etc., to streamline project management efficiencies.</p>

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
	Limits on Funds' Granting Parameters	<p>R3. Conduct analysis to determine relevance of current award levels and scope to ensure that communities' needs for successfully implementing projects are met. Ideas to be considered would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding scope by project and applicant criteria of the Outreach Fund to better bridge current gap between the current Outreach Fund and the Small and Simple Fund. - Explore raising award ceilings for the Small and Simple Fund and the Large Project Fund to address inflation. - Improve and update Tree Fund policies that better address residents' interests. - Establish an equitable review process outside of the current neighborhood-specific criteria for citywide Large Projects Fund projects. <p>R4. Institute a process for regularly conducting (perhaps every two or three years) this review of relevance of award levels and scope.</p>
	Engage Community Members Across Neighborhood Boundaries	<p>R5. Eliminate policy and process barriers to cross-neighborhood collaborations</p> <p>R.6 Provide networking opportunities and trainings for cross-neighborhood collaborations</p>

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008. NMF's successes have been lauded through testimony, the physical completion of numerous neighborhood improvement projects, and the program's replication in over a hundred cities around the United States and internationally. Yet, a full evaluation of the program's strengths and areas needing improvement had not been conducted.

Seattle has changed significantly in the 20 years of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Development has boomed, neighborhoods have been challenged to define themselves, and community members have become aware of the roles they can assume to steward their neighborhoods to improve livability. Seattle's demographics as well as the challenges of civic engagement of within more diverse community have also changed. The City and community naturally ask – "Has the Neighborhood Matching Fund kept pace with changes in Seattle over 20 years? What have been the results? How can it be improved to better align with our current and future challenges?"



SODO Urban Art Corridor

In early 2008, the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) began an evaluation process to assess the impact of the Neighborhood Matching Fund Program. This evaluation looks at program strengths and weaknesses and identifies areas in which the program can be improved.

Methodology for Information Gathering

This evaluation is based on qualitative stakeholder feedback and quantitative descriptive program data. The quantitative data are collected from existing program records analyzed from 1999-2008. Due to program and staffing changes over the years, there are certain unavoidable inconsistencies in the types of data collected and compiled. Program data describes groups and neighborhoods supported by the various Neighborhood Matching Fund award components, types of neighborhood projects, and information regarding development and ongoing program operations and processes. Financial data includes budget and staffing allocations.

Quantitative data were compiled by program staff and Department of Finance staff specifically assigned to assist with the evaluation. Descriptive data were compiled regarding amount of awards, amount of community match, distribution of awards among racial and ethnic groups, geographic locations, and types of projects. Some data that were required to answer questions about the program were not already compiled, so research was conducted to collect the information and compile it into a reportable format.

Qualitative data was gathered through a mixed-method approach using focus groups, key informant interviews, and phone surveys. An external team of research consultants ([Appendix A: Consultants for Stakeholder and Key Informant Feedback](#)) was hired by the Department of Neighborhoods to facilitate community feedback sessions from a neutral perspective and to collect and compile the comments. Members of various community stakeholder groups were invited to provide their thoughts and perspectives about the effectiveness and potential of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Invitations from the Department of Neighborhoods were extended through posted mail to over 2,800 individuals for participation in focus groups, phone interviews or key informant interviews. DON staff also made phone calls to encourage potential respondents to participate. As such, it is possible that many people who chose to participate did so out of a desire to express specific issues or concerns about the NMF Program.

Additional qualitative data was gathered at neighborhood district council meetings by Neighborhood Matching Fund staff.

FOCUS GROUPS – Between late April and early May 2008 ([Appendix B: Focus Group Schedule](#)), the research team conducted nine focus groups with various stakeholders: Neighborhood Matching Fund awardees; members of the Citywide Review Team; the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation; the Seattle Department of Transportation; and Seattle Public Utilities. Focus group participants were self-selected based on invitation letters ([Appendix C](#)) that were mailed by DON in April 2008 to NMF awardees. Using an internal database of stakeholders, the Department of Neighborhoods generated 2,800 such letters.

The research team facilitated the focus groups using a series of moderator's guides reviewed by DON ([Appendix D: Sample Moderator's Guide](#)). There was an average of eight participants in each focus group, with each group lasting roughly two hours. At the end of each focus group, non-City employees were offered a modest stipend to cover transportation costs.

Table 1: Focus Group Participants

Stakeholder Type	Number of Focus Groups	Total Number of Participants
NMF Awardees	6	52
NMF Citywide Review Team	1	5
Seattle Parks Department	1	6
Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities	1	8
TOTAL	9	71

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS – The research team conducted six key informant interviews with individuals selected by DON. The interviewees were:

- Pamela Banks, Director of Outreach, Office of the Mayor
- Sally Clark, Seattle City Councilmember
- Richard Conlin, Seattle City Councilmember
- Dwight Dively, Director, Department of Finance
- Jackie Kirn, Strategic Advisor, Office of Policy and Management
- Jim Street, Former Seattle City Councilmember

Using an interview guide reviewed by DON, the research team interviewed each key informant individually. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. ([Appendix E: Key Informant Interview Guide](#))

PHONE INTERVIEWS – Finally, the research team conducted four additional phone interviews with individuals identified by DON. Interviewees included:

- Gretchen Dedecker, Project Coordinator, Seattle Public Schools
- Paul Fischburg, Policy Advisor, Office of Policy Management
- Kathy Hsieh, Community Liaison, Office Arts and Cultural Affairs
- Bill Keller, Associated Recreation Council Executive Director, Parks and Recreation

These interviews were intended to supplement data collected through the focus groups and key informant interviews. Using the same interview guide as for the key informant interview, these interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each.

The consultant research team primarily used a note-based analysis, using typed notes and flipcharts as the primary data sources, with audio recordings as backup sources. The research team also debriefed the focus groups, key informant interviews and phone interviews. Using the focus group and interview guides, responses from participants in each focus group and interview were categorized based on common themes that emerged, and comments were tallied to measure the frequency with which each theme was referenced.

NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETINGS – In addition to the work conducted by the research team, Neighborhood Matching Fund program staff attended neighborhood district council meetings to solicit councilmembers' feedback about expansion proposals related to specific NMF funds.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Matching Fund: Background and Framework

Seattle's quality of life is tied to its strong neighborhoods and their active residents. Recognizing that the most vibrant neighborhoods are those where community members feel ownership of issues and are empowered to effect change, the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) program was created in 1988 to provide community members with City resources for self-help projects – those imagined, planned and implemented by community members – that enhance and strengthen their own neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Matching Fund program components promote collaboration between City government and the community, and support:

- Projects featuring high community participation and self-help, wherein the beneficiaries of the proposed project are part of shaping and implementing it.
- Grassroots, neighborhood-based projects across the City of Seattle.
- Grassroots, neighborhood-based organizations or organizations that advocate for the interests of people of color.
- Projects that have a match of volunteer or professional services, donated materials, and/or cash resources.
- Projects with distinct products, rather than ongoing services.
- Neighborhood improvements, planning, organizing and public school/ neighborhood partnership projects which have a public benefit.



Lao Highland Association Community Resource Center

Created in response to calls from neighborhood leaders for support for resident-led efforts, the Seattle City Council passed a resolution in 1987 to create a partnership between the City and its neighborhoods in order to provide neighborhoods with financial support, technical assistance and encouragement for community-building activities that reflect their needs and values. This resolution informs

NMF's policy framework and outlines the program's goals, operating objectives, application process, and selection criteria. Program goals are to:

- foster effective ways for residents and business persons to initiate and carry out small scale neighborhood improvements and neighborhood-focused planning;
- increase cooperation and participation among residents, business persons, neighborhoods and the City of Seattle; and
- promote participation in neighborhood activities that reflect the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the City of Seattle.

The resolution also emphasizes the needs of low-income communities by requiring that “at least 51% of the total funds available in each funding cycle will be awarded to projects providing a direct benefit to low-moderate-income people in the City of Seattle.” In pursuit of these collective goals, the NMF Program supports community projects initiated by neighborhood groups and organizations where residents identify, plan and manage neighborhood efforts. Projects must build community by: engaging all segments of a neighborhood or community; providing a public benefit; and honoring the culture, traditions, values and relationships in that community.

A cornerstone of the NMF program is the community match requirement. For each project, the NMF awardee must match the value of the cash award by securing contributions of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services and/or cash. Awardees are required to secure a 1:1 match for physical projects, and ½:1 match for non-physical improvement projects. This match requirement establishes a strong level of community accountability and ownership for funded projects.

The NMF is overseen by the Department of Neighborhoods, which works to bring government closer to the residents of Seattle by engaging them in civic participation; by helping them become empowered to make positive contributions to their communities; and by involving more of Seattle's underrepresented residents – including communities of color and immigrants – in civic discourse, processes and opportunities.

In the first NMF budget in 1988, the City Council set aside \$150,000 for projects requesting up to \$3,000. Ten years later, the annual NMF budget was ten times that original amount: \$1.5 million. The 2008 Adopted Budget was \$3,797,389 and was comprised of:

- 1) Outreach Fund (which includes Small Sparks)
- 2) Tree Fund
- 3) Small and Simple Projects Fund
- 4) Large Projects Fund
- 5) Management and Project Development

Over the past 20 years, the NMF has funded over 3,500 projects, totaling over \$42 million of City investment matched with \$65 million in cash, volunteer time and donated materials. These projects promote neighborhood planning, community organizing, physical improvements, race and social justice, climate protection, youth initiatives and school-community partnerships.

Since the program's inception, this model has been duplicated not only in other City of Seattle departments – including the Department of Transportation, Public Utilities, Parks and Technology Departments as well as arts programs – but also in other cities around the country and world, including Newcastle (United Kingdom) and Kobe (Japan).

Neighborhood Matching Fund: Award Funds

The Neighborhood Matching Fund includes several award funds intentionally created to provide applicants support and a progressive learning experience, beginning with \$250 Small Sparks grants and ascending to Large Project Fund awards, which provide up to \$100,000. While applicants can enter into the award spectrum at any point, they are encouraged to start small, gain experience, gather support and build community along the way.

1) OUTREACH FUND

SMALL SPARKS – Small Sparks, contained within the Outreach Fund, was created in 1998 to introduce newcomers to civic engagement. This is the only Neighborhood Matching Fund program component that makes awards to individuals, who are not required to have affiliation with an organized group to be eligible for application.

Small Sparks provides individuals with up to \$250 in up-front money for small community projects, such as supplies and materials, interpreters, or printed materials for a neighborhood event. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed upon receipt by Neighborhood District Coordinators or NMF staff.

The typical Small Sparks award recipient is someone who has looked out her/his door, found something that (s)he is interested in or passionate about, and then joins with other people to put a project together. What is unique about Small Sparks is that it supports individual people rather than groups or organizations, and is designed to provide a “spark” to a community through bringing individuals together or initiating a neighborhood idea. A Small Sparks award to support outreach for a neighborhood event, for example, may lead neighbors to learn that there is a shared interest about a particular neighborhood issue, such as pedestrian safety or the desire for a community garden. Some, but not all, Small Sparks projects develop into larger-scale organizing projects and qualify for higher levels of community and financial support, both through NMF and through other community resources.

While Small Sparks is able to support small-scale projects with a relatively short turnaround time, this fund is explicitly for individuals and not community groups. While the intent is to provide seed money to spark stronger neighborhood connections or community organizing, Small Sparks projects are often seen as precursors to later, larger efforts, but are typically not realized as fully organized community-building efforts at the point of Small Sparks funding.

OUTREACH FUND – From the Outreach Fund, a community can receive up to \$750 up front for a community project, assisting community groups with membership expansion and leadership development. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed upon receipt by Neighborhood District Coordinators or NMF staff.

The Outreach Fund was created to provide established neighborhood groups with the means to attract more members and to create stronger neighborhood organizations. The Fund provides money for training, leadership development and other methods of

recruiting and attracting new members to the group. This fund helps nascent community groups build infrastructure so that they have the capacity to operate in a sustainable fashion over the longer term.

2) TREE FUND

The Tree Fund was created in 1995 as a quick and easy way for residential groups to access the Neighborhood Matching Fund for neighborhood beautification. Since its inception, the Tree Fund has added nearly 20,000 trees to the city's canopy through over 700 projects. For a relatively small city investment of money and staff time, these projects create beautiful and connected neighborhoods, typically a block at a time. These small tree-planting groups often move on to other Neighborhood Matching Fund projects.

This fund is a partnership between the Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), and the Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE). As it is structured, it has been successful in furthering the goals of both DON and the City of Seattle's Urban Forestry Management Plan, in spite of the fact that each set of goals is fundamentally different from one another. Neighborhood Matching Fund's purpose is rooted in building and strengthening community relationships; the Urban Forestry Management Plan's purpose is rooted in increasing and maintaining a healthy tree canopy in the City of Seattle. The collaboration succeeds in supporting all partners to help meet their goals and objectives without compromising their own.

Tree Fund plantings have a high rate of survival due to community members' commitments established at application and during training workshops on care of trees. DON staff collaborate with the SDOT arborist to coordinate trainings that instruct community members on proper planting and care in trees' critical first years to maximize survival rates. In addition to community volunteerism resulting in greater cost efficiency in planting trees, ongoing maintenance costs to the City are drastically reduced.

The Tree Fund provides approximately \$47,000 each year for the purchase of trees for residential planting along street rights-of-way. Once a year, neighborhood groups can request up to 40 trees. NMF staff review and approve all Tree Fund requests. Awarded groups are required to participate in tree planting and tree care training prior to receiving their trees.



*Dream Catcher Memorial to
Bernie Whitebear and Luana Reyes*

3) SMALL AND SIMPLE PROJECTS FUND

A component of the NMF since the program's establishment, the Small and Simple Projects Fund is NMF's largest fund and supports community groups' efforts to build community relationships around a specific project. Both grassroots organizations and neighborhood groups are eligible to apply for these funds. Awards are made for the initiation, planning, organization and/or implementation of a project. Because the NMF places high value on the process of bringing people together – believing this is key to sustainable communities – building relationships along the way is considered to be as important as the completed project itself. To this end, all Small and Simple Projects must demonstrate community ownership and involvement with a match of community support realized through contributions of volunteer labor, donated materials, pro-bono professional services or cash.

All Small and Simple Projects Fund awards must align with one of the following project types:

- *Race and Social Justice* – These projects create opportunities for diverse communities to interact, encourage mutual understanding and respect, celebrate uniqueness, openly address issues of racial and social inequity, and help improve the quality of life for all City residents. These projects do not have to reach just one neighborhood.
- *Climate Protection* – These projects create opportunities for neighbors to connect and collaborate on community-driven approaches to addressing climate change. Like Race and Social Justice Initiative projects, these projects do not have to reach only one neighborhood.
- *Planning and/or Design* – These projects are comprised of a plan, design, or report outlining specific actions that will serve as a guide for future action in or changes to a neighborhood.
- *Neighborhood Organizing* – These projects not only create, diversify, or expand participation in a community, a neighborhood-based association, or an organization in a low-income neighborhood, but also benefit other community members in the neighborhood.
- *Physical Improvement* – These projects build or enhance a physical improvement in a neighborhood.
- *Non-Physical Improvement* – These are activities or events, such as a festival, celebration, training session, educational campaign or workshop. A festival or celebration will only be funded once.
- *Public School Partnership* – These are pilot or start-up projects that directly benefit the families and children/youth in a neighborhood public school and its immediate neighborhood.
- *Youth Violence Prevention* (including the Rainier Beach Youth Initiative and the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative) – These projects create opportunities for young people to organize around their creativity, intellect and energy, and positively engage with their peers through alternatives to delinquent and/or violent activities. Originally focused on Rainier Beach, this initiative now targets three Seattle-area neighborhoods: Central, Southeast, and Southwest.

NOTE: Three of the above NMF project categories – Race and Social Justice (incorporated into NMF in 2005), Climate Protection (2007), and Youth Violence Prevention (2007) – were added in response to Mayor Greg Nickels’ initiatives: Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), Climate Action Now (CAN), and Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (SYVPI). The Public School Partnership was added in 2007.



Friendship Garden

Small and Simple projects may be physical projects as well as less tangible but equally significant educational, cultural, and relationship-strengthening projects. Support for capital projects may include awards for: professional design processes for park, playfield and playground improvements; installation of reader boards at public schools; outreach and logistics for community festivals; organizing and staffing for neighborhood historic surveys; and materials and professional expertise for public art, including murals. Other projects can include educating intergenerational groups about cultural history, building leadership capacity among youth, teaching underserved communities about health and wellness, and creating support networks for daily life or emergencies. This fund supports community-building projects with awards up to \$15,000¹ and annually distributes approximately \$1.3 million. Applications are reviewed internally in DON and award decisions are made by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

4) LARGE PROJECTS FUND

The Large Projects Fund is the natural extension for many Small and Simple Fund projects (though the fund is open not only to previous Small and Simple awardees). A core component of the NMF since its inception and its second largest fund, the Large Projects Fund provides up to \$1.3 million annually for larger community-building projects and involves a two-step process consisting of a letter of intent (LOI) followed by an application. LOIs are reviewed by NMF staff members who determine eligibility and provide technical assistance to applicant groups. Each final application is evaluated through a community review process:

¹ Up through the end of 2008, projects were required to be implemented within a six-month period. Beginning in 2009, this timeframe was increased to one year.

- the Citywide Review Team, comprised of up to 17 community members (one selected by each of the 13 District Councils and four at-large community members selected by the Department of Neighborhoods); and
- the District Council relevant to the applicant project's geographic location.

Scores from the Citywide Review Team and from the District Council each accounts for 50% of an applicant's total score. The Citywide Review Team submits final award recommendations to the City Neighborhood Council (CNC) for review. Upon CNC approval, recommendations are submitted to the Mayor. The Mayor's final award recommendations are submitted for City Council review and vote.

The size of awards ranges from \$15,000 to 100,000, and projects have 12 months to complete. This larger award size means that community groups can take a next step to building stronger community through implementation of a significant project. Examples of Large Projects Fund activities include providing capital funding for community centers, such as the Filipino Community Center and the Duwamish Longhouse; providing development costs for new or redeveloped P-Patch community gardens, like Maple Leaf and Hazel Heights P-Patch gardens; and supporting large-scale public art installations, like the Fremont Troll and Georgetown's Hat n Boots.

Like the Small and Simple Projects Fund, all Large Projects Fund projects must align with a stated project type. The types relevant to Large Projects Fund projects are:

- *Planning and/or Design* – These projects are comprised of a plan, design, or report outlining specific actions that will serve as a guide for future action in or changes to a neighborhood.
- *Neighborhood Organizing* – These projects not only create, diversify, or expand participation in a community, a neighborhood-based association, or an organization in a low-income neighborhood, but also benefit other community members in the neighborhood.
- *Physical Improvement* – These projects build or enhance a physical improvement in a neighborhood.
- *Non-Physical Improvement* – These are activities or events, such as a festival, celebration, training session, educational campaign or workshop. A festival or celebration will only be funded once.
- *Public School Partnership* – These are pilot or start-up projects that directly benefit the families and children/youth in a neighborhood public school and its immediate neighborhood.

5) MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Within the Neighborhood Matching Fund program budget is a category of funds dedicated to management and project development activities. These support outreach, technical assistance, project management and program administration costs both within the Department of Neighborhoods as the lead agency for NMF as well as within two supporting City departments – Parks and Recreation Department and Department of Transportation (SDOT).

Most community groups that apply to or implement NMF-funded projects are informal or newly-organized groups. Many times, these groups come from historically underserved communities that have little to no experience working with public agencies. Some groups are not aware that they have not yet reached a stage of organizational readiness that puts them in good position to be successful with an NMF application. The support provided by NMF staff in management and project development bridges community members' knowledge and skills gap and helps them to reach successes. This support is especially relevant for many immigrant and refugee communities who may hold a distrust of government based on experiences from their homelands. They especially benefit from positive, targeted and personalized support the NMF program offers.



Webster Park

Management and project development activities include: providing tips on community outreach and organizing; assisting the development of feasible work plans and timelines; training awardees on basic accounting principles and procedures; providing guidance on fundraising; connecting groups with other similar projects; providing guidance on understanding sound procurement, purchasing, and subcontracting practices; helping groups complete and submit invoices with appropriate support documentation; helping groups recruit and manage volunteers; and helping projects leverage other public or private resources and opportunities. The partnership between community groups and NMF project managers is essential to project completion and success.

Application Review and Selection

A successful project requires this strong partnership between the community and NMF project manager, who provides support and technical assistance that is critical in the project development stage. Because projects rarely go according to plan, flexibility and creativity are vital to groups' ultimate success. Often, difficult issues that arise help a community group become stronger as they deal with it together and develop a sense of shared leadership.

Through 2008, the NMF Program annually managed six routine application review cycles – one for the Large Projects Fund, four for the Small and Simple Projects Fund, and one for the Tree Fund – as well as rolling application cycles for the Outreach and Small Sparks Funds.

Table 2: 2008 Application Review and Decision-Making Timeframes

NMF Fund	Application Review Cycles per Year	Process Conducted by	Maximum Time Between Application Deadlines and Final Decisions
Small Sparks	Rolling	District Coordinator, NMF staff, and Director	7 working days
Outreach	Rolling	District Coordinator, NMF staff, and Director	7 working days
Tree	1	NMF staff	30 working days
Small and Simple Projects	4	NMF and appropriate department staff	30 working days
Large Projects	1	District Councils and Citywide Review Team	6-8 months

The formal criteria used for making award recommendations are as follows:

Project Idea

- The idea provides a good description of what the project is and why the group wants to do it.
- The idea is based on principles of local control, self-help, and collective action with a clear public benefit.

Community Building

- The project encourages widespread participation and provides opportunities to bring people together to work on a neighborhood/community issue.
- The project promotes interaction and builds community between different groups, such as renters, business owners, seniors, or different ethnic or racial groups.
- The project provides a “neighborhood to neighborhood” connection with opportunities for communities to learn from each other and act as partners.
- The project promotes meaningful collaboration between youth and adults.

Project Feasibility

- The budget is reasonable, appropriate, and clear of conflicts of interest.
- Activities are well planned, the timeline is realistic and the project has a clear beginning and end.

Community Match

- Documented match is realistic and appropriate to the project and is representative of the demographic make-up of the community (i.e., represents different segments of the community).
- Match is documented with signatures demonstrating widespread participation and support for the project.
- The match helps build community.

Project Management and Contract Administration

Typically, when a project receives any type of award, it is often a conditional award: there can be some questions that need to be answered or additional information provided, such as proof of commercial liability insurance or a detailed community outreach plan. Once these conditions have been met, the DON project manager works with the contact person to negotiate a contract to ensure that the workplan, budget and timeline are accurate and to ensure everyone is operating under the same assumptions. At this point a contract is developed and then signed by the community group and by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

All NMF-funded projects, except for Tree Fund projects, require a funding agreement between the awardee and the City of Seattle. Awarded individuals and groups (as appropriate) must be ready to contract within 30 days of the award date. At this time, community groups must fulfill any award conditions and, if applicable, must provide proof of their cash match. Contracts are prepared based on the scope of work, budget and timeline provided in the application or, in some cases, in the response to award conditions.

Once awardees are under contract, project implementation can begin. The NMF staff maintains regular contact with project leads to ensure successful implementation. For example, NMF Project Managers conduct site visits to advise community groups that need assistance with invoicing, fundraising, competitive bid processes, community outreach, translation and interpretation services, documenting community match, and/or participate in other project-related activities, such as steering committee meetings and work parties.



A Picnic in the Park – Beacon Hill

Partnership with City Departments and Other Agencies

Throughout the life of a Neighborhood Matching Fund project – from its initial concept to final reporting – NMF Program staff maintain relationships with key relevant partners, such as Department of Transportation, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Public Utilities. These partnerships are essential to the NMF Program because many projects are multifaceted, and require the technical support and project approval of departments in addition to the Department of Neighborhoods. Each partner plays a role throughout projects' various phases, including community outreach, application development, application review, contracting and project implementation.

The Neighborhood Matching Fund has especially deep relationships with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation, as many NMF projects significantly involve properties managed by these other departments. To facilitate collaboration, DON annually negotiates and signs a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with each of these departments to formalize the establishment of dedicated staff people to NMF activities:

- the Department of Transportation has one 0.5 FTE focused on NMF projects; and
- the Parks Department has a 1.0 FTE focused on NMF projects.

Funding for these positions is provided by the Department of Neighborhoods. (An additional 0.5 FTE from the Parks Department is also devoted to NMF, but this portion of the position is not paid out of the NMF budget). These staff members provide review of proposed NMF projects from the perspectives of their respective departments. They also provide technical assistance to community groups on relevant policies, procedures, and requirements from their respective departments. These coordinators act as liaisons between their departments and DON, keep DON staff abreast of relevant rules and procedures as it relates to NMF projects, and assist in mitigating issues that may arise with the community or between departments. They do not manage any NMF contracts.



Small Sparks Award Celebration

FUND AWARDS

The Neighborhood Matching Fund has had important impact on area communities since the program was founded over 20 years ago. Some projects have been physical: new neighborhood parks, first-time farmers' markets, pedestrian improvements, street trees, public art, community events, natural area restorations, facility renovations and more. Other projects are less tangible to the naked eye: community building, planning efforts and strengthened relationships between neighbors and community members. NMF has brought about projects which have bolstered neighborhoods and created innumerable opportunities for people to connect with one another.

For many projects, the NMF serves as its first major funder, providing critical seed monies that help applicants leverage other funding, as evidenced by the large amounts of match dollars raised noted in the following tables. Because most community groups that apply to or implement NMF-funded projects are informal or newly-organized, NMF awards help them begin building credibility with other public and private funding agencies and stakeholders.



Colonnade Mountain Bike Course

Here in this section, we look at applications and awards made to the various NMF program funds since 1999. It should be noted that, due to program and staffing changes over the years, there are certain unavoidable inconsistencies in the types of data collected and compiled.

Total Number of Applications and Awards

Between 1999 and 2008, 2,898 applications were submitted to all the Neighborhood Matching Fund program components; 2,133 awards were made, representing an overall award rate of 73.6%.

Table 3: Numbers of Applications and Awards 1999-2008

Small Sparks		Outreach		Tree Fund		Small and Simple		Large Projects	
<i>Apps</i>	<i>Awards</i>	<i>Apps</i>	<i>Awards</i>	<i>Apps</i>	<i>Awards</i>	<i>Apps</i>	<i>Awards</i>	<i>Apps</i>	<i>Awards</i>
236	222	118	113	555	494	1,686	1,071	303	233

(Notes: Awards in the Tree Fund are numbers of projects, and not numbers of trees. Additionally, in 2003, no Tree Fund requests were awarded due to a budget freeze.)

For the most part, awards were made at 100% of the funding requested. Partial funding occurs on rare occasion in the Small and Simple Projects Fund, and more commonly with the Large Projects Fund.

Small Sparks Fund (1999-2008)

During the ten-year period reviewed for this evaluation, 236 applications were made to the Small Sparks Fund. The success rate for these applications was high, with 94.1% of applications funded and 94.2% of requested dollars awarded. Community resources that were brought in through the Fund's match were more than three times the award amounts.

The geographic distribution of awards varies without a distinct geographic pattern, with the largest number of awards given to Southeast-, Greater Duwamish and East-based projects, and the fewest to Southwest, Downtown and Magnolia/Queen Anne projects.

Table 4: Small Sparks 1999-2008

	<i>Projects Requested</i>	<i>NMF \$ Requested</i>	<i>Match \$ Proposed</i>	<i>Projects Awarded</i>	<i>NMF \$ Awarded</i>	<i>Match \$ Raised</i>
Ballard	18	\$3,995	\$4,470	17	\$3,745	\$5,102
Central	19	\$4,544	\$7,601	18	\$4,294	\$9,181
Delridge	24	\$5,775	\$11,125	23	\$5,650	\$11,660
Downtown	6	\$1,422	\$3,835	6	\$1,422	\$4,360
East	29	\$6,915	\$22,853	27	\$6,415	\$24,098
Greater Duwamish	26	\$6,200	\$21,625	25	\$6,050	\$23,297
Lake Union	11	\$2,545	\$22,140	11	\$2,545	\$22,390
Magnolia/Queen Anne	8	\$2,000	\$4,210	8	\$2,000	\$4,339
North	20	\$4,790	\$11,649	18	\$4,290	\$10,782
Northeast	17	\$4,011	\$14,711	17	\$4,011	\$14,941
Northwest	22	\$5,058	\$11,304	20	\$4,558	\$12,706
Southeast	32	\$7,900	\$26,645	28	\$6,900	\$22,609
Southwest	4	\$1,000	\$13,110	4	\$1,000	\$7,200
Grand Total	236	\$56,155	\$175,278	222	\$52,880	\$172,665

Outreach Fund (1999-2008)

Like the Small Sparks Fund, applicants have had strong success with the Outreach Fund. From 1999-2008, 118 applications were submitted to this Fund, with 113 receiving funding, representing a 95.8% success rate. The Southeast district has received a larger portion of Outreach Fund dollars than other neighborhoods, with 19 projects (or 16.8% of all awarded projects) funded and \$12,270 (or 17.3%) awarded. The next best funded area was Greater Duwamish, with 14 projects (12.4%) and \$8,275 (11.7%).

Table 5: Outreach Fund 1999-2008

	<i>Projects Requested</i>	<i>NMF \$ Requested</i>	<i>Match \$ Proposed</i>	<i>Projects Awarded</i>	<i>NMF \$ Awarded</i>	<i>Match \$ Raised</i>
Ballard	6	\$4,375	\$4,000	6	\$4,375	\$4,000
Central	11	\$6,418	\$8,853	11	\$6,418	\$9,928
Delridge	14	\$9,220	\$18,581	13	\$8,625	\$13,050
Downtown	1	\$750	\$1,760	1	\$750	\$1,760
East	13	\$7,621	\$9,898	11	\$5,381	\$9,245
Greater Duwamish	16	\$9,810	\$13,535	14	\$8,275	\$12,690
Lake Union	5	\$2,940	\$4,805	5	\$2,940	\$4,805
Magnolia/Queen Anne	8	\$6,000	\$3,150	8	\$5,250	\$3,150
North	11	\$8,150	\$8,480	11	\$8,150	\$9,110
Northeast	8	\$5,850	\$5,577	8	\$5,100	\$5,577
Northwest	4	\$1,943	\$868	4	\$1,943	\$1,018
Southeast	19	\$13,070	\$29,880	19	\$12,270	\$31,480
Southwest	2	\$1,500	\$1,560	2	\$1,500	\$1,560
Grand Total	118	\$77,647	\$110,947	113	\$70,977	\$107,373

Tree Fund (1999-2008)

From 1999-2008, 555 Tree Fund requests were made; 494 requests were awarded. Typically, nearly all Tree Fund requests are granted. The large gap between requested and awarded trees during this period is due to a funding freeze in 2003, when 55 requests were made and none were awarded. Excluding 2003, 500 Tree Fund requests were made during the period from 1999-2008, and 494 were awarded. Tree Fund requests denied over the years have typically been due to SDOT determination of the projects' viability on the rights-of-way.

Small and Simple Projects Fund (1999-2008)

Projects that compete in the Small and Simple Projects Fund are larger and, typically, more complex than those in the Small Sparks, Outreach or Tree Funds, resulting in greater variability between requested and funded projects. From 1999-2008, 1,686 applications were submitted; 1,071 were funded; a 63.5% application success rate.

Projects from the Southeast and Central Districts have most actively pursued Small and Simple Projects Fund support, with 295 and 211 requests submitted, respectively. In the Southeast District, 165 projects were awarded \$1,774,978 (17.3% of total dollars awarded during this period). In the Central District, 106 projects were awarded \$1,059,491 (10.3%).

The fewest applications came from the North District and for Citywide projects, with 67 and 11 applications submitted, respectively. These were awarded as follows: North – 51 awards for \$413,340 (4.0% of total dollars awarded during this period); and Citywide – seven projects for \$78,275 (0.1%).

Table 6: Small and Simple Projects Fund 1999-2008

	<i>Projects Requested</i>	<i>NMF \$ Requested</i>	<i>Match \$ Proposed</i>	<i>Projects Awarded</i>	<i>NMF \$ Awarded</i>	<i>Match \$ Raised</i>
Ballard	89	\$704,290	\$1,057,935	65	\$496,435	\$762,879
Central	211	\$2,268,532	\$3,650,561	106	\$1,059,491	\$1,765,817
Citywide	11	\$121,275	\$191,318	7	\$78,275	\$209,809
Delridge	96	\$1,168,860	\$1,615,949	61	\$649,895	\$772,561
Downtown	137	\$1,468,697	\$2,737,871	79	\$786,398	\$1,433,605
East	137	\$1,325,136	\$2,063,663	75	\$707,030	\$942,880
Greater Duwamish	118	\$1,272,672	\$1,662,671	87	\$967,044	\$1,236,078
Lake Union	98	\$972,990	\$1,259,339	68	\$667,632	\$877,282
Magnolia/Queen Anne	86	\$867,873	\$1,004,678	65	\$653,434	\$864,959
North	67	\$524,346	\$744,820	51	\$413,340	\$538,132
Northeast	134	\$1,176,433	\$1,418,703	97	\$853,236	\$979,332
Northwest	92	\$733,995	\$832,408	71	\$536,424	\$663,170
Southeast	295	\$3,639,414	\$4,556,676	165	\$1,774,978	\$2,328,223
Southwest	115	\$1,037,984	\$1,315,966	74	\$638,006	\$788,239
Grand Total	1,686	\$17,282,497	\$24,112,558	1,071	\$10,281,618	\$14,162,966

Large Projects Fund (1999-2008)

As compared to its Small and Simple Projects counterpart, Large Projects Fund applications and awards are generally more evenly distributed geographically. Again, Southeast has more actively pursued funding, with 48 applications submitted between 1999 and 2008; 37 were funded with \$2,995,101 (16.0% of total dollars awarded during this time). Although the numbers of projects awarded for each of the remaining districts are more akin to one another, award dollars for each of these districts vary greatly, from \$1,738,404 (9.3% of all award dollars) for 18 Northeast projects to \$870,819 (4.7%) for 11 North projects.

Table 7: Large Projects Fund 1999-2008

	<i>Projects Requested</i>	<i>NMF \$ Requested</i>	<i>Match \$ Proposed</i>	<i>Projects Awarded</i>	<i>NMF \$ Awarded</i>	<i>Match \$ Raised</i>
Ballard	18	\$1,592,726	\$3,803,245	16	\$1,218,976	\$2,552,478
Central	25	\$1,566,267	\$1,955,106	19	\$1,278,277	\$1,530,021
Delridge	18	\$1,547,755	\$4,955,750	14	\$1,131,786	\$2,794,421
Downtown	30	\$2,279,733	\$5,705,757	19	\$1,615,468	\$3,892,340
East	24	\$1,972,296	\$2,466,250	18	\$1,435,030	\$2,077,722
Greater Duwamish	20	\$1,611,703	\$2,260,311	13	\$922,679	\$1,390,522
Lake Union	25	\$2,176,708	\$4,224,215	19	\$1,488,493	\$1,895,519
Magnolia/Queen Anne	19	\$1,444,149	\$2,296,989	17	\$1,362,721	\$1,995,549
North	13	\$1,160,582	\$1,273,294	11	\$870,819	\$1,025,664
Northeast	21	\$2,187,830	\$3,059,635	18	\$1,738,404	\$2,505,031
Northwest	16	\$1,383,634	\$1,551,836	14	\$1,118,315	\$1,223,480
Southeast	49	\$4,238,519	\$7,174,889	37	\$2,995,101	\$5,357,914
Southwest	25	\$2,296,462	\$3,049,223	18	\$1,534,002	\$1,767,336
Grand Total	303	\$25,458,364	\$43,776,500	233	\$18,710,071	\$30,007,997

Funding by Project Types (1999-2008)

All Small and Simple Fund and Large Projects Fund awards are distributed under one of the following project types: Race and Social Justice; Climate Protection; Planning and/or Design; Neighborhood Organizing; Physical Improvements; Non-physical Improvements; Public School Partnerships; and Youth Violence Prevention. Among these types, the following were Mayoral initiatives: Race and Social Justice, launched in 2003; Climate Protection (or Seattle Climate Action Now) in 2007; and Youth Violence Prevention (or Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative) in 2008.

Table 8: Initiative-Specific Funding 1999-2008

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Race and Social Justice	-	-	-	-	\$586,078
Climate Protection	-	-	-	-	-
Planning and/or Design	\$184,233	\$520,667	\$418,580	\$548,643	\$83,624
Neighborhood Organizing	\$116,297	\$15,434	\$69,360	\$48,217	\$130,040
Physical Improvement	\$2,576,503	\$2,698,815	\$2,782,755	\$2,754,384	\$1,833,378
Non-physical Improvement	\$304,730	\$289,001	\$307,732	\$258,590	\$117,389
Public School Partnership	\$148,200	\$20,000	\$49,350	-	\$29,000
Youth Violence Prevention	-	-	-	-	-

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Race and Social Justice	\$527,744	\$562,922	\$193,457	\$247,915	\$149,394
Climate Protection	-	-	-	\$114,606	\$83,760
Planning and/or Design	\$281,247	\$335,324	\$211,912	\$224,886	\$368,022
Neighborhood Organizing	\$36,819	\$40,460	\$127,936	\$246,325	\$211,995
Physical Improvement	\$978,919	\$1,463,523	\$1,196,186	\$1,326,677	\$725,664
Non-physical Improvement	\$261,882	\$180,126	\$165,138	\$248,881	\$512,786
Public School Partnership	\$71,732	\$75,990	\$15,000	\$447,238	\$99,900
Youth Violence Prevention	-	-	-	\$70,180	\$386,650

Reaching Priority Constituencies

The Neighborhood Matching Fund has a provision (through its founding resolution) to reach low- and moderate-income communities and also possesses value on ensuring that historically underserved populations – with an emphasis on immigrant and refugee communities – have access to NMF grants and resources. While the program was not designed from its inception to collect income information, the history of NMF awards shows a preponderance of NMF projects awarded and completed in historically low- and moderate-income neighborhoods (as defined by the U.S. Census) such as Central, Southeast, Downtown and Greater Duwamish. Though information can be researched through project reports, the Matching Fund program currently lacks a database that can be consistently tracked over time concerning additional demographic information – such as representation of ethnic communities – about projects.

Performance Metrics

Performance metrics help assess the overall effectiveness and efficiency of programs. Key performance metrics for the NMF program and its project management staff are:

- number of community volunteers participating and contributing to NMF projects;
- total hours of community volunteer hours donated; and
- total value of goods and services donated by the community.

These metrics are tracked by each project, area, and year in the NMF database.

Table 9: NMF Metrics

Types of Community Match	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of Volunteers	4,696	1,276	11,050	13,816	10,793	9,727	9,531
Total Hours Donated	51,913	16,708	53,403	63,328	93,237	71,065	65,483
Total Value of Donation	\$606,601	\$204,369	\$800,045	\$1,164,457	\$1,472,932	\$1,275,651	\$1,062,253
Volunteers Equivalent to City Staff	25	8	26	30	45	34	31

* one city staff equivalent to 2088 volunteer hours

These figures show that the NMF has been able to engage large portions of our communities in varied ways. Looking at the total hours donated by community volunteers as one metric, for example, the return on NMF investment is notable. For example, in 2006, there were over 93,000 volunteer hours donated – equal to 45 city staff. More recently, in 2008, there were over 65,000 volunteer hours donated – equal to 31 city staff.

Long-term Impact

It should be noted that the measurement of the longer-term impact of the projects that the Neighborhood Matching Fund supports is, currently, beyond the program's evaluation capacity. The NMF is designed to sow community members' ideas and encourage them to build sustainable communities. Because the Neighborhood Matching Fund is, as a fund source, focused on tangible, finite projects implemented over specific periods of time (no longer than one year for a given award), it does not have the structure for following projects years down the line to see how communities have been affected long-term as a result of the seed dollars that the NMF invested.



*Jim Street, City Councilmember and Founder of the Neighborhood Matching Fund,
And Jim Diers, First Director of the Department of Neighborhoods*

REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

There are numerous regulations and policies that define parameters of the Neighborhood Matching Fund program.

Regulations

The Seattle Municipal Code includes regulations relating to the Neighborhood Matching Fund (also referred to as the Neighborhood Matching Subfund) that are the law of the City, enforceable and not subject to changes without legislative process.

In October 1987, the Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 27709 to establish a Neighborhood Planning and Assistance Program. Within this plan was the authorization for the creation of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. This resolution designated this fund to disburse matching grants to community councils and business district organizations to address community-identified problems. Matching requirements may be met by cash or in-kind contributions. At least \$750,000 each year (beginning in 1989) is allocated to low-income neighborhoods. This resolution also calls for more than half of the matching funds to be expended on improvement projects, with a smaller amount for the funding of neighborhood-generated planning efforts which offer the prospect of significant public and/or private sector action.

Resolution 27709 designated administration of the Neighborhood Matching Fund to the Office of Neighborhoods (now the Department of Neighborhoods) in consultation with the City Neighborhood Council. Rating and ranking of eligible applications is the responsibility of the District Councils and the City Neighborhood Council. Awards are made at least twice each year after Office of Neighborhoods recommendation and Seattle City Council approval. Matching Fund dollars are not be used to replace dollars which would otherwise have been available to the neighborhoods from the City.

The creation of the NMF is codified in Section 3.35.050 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which establishes the Neighborhood Matching Subfund as a subfund of the General Fund to be administered by the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods. It states that disbursements shall be made from appropriations authorized by the City Council by ordinance. It also dictates that appropriated funds shall not lapse and shall not be carried over each year until fully expended, reallocated by administrative action, or abandoned or re-appropriated to other authorized activities. It also establishes the Neighborhood Participation Account into which cash matching dollars are deposited to further projects authorized through NMF.

Section 3.35.030 of the Code allows the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods to administer the Neighborhood Matching Fund Program and the Neighborhood Matching Fund.

Initial approval of the Neighborhood Matching Fund guidelines was made in 1989 through Resolution 27965. Revisions were subsequently made through Resolutions 28121 (in 1989) and 28835 (1994). Also in 1989, Ordinance 114767 dictated that NMF funds should not lapse and can be carried over each year; established authority for reallocation of funds among projects; and designated a new account with the Neighborhood Matching Fund for deposit of cash match for furtherance of NMF projects. (These declarations are codified in 3.35.050 as noted above.) In 1993, Resolution 28665 made changes to the NMF to better streamline the earlier guidelines, i.e. providing specific guidance on the intent of the program, adding another funding cycle each year for the “big projects,” and establishing a component for “mini projects” that support organizational development. In 1998, Resolution 29737 designated increased NMF dollars for Neighborhood Plan Implementation Projects.

Ordinances have also been passed one or more times annually to approve NMF project allocations as well as programmatic or funding changes and additions.



Log House Museum

Policies

Numerous legislative and administrative policies and guidelines shape the use of the Neighborhood Matching Fund.

Awards cannot:

- be made to individual persons, individual businesses, religious organizations, government agencies, political groups, district councils, universities, hospitals, newspapers, or non-local organizations;
- be made to applicants who have failed to successfully carry out projects funded in the two preceding years;

- support ongoing programs or services;
- be used to duplicate an existing public or private program;
- replace funding lost from other sources or provide gap funding;
- pay for an organization's operating expenses that are not directly related to the awarded project;
- pay individuals who developed the project idea and/or submitted the application;
- purchase land or buildings;
- pay for out of City travel expenses;
- support events and/or activities that require an admission fee;
- support fundraising activities for any group or organization; and
- pay for expenditures or financial commitments made before the organization is under contract with the City of Seattle.

A full set of the NMF guidelines can be found in [Appendix F](#).



*Rainier Community Center and Phinney Neighborhood Association
2008 Neighborhood Matching Fund Events*

BUDGET AND STAFFING

Budget

The Adopted Budget represents the annual appropriation made to the NMF. [Table 10](#) provides funding summaries from 1999-2008.

Under enabling City legislation and budget authority, NMF funds carry forward automatically from year to year. Over the years, this automatic carry-forward provision has created a significant accumulation of allocated but unspent NMF funds (or fund balance). This fund balance represents a combination of funds that were:

- 1) allocated to projects that were not completed by the end of the prior year;
- 2) not awarded to projects by the end of the prior year; and
- 3) under-expended by award recipients or by the City.

Items #1 and #2 above make up the significant portion – up to 90% – of the ending fund balance that carries over to the next fiscal year. The basis of this fund balance is multifaceted:

- It is common for funded projects to extend over more than one fiscal year. This can occur for a variety of reasons: a lead volunteer may encounter a serious personal predicament (prolonged illness, death in family, job loss, etc.) and the momentum slows; additional fundraising is need; higher costs arise due to new requirements; permitting or actions dependent on other City departments do not follow schedule; pledged match is returned slower than expected; weather issues delay physical projects (like P-Patch development); school-related projects face issues that force delays until the following school year, etc. Additionally, due to the multiple cycles, awards are made throughout the fiscal year.
- The Large Projects award process ends in late summer/early fall, which means that funds, though awarded and committed to community projects, are not always contracted by the end of the year.
- At times, community groups withdraw applications after awards are made, increasing the available fund balance.
- The total amount of eligible funding requests may be less than the total available funding for that year.
- Community groups as well as implementing City departments (namely DON, Parks and SDOT) will sometimes under-spend on their projects and budgets.
- Staffing workloads can create delays in the number of contracts and projects completed each year. (A more detailed workload analysis is included in the following section.)

Over the years, the NMF fund balance has been reallocated in different ways. Most often, the fund balance is allocated back to the Neighborhood Matching Fund as an offset to new General Fund appropriation made to a new NMF budget. The life-to-date total NMF fund balance of \$1.78 million from 1988 to 2004 was reallocated to the 2003, 2004, and 2005 NMF budgets as well as to capital budgets for building new Department of Neighborhoods Service Centers in Ballard and Lake City.

The following table provides an overview of the NMF Adopted Budget from 1999-2008. It should be noted that, due to the City's accounting system conversion from Seattle Financial Management System (SFMS) to PeopleSoft SUMMIT in 2002 and the aggregate ways in which the NMF was budgeted in the past, certain detailed financial data from 1999 to 2001 are not available for comparisons.

Table 10: Adopted and Revised Budgets 1999-2008

NMF Adopted and Revised Budgets 1999-2008										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Adopted Budget	3,750,000	3,750,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	3,700,000	3,555,429	3,551,119	3,270,911	3,595,694	3,796,389
Less:Mid-year Adjustment to Adopted Budget					(594,487)	(24,854)			-	-
Revised Budget	3,750,000	3,750,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	3,105,513	3,530,575	3,551,119	3,270,911	3,595,694	3,796,389
Year to Year % Change		0%	17%	0%	-45%	12%	1%	-9%	9%	5%

1999-2002: Federal HUD Community Development Block Grants partially supported NMF.

2003 mid-year adjustments: Large Projects reduced by \$31,195 and Tree by \$20,000

2003 mid-year adjustments: Small and Simple Projects frozen by \$459,082; Tree by \$80,000; and Outreach by \$4,210

2004: year-end abandonment in Management & Project Development and Tree Fund

The entire NMF program is budgeted under one Budget Control Level under the City's accounting and budget structure and is comprised of five different categories:

1. *Outreach and Small Sparks Funds* – one-time awards up to \$750;
2. *Tree Fund* – trees provided to neighborhood groups to plant along residential planting strips;
3. *Small and Simple Projects Fund* – awards up to \$15,000;
4. *Large Projects Fund* – awards between \$15,000 and \$100,000; and
5. *Management and Project Development* – technical assistance to neighborhood groups, coordination of the application and award processes, and project management and contract administration.

Table 11: NMF Adopted Budgets by Categories 1999-2008

NMF Adopted Budget by Categories 1999- 2008										
NMF Categories:	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Large Projects		2,325,000	2,883,000	2,789,755	2,090,076	1,319,576	1,317,768	1,218,970	1,261,634	1,308,314
Small & Simple Projects		600,000	800,000	800,000	880,000	1,280,000	1,262,042	1,062,042	1,174,213	1,303,217
Outreach		30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	13,000	13,000	13,455	13,953
Trees		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	50,000	50,000	44,558	46,118	47,824
Other Services & Charges (includes Large, Small, Outreach, Trees, Project Related)	3,185,439									
Management & Project Development	564,561	695,000	707,000	800,245	619,924	895,853	908,309	932,341	1,100,274	1,123,081
Total	3,750,000	3,750,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	3,700,000	3,555,429	3,551,119	3,270,911	3,595,694	3,796,389

1999: NMF project funds were lumped under one category called Other Services & Charges

1999-2003: Management & Project Development category was budgeted in both NMF and GF with portions of NMF being returned to GF

2003: Figures do not account for mid-year budget cuts

2004: Figures do not reflect year-end abandonment

Management & Project Development category includes funding for DON, Parks and SDOT NMF staffing costs

Since Table 11 only shows the NMF Adopted Budgets, it does not include the DON Adopted Budget portions that had been supporting the NMF program and thus understates the total NMF program budgets. Before 2004, the NMF Management and Project Development category had been budgeted under both the NMF and DON Adopted General Fund budgets. Starting in 2004, to increase financial transparency and to show the full costs of the NMF program under one budget, the Management and Project Development category was transferred to and budgeted solely under the NMF budget. These budgeting changes and DON General Fund offsetting contributions are detailed in Table 14.

BUDGET CHANGES. The NMF budget history over the last ten years includes a number of complex accounting and budget methodology changes. Some examples of these key changes include the following:

- The NMF project funds were previously held together in one budget category called “Other Services & Charges.” In 2000, these dollars were separated and allocated along the five budgeting categories noted above.
- A portion of the Adopted Budget was frozen during the 2003 mid-year budget cuts and then reduced and reallocated in 2005.
- In 2004, the Management and Project Development budget was consolidated under the NMF. This eliminated General Fund contributions and, with it, the convoluted transaction and reimbursement processes between the NMF and General Fund, thus increasing financial transparency.
- The method of budgeting staff positions (FTEs) changed in 2004. Instead of budgeting positions by their fund sources, they are now budgeted by their “home” program.

Following is a summary of major budget changes that the NMF has experienced since 1999:

Table 12: Major Budget Changes

Year	Major Budget Changes to NMF
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is increased by \$46,680. • Small and Simple Projects is increased by \$129,004, \$89,000 is dedicated to the Youth Violence Prevention and \$75,000 to Seattle CAN initiatives. • Management and Project Development funding is reduced by \$20,000 for climate protection project management consulting support.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is increased by \$42,664. • Small and Simple Projects is increased by \$112,171, \$75,000 of which is dedicated to Seattle CAN initiative. • Management and Project Development is increased by \$50,000 for climate protection project management consulting support and by \$67,067 for project management consulting support.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is reduced by \$98,798. • Small and Simple Projects is reduced by \$200,000.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is reduced by \$401,808 and transferred to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small and Simple Projects: \$382,000. ○ Management & Project Development: \$12,000. ○ Outreach: \$3,000. • Management and Project Development is increased by \$12,456. • \$543,292 in Small and Simple Projects, Outreach, and Tree that had been frozen in 2003 are cut and reallocated.

Year	Major Budget Changes to NMF
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is reduced by \$373,500. • Management and Project Development is reduced as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SDOT Management support by \$11,906. ◦ Parks Management support by \$134,500, thus reducing Parks NMF staffing from 2.5 to 1.0 FTE. ◦ project-related expenses by \$24,202. • Tree Fund is reduced by \$50,000. • Funding for NMF Management and Project Development is now centrally budgeted in the NMF Subfund, thus eliminating the need to have two separate budgets in both DON General Fund and NMF Subfund. This increases transparency. • Race and Social Justice Initiative pilot funding for \$400,000 is supported by Small and Simple Projects funds.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is reduced by \$513,113 and then further reduced by \$31,195 through mid-year budget cuts. • Small and Simple Projects is increased by \$80,000 and then frozen by \$459,082 through a mid-year budget freeze. • Management and Project Development is reduced as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SDOT project management support by \$22,000. ◦ Parks project management support by \$60,554. ◦ DON project management support by \$97,767, eliminating one position in NMF and another in General Fund. • Tree Fund is cut mid-year by \$20,000. Another \$80,000 is frozen through a mid-year budget freeze, resulting in no Tree Fund awards that year. • Outreach is frozen by \$4,210 through a mid-year budget freeze. • Race and Social Justice Initiative pilot is created and supported by Small and Simple Projects funds. • City Council caps each Large Projects allocation at \$100,000 and prohibits using funds for property acquisition under a budget proviso.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City's accounting system converts to PeopleSoft SUMMIT. • A life-to-date (1999-2001) fund reconciliation is completed, resulting in a fund balance of \$1.4 million. This fund balance is used to partially fund 2003 and 2004 NMF budgets as well as construction of two new Neighborhood Services Centers. • Management and Project Development is budgeted in details (staff vs. project-related expenses; DON vs. Parks/SDOT, etc.).
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Projects is increased by \$596,000 to support implementation of large neighborhood-initiated projects. • Small and Simple Projects is increased by \$200,000. • Outreach is decreased by \$20,000. • Management and Project Development is increased by \$11,769.
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMF funds are allocated into five fund areas or categories. • Large Projects is increased by \$47,000. • Tree Fund is reduced by \$100,000. • Outreach is reduced by \$20,000. • Management and Project Development is increased by \$70,670.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMF project funds are budgeted under one lump sum category called "Other Services and Charges".

EXPENDITURES. The Neighborhood Matching Fund expenditure budget is distinctive because it is a pool of dollars awarded to community members, and also because NMF projects can take a few to many months to complete, depending on their complexity, budget and scope. As such, the NMF is set up like a capital fund, with dollars that revolve or are carried over from year to year. Ordinance 114767, which provides general framework for the Neighborhood Matching Fund, also provides the framework for these expenditure cycles by dictating that “[f]unds appropriated from the

Neighborhood Matching Funds shall not lapse and shall be carried over each year until fully expended, reallocated by administrative action, or abandoned or re-appropriated to other authorized activities." Following these declarations, NMF funds not expended in a given fiscal year are carried into the following fiscal year.

Table 13: NMF Budget including Carryover Funds 1999-2008

NMF Budget including Carryover Funds from Prior										
	199	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs	âs
	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/	12/31/
Carryover from	3,109,8	3,660,9	4,027,0	5,205,6	5,899,1	5,084,6	4,341,2	4,866,6	4,991,2	5,333,3
Add: Adopted	3,750,0	3,750,0	4,500,0	4,500,0	3,700,0	3,555,4	3,551,1	3,270,9	3,595,6	3,796,3
Less: Mid-year	00	00	00	00	759,48	724,85	00	00	00	00
Revised	6,859,8	7,410,9	8,527,0	9,705,6	9,004,6	8,615,2	7,892,3	8,137,5	8,586,9	9,129,7
Less:	(3,138,95)	(3,198,33)	(3,312,06)	(3,603,16)	(3,751,18)	(4,076,84)	(3,025,72)	(3,146,31)	(3,253,53)	(4,261,51)
Less:	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Ending	3,860,9	4,027,0	5,205,6	5,899,1	5,084,6	4,341,2	4,866,6	4,991,2	5,333,3	4,868,2
Rate of	56 47	56 46	61 39	61 39	57 44	57 50	56 38	57 39	56 38	56 47

The purpose of Table 13 is to show a more complete financial picture of the NMF program in a given budget year. That is, in addition to the annually allocated Adopted Budget amount, there are funds carried over from the previous budget year. A combination of these two figures makes up the Revised Budget or the total managed and overseen by the NMF project management and DON administration staff. This revised budget figure provides a more accurate scope and scale of staff's fiduciary responsibility and project management workload.

The ten-year average of carryover funds from prior years is \$4.7 million; the five-year average is slightly higher, at \$4.9 million. The ten-year average of total NMF managed in a given fiscal year is \$8.4 million; the five-year average is higher, at \$8.5 million. Since the loss of two full-time project management staff in 2004, the annual rate of expenditure has gone down slightly, though 2008 saw an increase due in part to a boost in temporary staffing support through the Mayor's Climate Protection and Youth Initiatives. The ten-year average rate of expenditure of the combined carryover funds and new budget appropriation is 43% per year, with a range varying from 38% to 47%.

The rate of NMF expenditure has not been used as a performance metric in the past as the NMF program has focused on metrics such as number of community volunteers, total number of community volunteer hours donated, and total value of goods and services matched or donated by the community. Because the total amount of NMF managed is notable and because there is an increasing priority placed on investing and spending these dollars quickly, this financial metric could be added to assess future efficiency.

In addition to supporting project awards, the NMF budget also covers project management staffing and some administrative expenses. The Management and Project Development category supports outreach, technical assistance, project management, and program administration costs in the Department of Neighborhoods along with two supporting City departments – Parks and Recreation Department and SDOT. A small portion called “Project Related Expenses” pays for operating costs such as insurance, events, staff training, printing, etc. The majority of funds in this category pay for staffing in these three departments which support, manage, and implement the NMF program.

Table 14: NMF Management and Project Development 2000-2008

NMF Management & Project Development (MPD) 2000-2008										
Management & Project Development	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	9-yr Ave
Project Related Expenses			75,000	75,000	50,798	51,560	51,409	35,878	37,153	
DON Project Management Staffing			844,327	674,208	684,770	699,756	717,832	778,521	814,517	
SDOT Project Management Staffing			114,000	92,000	80,094	73,931	76,807	79,495	82,437	
Parks Project Management Staffing			275,245	214,691	80,191	83,062	86,293	89,313	92,618	
Climate Protection Consultant Funding								50,000	30,000	
Project Management Consultant Funding								67,067	66,356	
Total Adopted MPD Budget	1,598,439	1,184,000	1,308,572	1,055,899	895,853	908,309	932,341	1,100,274	1,123,081	
GF Offset budgeted in DON	1,172,000	813,000	844,327	674,208						
NMF Portion	426,439	371,000	464,245	381,691	895,853	908,309	932,341	1,100,274	1,123,081	
Total MPD	1,598,439	1,184,000	1,308,572	1,055,899	895,853	908,309	932,341	1,100,274	1,123,081	1,122,974

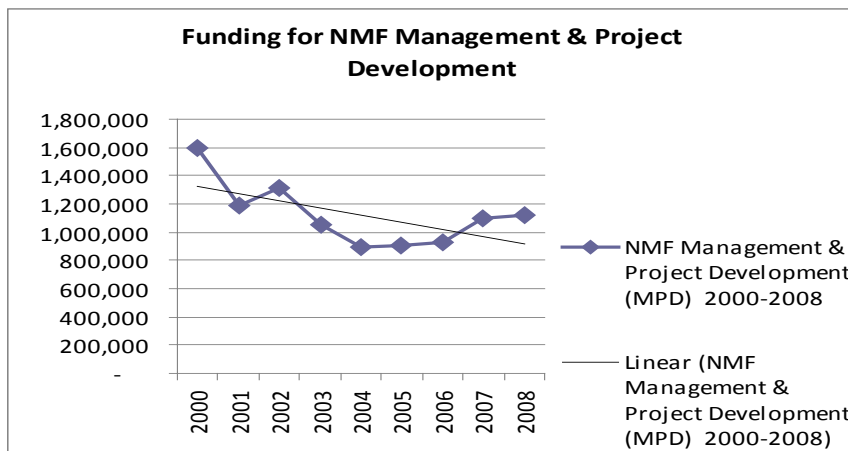
1999: Data Not Available

2002: Management & Project Development Category budgeted in more details.

2004: GF Offset portion was reduced and transferred under NMF.

Table 14 illustrates the budgeting history where the NMF Management and Project Development budget was funded by both NMF and DON General Fund budgets through 2003. This budgeting practice of using DON General Fund offset ended in 2004 in order to reduce confusion and to show the full costs of the NMF program under only one budget, the NMF Budget.

Table 15: Funding for NMF Management and Project Development (2000-2008)



Funding for NMF’s Management and Project Development has fluctuated over the last several years with a downward trend. This reflects past staffing reductions which then were temporarily offset by time-limited staffing and consultant support to carry out time-limited

initiative or projects in 2007 and 2008.

Table 16: Management and Project Development Costs

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	9-yr Ave
Total Management & Project Development	1,598,439	1,184,000	1,308,572	1,055,899	895,853	908,309	932,341	1,100,274	1,123,081	
Total NMF Adopted Budget	\$3,750,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$3,700,000	\$3,555,429	\$3,551,119	\$3,270,911	\$3,595,694	\$3,796,389	
% MPD over Adopted Budget	43%	26%	29%	29%	25%	26%	29%	31%	30%	30%
Revised NMF Budget incl Carryover	\$7,410,950	\$8,527,086	\$9,705,654	\$9,004,614	\$8,615,218	\$7,892,356	\$8,137,537	\$8,586,921	\$9,129,772	
% MPD over Total NMF Managed	22%	14%	13%	12%	10%	12%	11%	13%	12%	13%

Table 16 shows the proportion of the Management and Project Development costs compared to the NMF adopted budget and then compared to the revised NMF budget, which includes the prior year NMF carried over and managed in that given year. For example, in 2008 Management and Project Development costs represent 30% of the total adopted NMF budget. However, when looking at the totality of all NMF managed under the revised NMF budget, this percentage of project development costs is much lower, approximately 12%. This is important to note because the revised NMF budget is a more accurate and complete scale of NMF managed that given year and because the Management and Project Development costs support project management and oversight staffing in DON, Parks, and SDOT so that neighborhood and community groups receive adequate support to access and expend their NMF project funds.

Staffing

The Neighborhood Matching Fund program is managed by DON, Parks and SDOT staff. In 2008, there were eight full-time budgeted positions: five Project Managers, one working Supervisor, one Assistant Finance Analyst, and one Manager position split between the NMF and P-Patch Community Gardens programs. Descriptions of each position in the 2008 fiscal year follow:

NMF Program Manager (Manager 2) [1.0 Budgeted FTE, 0.7 NMF-funded FTE] –

This position is responsible for managing the administration, implementation, and evaluation of the NMF program. The Program Manager develops and manages the program budget, personnel resources, and advises the department directors on policy issues. The position is part of DON's Senior Team and plays a leadership role in developing and implementing department policies and operating procedures. The Manager supervises the working Supervisor. The Manager also manages at least one NMF project and handles sensitive issues, including personnel, political, and interdepartmental matters.

NMF Supervisor or Senior Planning and Development Specialist [1.0 FTE] – The Supervisor reports directly to the Manager 2 and is primarily responsible for supervising Planning & Development Specialist IIs (also known as Project Managers). The position also supervises the Assistant Finance Analyst and part-time Administrative Specialist II through the end of 2008. The Supervisor assists in setting policy and program guidelines and priorities for the NMF funds and various city initiatives. The Supervisor also manages NMF projects and staffs the Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee and Citywide Review Team.

Planning and Development Specialist IIs (Project Managers) [5 NMF-budgeted FTE, 2.5 temporarily funded FTE] – The Planning and Development Specialists, or Project Managers, report directly to the Senior Planning and Development Specialist and are primarily responsible for the outreach, technical assistance, application review, and contract management of awarded NMF projects. Each Project Manager implements program policies and guidelines for an historic average project load of approximately 20-25, depending on difficulty and scope of project. More recently, the typical workload for NMF project managers has risen to over 40.

Time-specific projects and time-limited funding made it possible to include 2.5 FTE temporary project management positions in 2008. These positions and their funding expired at the end of 2008, though the work continues into 2009. The time-specific project management staffing support helped launch the Seattle Climate Action Now and Youth Violence Prevention initiatives.

Assistant Finance Analyst [1.0 FTE] – This position is responsible for developing and amending contracts, maintaining and populating key components of the Neighborhood Matching Fund database, providing key data for reports for internal and external use, and working with the department's Finance and Accounting unit to process invoices.



Wilson-Pacific Murual Project (Chief Sealth)

The number of permanent Project Manager positions has remained fairly consistent since 1999 with one major change in 2002 when two positions were eliminated. There have been turnovers in project management as well as leadership positions, especially in the last three years. It should also be noted that, although award caps have not grown with inflation as staffing costs have, the number of projects that can be funded with adjusted budgets has been growing while staffing capacity has not kept proportionate pace with this funding growth.

While DON oversees the NMF program, projects require regular technical and administrative assistance from the Parks Department and SDOT. The program covers management and project development costs for these departments. The majority of project management funding covers DON's staffing costs, with approximately 16% covering related costs for Parks and SDOT:

Parks Department Planning and Development Specialist II (Parks NMF Coordinator) [1.5 FTE (1.0 FTE funded by NMF and 0.5 FTE funded by Parks)] –

This position provides Parks Department's review of proposed NMF projects on Parks properties and provides technical assistance to community groups on Parks' policies, procedures, and requirements. In addition, the Parks Coordinator acts as a liaison between Parks and DON, keeps DON staff abreast of Parks rules and procedures as it relates to NMF projects, and assists in mitigating issues that may arise with the community or between departments. The Coordinator supports the NMF Project Managers, but does not manage any NMF contracts.

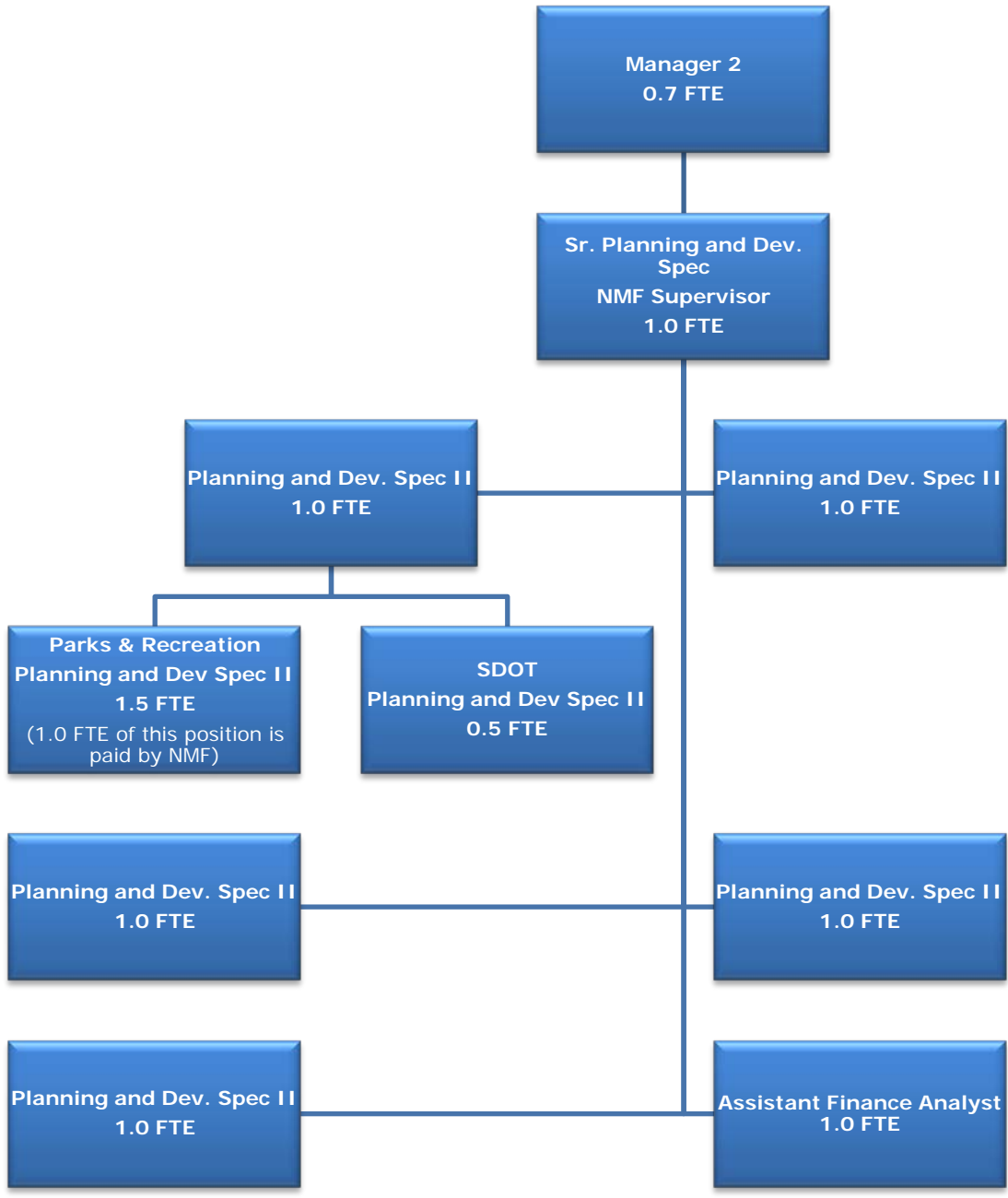
SDOT Planning and Development Specialist II (SDOT NMF Coordinator) [0.5 FTE] – This position provides dedicated SDOT review of proposed transportation-related projects, including those that occur within the street rights-of-way and provides technical assistance to community groups on SDOT policies, procedures and requirements. In addition, the SDOT Coordinator acts as a liaison between SDOT and DON, keeps DON staff abreast of SDOT rules and procedures as it relates to NMF projects, and assists in mitigating issues that may arise with the community or between departments. The Coordinator supports the NMF Project Managers, but does not manage any NMF contracts.

In 2008, NMF also had three positions that partially supported the program and therefore were in part paid for by NMF: Administrative Specialist II, Administrative Staff Assistant and Deputy Director. And, additional work hours to an existing, half-time position in another department program called Involving All Neighbors helped alleviate NMF project workloads in 2008.

Over the course of the NMF program, the introduction of new initiatives has called for the addition of temporary staff to launch the new sets of activities. For example, with time-limited funding and time-limited projects, two temporary Project Managers supported the work under two special City initiatives related to the NMF Program: Climate Action Now and Youth Violence Prevention. Typically, new initiatives require intensive work in the early stage of bringing it to the community. Once community awareness has been built, the work contained within these initiatives is then absorbed into NMF program staff's scopes of work, and the temporary positions are eliminated.

An organizational chart along with 2008 NMF budgeted position titles follows:

2008 NMF Organizational Chart by Position Title



KEY STAFF FUNCTIONS. The community-building focus of the Neighborhood Matching Fund program sets it distinctly apart from other grants programs. The majority of NMF applicants are community groups and individuals often new to grants processes and their successes in moving through NMF cycles are reliant upon the focused and intensive guidance and technical assistance that NMF staff offer, starkly different from that which is provided by foundations and public funding agencies whose applicants are nonprofits with at least some degree of fundraising knowledge and experience. The most notable feature of the NMF program is that it supports projects that are neighborhood-initiated, which entail civic participation, self-determination, volunteerism, community organizing and leadership development. To support the NMF's community-based characteristics, NMF staff tailors service delivery to the needs of each neighborhood group and to volunteers who take the lead in making the projects happen on the ground. As a result, project managers' work is heavily focused on outreach, technical assistance, and capacity building. No two NMF projects are identical. Each requires unique start-up, learning curves and implementation plans to educate and assist community groups in carrying out their goals. With projects that range from community organizing to playground improvement, there is a high degree of variability among NMF projects. This specificity is core to the NMF program's values around community engagement, but also requires that staff deliver a high degree of technical assistance, contract and project management, and project support.

Staff's project work fall into the following key categories:

OUTREACH (20%)

Staff is responsible for reaching out to individuals and community groups who may be interested in applying to the Neighborhood Matching Fund. This is done in several ways:

- Researching and identifying new community groups.
- Developing an outreach plan in collaboration with Neighborhood District Coordinators.
- Responding to inquiries about the program.
- Meeting with individuals and organizations in the community.
- Placing flyers at various locations.
- Attending district council meetings, community meetings, board meetings, etc.
- Working with local institutions to get the word out, including newspapers, news channels, listservs, bulletin boards, and community calendars.
- Promoting the program and the City at community events and fairs.
- Organizing and leading technical assistance workshops and other events.
- Providing one-on-one guidance to interested neighborhood groups and their fiscal sponsors on organizing community groups and preparing applications.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (25%)

Staff is responsible for providing support to awarded neighborhood groups and their fiscal sponsors. These responsibilities include:

- Connecting applicant and contracted applicant groups and individuals to related City and non-City resources that will enhance project success.

- Providing or connecting groups to community-organizing and -building training.
- Accommodating groups with little or no experience using City resources and opportunities.
- Reviewing and rating Small and Simple and Tree Fund applications.
- Providing program support to Outreach and Small Sparks applicant groups and individuals.
- Meeting with Large Project Fund applicant groups and providing detailed comments on Large Project Fund applications for Citywide Review Team use.
- Staffing the Citywide Review Team and the Large Projects Fund review process.
- Acting as liaisons with fiscal sponsors, insurance companies, and sub-contractors as appropriate.
- Resolving issues related to conflicts that arise in the community.
- Working and coordinating with other city departments regarding project-specific issues.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION (40%):

Staff is responsible for executing and managing contracts with awarded neighborhood groups. Tasks vary depending on the difficulty and scope of projects, but generally include:

- Developing, regularly reviewing, and appropriately revising written guidelines and instructions for applicants and awardees.
- Developing and helping execute contracts for awarded applicant groups.
- Managing an average load of 20 to 25 projects.
- Maintaining regular contact with awarded projects and community groups.
- Conducting site visits and attending project meetings.
- Providing and documenting support, no less than monthly, to groups throughout the length of a project and contract.
- Assisting contracted applicant groups with invoices and final reports.
- Entering and updating contract and project information in the database, including regular progress notes.
- Closing out contracts in a timely manner.

PROGRAM COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION (15%):

- Attending mandatory workshops, interdepartmental coordination meetings, and regular staff meetings.
- Completing periodic project and program reports.
- Responding and fulfilling requests for program information.
- Assisting with development and implementation of new program policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Assisting with updating program guidelines and applications.
- Receiving supervision and training as relevant to job duties.

Table 17: NMF Project Manager Work Week

	Current Work Hours	%
Outreach	8	20
Technical Assistance	10	25
Project Management and Contract Administration	16	40
Program Coordination and Administration	6	15
Total Hours Per Week	40 hrs	100%

In addition to core key functions shared by all Project Managers, every year each staff person also takes the lead on two or more aspects of programmatic coordination. These roles are typically assigned at the beginning of each calendar year. These roles include: leading one of the Small and Simple review processes; coordinating ceremony logistics and planning; serving as the point person for strategic communications; coordinating the activities outlined in the Outreach Plan; leading the Tree Fund process; serving as the staff point person for the Large Project Fund process; serving as the liaison with the North and South Neighborhood District Coordinator teams; and coordinating community outreach and education workshops.

The following table summarizes the total estimated amount of staffing resources dedicated to the program annually.

Table 18: Neighborhood Matching Fund Staffing

NMF Staffing by Position 1999-2008

Positions	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Executive 2				0.35	0.35	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Administrative Specialist II-BU				0.50	0.50	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.70
Administrative Specialist II-BU				0.25	0.25					
Admin Staff Assistant										0.10
Manager 2						1.00	1.00	1.00	0.70	0.70
Sr. Planning & Development Spec.				1.00	1.00					
Sr. Planning & Development Spec.				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Assistant Finance Analyst				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.92
Planning & Development Specialist II				1.00					0.50	1.21
DON NMF-funded positions	11.10	12.10	11.10	11.10	9.10	8.48	8.53	8.53	9.23	10.93
DON FTE per Budget	11.10	12.10	11.10	11.10	9.10	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Parks NMF-funded position			2.00	2.50	2.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
SDOT NMF-funded position			1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50

1999-2001: DON staffing information in aggregate

2003: 2 Planning & Development Specialist II are eliminated in DON and staffing levels in Parks, and SDOT are also cut.

2004: Methodology of FTE count is by home program, while previous methodology is by fund split.

2004: Sr. Planning & Development Specialist is reclassified to Manager 2.

2007: Manager 2 started managing the P-Patch Program, decreasing the time allotted to NMF.

2007: Consultant funding for Seattle CAN and for project management support, in lieu of position, are added to NMF.

2007: In lieu of hiring consultants, a part-time Planning & Development Specialist's hours are increased and a temporary staff is hired.

2008: A temporary, part-time Planning & Development Specialist II is added to launch the Youth Violence Prevention Initiative.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The Neighborhood Matching Fund strongly values community building. It is specifically designed to help community members connect with one another through projects that establish strong and healthy environments within which constituents can live and work. Stakeholder feedback is, therefore, an important element in this evaluative effort. And so, in addition to the program information described in the previous sections, the Department of Neighborhoods hired a consultant team to gather qualitative feedback from people who have been involved in or are familiar with the Neighborhood Matching Fund program. Focus groups were conducted with community members and interviews were carried out with key informants. This stakeholder feedback is intended to inform both the analysis of the program and the findings and recommendations.

Focus group participants were asked to offer their input and feedback about:

- elements that make up a strong neighborhood;
- successful strategies for building strong neighborhoods;
- what motivates applicants to pursue Neighborhood Matching Fund support; and
- difficulties they faced in their experience with NMF.

They were also asked to participate in an exercise to redesign the Neighborhood Matching Fund program.

Key informant interviews covered similar subject areas.

(Please see Appendices [C](#), [D](#), [E](#) and [G](#) for stakeholder feedback materials.)

Additionally, neighborhood district councils were invited to offer feedback on discussions about potential expansions of the various funds. NMF staff gathered this information at district council meetings.

The following section summarizes this collective feedback. In reviewing these findings, it is important to note that the Neighborhood Matching Fund is unlike typical funding programs, whether in government or in private philanthropy. Because it is promoted as a community-building resource for constituents throughout the city, the NMF is expected to be user-friendly and accessible as a public service to the community. Seattle residents expect high-quality customer service and neighborhood capacity building from DON. This level of public expectation creates both opportunities and challenges for the NMF Program.

How do people in our city build stronger neighborhoods or communities?

In focus groups with a diverse range of community members throughout Seattle, participants were asked to describe the elements of a strong neighborhood. The summary below reflects participants' responses, which were grouped into themes, listed in descending order of the frequency with which each theme was mentioned (see [Table 19](#)).

Opportunities for collaboration: This theme was echoed most widely across all focus groups. Participants described the need for people to stay actively involved in their neighborhoods, to build relationships with each other and to solve common problems. One participant described this simply as "connectedness." Some explicitly cited the importance of having strong neighborhood organizations — like business associations, Neighborhood District Councils, churches, and nonprofit organizations — in order to foster and sustain active community engagement. Participants also felt that collaboration between businesses and the community was critical.

A spirit of friendliness, openness to diversity: This theme is closely related to the one above. In fact, several comments addressed both the need for opportunities to engage *and* the importance of having a welcoming and generous neighborhood spirit. When addressing this subject, people often described attitudes or social values, like a sense of responsibility for one's neighbor, caring, and a feeling that one is part of a greater whole. The importance of diversity came up frequently here, in terms of race, age (i.e., having a multigenerational neighborhood), and income.

A strong neighborhood identity: To many participants, having a strong sense of place was key to having a strong neighborhood. People felt this could be achieved through various means — holding community events, creating marketing materials and strategies to promote the neighborhood, and developing a shared sense of history. There were some participants who also addressed the need for neighborhood stability — i.e., having families who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time, and minimizing drastic neighborhood development changes.

Multiple accessible gathering places and amenities: Not surprisingly, many participants cited the need for places where people can gather, connect, and socialize. This included coffee shops, plazas, parks, sidewalks, libraries, and community centers. Some specifically cited the importance of having a business district, with amenities like movie theaters and restaurants. However, one participant was quick to point out that the mere existence of these gathering places was not enough; empty parks and streets lined with businesses that are vacant do not reflect a strong neighborhood. In order to have a vibrant community, these amenities must be widely and frequently used.

Schools that are academically strong and community-centered: In terms of public institutions, strong schools came up most frequently as elements of a healthy neighborhood. People emphasized the need for schools that were both academically strong and community-centered. Among the specific kinds of activities mentioned were quality after-school programs for youth and community events held at the school.

Walkability and community safety: This theme came up often, and included the need for sidewalks, streetlights, and block watch programs. Some participants described community safety as being closely related to the themes above. For example, the more ways there are for people to socialize and get to know each other in a neighborhood, the safer the neighborhood is likely to be. Similarly, embracing diversity and ensuring that all communities feel a sense of ownership was seen as an important part of public safety.

Communication: Many people cited the need for various and regular forms of communication as a vital requirement for strong neighborhoods. Again, this was closely tied to many of the themes above. Without having a systematic and accessible flow of information, in languages that meet the needs of the neighborhood, it is impossible to create and sustain

Several comments addressed both the need for opportunities to engage and the importance of having a welcoming and generous neighborhood spirit.

broad neighborhood involvement. People mentioned neighborhood newspapers, email listservs, regular monthly meetings, flyers, and door-to-door contact as important ways for neighborhoods to remain vibrant and active.

Strong infrastructure: Along with communication, participants felt that basic neighborhood infrastructure was critical to support neighborhood involvement. Good roads and sidewalks, well-maintained parks, access to reliable public transportation, and streetlights were mentioned often. People also cited the importance of having good public planning to minimize traffic issues, to provide sufficient parking, and to ensure access to City and other public services.

A community safety net: These comments were closely related to the importance of having a spirit of caring and friendliness. Some people who cited the need for basic social services and a community safety net also talked about the value of having a neighborly attitude and a willingness to help others in need. Some comments specifically addressed the need to support low-income communities and those who are homeless.

Well-maintained green space and nature: While parks and open space were mentioned as part of the need for accessible gathering places and amenities as described above, it is worth noting that several participants specifically cited the need for green space and nature.

Affordability and income diversity:

The need for affordable housing came up several times. People felt that affordability was a key to ensuring neighborhood stability. Most often, affordability was cited in relation to ensuring broad access to homeownership and the ability of people to stay in their homes. One participant, however, expressed some hostility toward renters, and felt that homeowners strengthened neighborhoods, while renters did not.

While this was a strongly felt sentiment, it was not widely held. In fact, some participants explicitly cited the value of having mixed-income neighborhoods as opposed to homogeneously low-income or affluent neighborhoods.

In addition to the major themes described above, people also talked about the need for **strong leadership** and for the presence of **arts and culture** in a neighborhood.

Table 19: Community Responses to “How do people in our city build stronger neighborhoods or communities?”

Theme	Frequency of mention
Opportunities for collaboration	17
A spirit of friendliness, openness to diversity	11
A strong neighborhood identity	11
Multiple accessible gathering places and amenities	11
Schools that are academically strong and community-centered	10
Walkability and community safety	8
Communication	5
Strong infrastructure	5
A community safety net	3
Well-maintained green space and nature	3
Affordability and income diversity	2
Strong leadership	1
Arts and culture	1



Longfellow Creek

What are successful strategies that you have seen for building stronger neighborhoods or communities?

After participants had identified elements of a strong neighborhood, they were asked to describe successful strategies for building strong neighborhoods that they had either seen or been involved with. Below are the major themes that emerged, in order of prevalence (see [Table 20](#)).

Communication and networking:

This was the most dominant theme. As in the last section, participants described strategies like using email groups, newsletters, websites, flyers, and monthly meetings to share information and to foster collaboration. However, many people went further, emphasizing the importance of personal contact. When talking about newsletters, for example, participants specified “hand-delivered newsletters.” When mentioning flyers or monthly meetings, people described going door-to-door, or meeting with neighbors one-on-one at coffee shops or over lunch. Not surprisingly, people cited the need to have tools like updated contact lists, but they also talked about the importance of adopting a neighborly spirit in everyday life, like introducing oneself to one’s neighbors. Also within this theme, people mentioned the value of systematically gathering neighborhood input when important issues arose, and building a shared sense of history by encouraging diverse members of a neighborhood to share their stories.

Small, visible community-building projects:

Having people who are outside, publicly doing things to improve their neighborhoods was thought to be an invaluable strategy. Examples ranged from holding neighborhood barbecues to organizing work parties to repaint storefronts.

People also mentioned the success of block watch programs, tree planting, and strategies to fill public spaces that had been used for negative activities, like drug dealing or prostitution, with positive activities, like neighborhood potlucks.

Strong leadership that reflects the community:

The topic of leadership came up frequently and in different ways. People believe that along with strong leaders, neighborhoods need a wide range of volunteer opportunities as a way to develop new leadership. People also cited the importance of having leaders who reflect the diversity of the neighborhood, and programs that support people in developing their leadership skills.

Overcoming crisis through

collaboration: Interestingly, crisis or difficulty came up several times as the initial spark behind successful collaboration and action. Here, the need for consensus building to solve neighborhood problems and to foster networking and communication became very important. This theme was also closely related to the need for strong community leaders with the courage and skills to face conflict and to unite disparate interests.

Collaborations with schools and other institutions: In some instances, people mentioned community collaborations with schools, including the example of a P-Patch created at a school, as successful strategies for strengthening neighborhoods. The importance of partnering with City agencies like the Department of Neighborhoods, including projects funded by the Neighborhood Matching Fund, also came up as a way to strengthen neighborhoods.

In addition to the themes described above, participants also mentioned the importance of efforts to **build upon successful NMF projects**, to

establish community-gathering places like libraries, to **involve youth**, and to build sidewalks through the **SDOT Sidewalk Program**. There was also mention of **social capital** as a valuable asset for neighborhoods – i.e., people, networks, relationships, and/or organizations within the neighborhood that can facilitate access to resources and political power. Other themes mentioned include the **systematic gathering of neighborhood input** through community meetings, **building a shared sense of history through storytelling**, the **NMF program** itself, **tree planting**, and **introducing oneself to one’s neighbors**.

Table 20: Community Responses to “What are successful strategies that you have seen for building stronger neighborhoods or communities?”

Theme	Frequency of mention
Communication and networking	24
Small, visible community-building projects	13
Strong leadership that reflects the community	8
Overcoming crisis through collaboration	2
Collaborations with schools and other institutions	2
Build upon successful NMF projects	1
Establish community gathering places	1
Involve youth	1
SDOT Sidewalk Program	1
Social capital	1
Systematic gathering of neighborhood input	1
Building a shared sense of history through storytelling	1
NMF itself, especially the volunteer match	1
Tree planting	1
Introducing oneself to one’s neighbors	1

What led you to apply for an award from the Neighborhood Matching Fund and what was the most useful aspect of using it?

Participants were asked to describe what led them to apply for NMF program, and what they found most useful about the program. The responses were again categorized into a set of major themes, listed below in order of frequency (see [Table 21](#)).

Desire to improve the neighborhood: This is the most basic and widespread motivation for NMF applicants. People cited everything from wanting to fix a muddy trail or a neglected park in their neighborhood, to more intangible motivations like wanting to achieve “small victories,” or what one participant described simply as “love for community.” People mentioned specific NMF-supported projects, like conducting a neighborhood needs assessment, supporting a small PTA, providing computer training, improving their streets, and writing a book about Magnolia. One participant said that a flooding crisis motivated her to apply.

The need for funding and resources: Almost as frequently as the desire to strengthen one’s neighborhood, the simple need for seed money or core operating funds came up as a strong motivation for applicants. Some people described having successfully gone from receiving a Small and Simple Fund award, to receiving a Large Project Fund award, to securing larger grants from other funding sources. The NMF is also seen as a good way to leverage funds, both to obtain other funds and to build a volunteer base. Several people said that the name recognition of the NMF

helped them to gain credibility in the eyes of other funders.

Past successful NMF projects: Hearing about, or being involved in, successful NMF projects in the past is a strong motivator for NMF applicants. People talked about being inspired by other awardees in their neighborhood, and valuing the notion of “paying it forward” – i.e., having past awardees assist others to apply.

Word of mouth and DON outreach: Some participants said that they heard about the NMF Program through word of mouth – at their community center, through their personal or social networks, from a community leader, or through neighborhood engagement process. A few people said that their Neighborhood District Coordinator told them about the NMF and helped them to apply, or that they learned about the program from an NMF training session.

Desire for fundraising experience and networking: Beyond all of the above, some people expressed a desire to learn about fundraising, and to gain hands-on experience through the NMF application process. Others said that their desire to meet and work with others in their community led them to apply.

Table 21: Community Responses to “What led you to apply for an award from the Neighborhood Matching Fund and what was the most useful aspect of using it?”

Theme	Frequency of mention
Desire to improve neighborhood	17
The need for funding and resources	8
Past successful NMF projects	5
Word of mouth and DON outreach	7
Desire for fundraising experience and networking	2

What was the biggest challenge in using the Neighborhood Matching Fund?

Participants were asked to describe what was difficult about applying for and receiving NMF funds. The summary below reflects participants’ responses, which were grouped into themes. The themes are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which each theme was mentioned (see [Table 22](#)).

NMF staff: There is an appreciation for the role that the NMF staff is asked to play in supporting applicants. However, concerns about staff accessibility and customer service were by far the most strongly expressed and widely cited problem with the NMF Program. These comments fell into two main subject areas:

- **Consistency, accessibility, and workload:** The majority of concerns related to staff had to do with the inconsistency of expectations among NMF project managers, and the resulting confusion and frustration that applicants experienced; staff turnover and the absence of institutional memory; and the inaccessibility of a few staff. Participants frequently mentioned not being able to get someone on the phone to answer their questions. It is important to note that all of these problems were widely attributed to prior year budget and staffing cuts

and to the unrealistic workloads that the NMF staff was perceived to be managing

- **Customer service:** Some participants said that a few NMF staff were occasionally curt and unprofessional, and again attributed this problem to unrealistic workloads and to a lack of adequate staffing. However, many more people described instances where a few project managers berated and criticized them, or treated them disrespectfully. It is worth mentioning that this was a strong and repeated theme throughout the focus groups, and also in one-on-one interviews with unsuccessful applicants. One person stated that due to the rudeness she experienced, her organization received the award, but “gave it right back.” These comments reflect a significant challenge for the NMF Program.

Complicated and confusing process and forms: The vast majority of these comments focused on the need for greatly simplified application, budget, match documentation, and invoicing forms. People described the forms as being excessively arduous, complicated, and confusing, in some extreme cases demanding hundreds of hours. These sentiments led many participants to note that the Small and Simple Fund is commonly referred to as the “Small and Complicated Fund.” People expressed feeling like they were “drowning in paperwork” and that the NMF “should be about people getting together to do the work, not filling out paperwork.”

Coordination between DON and other City departments: This was a frequently recurring theme. Applicants expressed deep frustrations over what was perceived as unnecessary bureaucracy and a lack of coordination between DON and other departments, most frequently Parks. People often felt a lack of clarity about who was leading a particular project, and irritation at the inconsistency among forms from different departments.

Cash flow: This was another frequently cited problem concerning a few staff, where individuals described having to personally or organizationally cover the expenses of a particular project while

awaiting reimbursement from the City, sometimes for up to six months or longer. Invoicing was described as being burdensome, not only because of the paperwork involved, but because of the long lag time between the submission of invoices and the receipt of funds. (It should be noted that grantees’ lack of familiarity with filling out reports completely can at times cause delays in the administrative processing of invoices. The Accounting Department is lauded for quicker-than-average turn-around time for payment of invoices.)

Inflexibility: Some participants described a lack of understanding by some NMF Program staff that, despite the best intentions of community groups, projects do not always go as planned. There is a feeling that budgets are enforced too rigidly, and that unrealistic or inappropriate conditions are often placed on funded projects.

Budget cuts: This theme cuts across many of the themes above. There is a general feeling that staffing cuts have created unmanageable workloads and an inability to meet the needs of the community. Some participants feel that these conditions exacerbate the problem of rudeness and poor customer service.

Table 22: Community Responses to “What was the biggest challenge in using the Neighborhood Matching Fund?”

Theme	Frequency of mention
NMF staff	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistency, accessibility, and workload (15) ▪ Customer service (7) 	
Complicated and confusing process and forms	17
Coordination between DON and other City departments	12
Cash flow	5
Inflexibility	5
Budget cuts	5

How would you re-design the Neighborhood Matching Fund?

Participants were asked to engage in an exercise to illustrate how they would redesign the NMF Program in terms of funding levels, frequency of application cycles, role of staff, decision-making, and typical projects that would be funded in each award category. ([Appendix G: Funding Levels Matrix Exercise](#)) Participants were told that they could focus different funding levels on specific issue areas, like climate change, for example, and that they could create up to four categories.

Table 23: Community Input on Re-designing the NMF Program

FUNDING LEVEL I				
Max Amount	% Participants	Frequency of Applications	Role of Staff	Decision Making
\$500,000	10%	Half of all participants favored holding one funding cycle per year for this funding level. Another 45% of participants favored having two cycles per year.	The majority of respondents (58%) said that staff should have a large role in identifying and developing proposals. About one-third said staff should play a medium role.	Combination of internal (DON) and external (CRT) decision makers.
\$250,000	13%			
\$200,000	10%			
\$150,000	8%			
\$120,000	5%			
\$100,000	53%			
\$50,000	3%			
FUNDING LEVEL II				
Max Amount	% Participants	Frequency of Applications	Role of Staff	Decision Making
\$100,000	16%	About 43% of participants said they would like to see four cycles per year in this category. Another 30% favored having two cycles per year.	More than 60% of participants said staff should play a medium role in this level of awards, and another 25% said staff should play a large role.	Evenly split between internal (DON) and external (CRT) decision-making.
\$75,000	3%			
\$50,000	8%			
\$35,000	5%			
\$25,000	21%			
\$20,000	16%			
\$15,000	32%			
FUNDING LEVEL III				
Max Amount	% Participants	Frequency of Applications	Role of Staff	Decision Making
\$50,000	3%	59% of participants favored having a rolling deadline for this funding level. Each of the other options received relatively weak support.	Nearly half (47%) of participants said that staff should play a medium role in this funding level, with 40% saying that staff should play a small role.	Internal.
\$25,000	16%			
\$20,000	6%			
\$15,000	6%			
\$10,000	3%			
\$5,000	16%			
\$2,000	3%			
\$1,000	9%			
\$500	19%			
\$250	19%			

FUNDING LEVEL IV				
Max Amount	% Participants	Frequency of Applications	Role of Staff	Decision Making
\$5,000	7%	Overwhelmingly (94%) participants wanted to see a rolling application deadline for this level of awards.	Fully 75% of respondents said that staff should play a small role in this level of awards.	Internal.
\$5,000	29%			
\$1,000	36%			
\$750	14%			
\$500	7%			
\$250	7%			

– INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS –

In general, focus groups and interviews with stakeholders in other City departments echoed what was heard in the community focus groups. There were remarkably similar appreciations and concerns about the NMF Program.

Race and Social Justice: Notably, City employees who participated in this evaluation from different departments and levels of organization all used similar language to talk about equity, disparities, and institutional barriers. This is likely a reflection of the Race and Social Justice Initiative, which has trained City departments on a shared framework and analysis of institutional racism. It is also notable that the Department of Neighborhoods in general is widely seen as the City entity that is best positioned to advance the Race and Social Justice framework externally because of its mission, and because it regularly engages with communities throughout Seattle.

The Department of Neighborhoods is widely seen as the department that is best positioned to advance the Race and Social Justice framework externally.

Need for better communication and coordination: This theme echoed particularly strongly in the focus groups and interviews with internal stakeholders. The “good cop / bad-cop” dynamic – where the Department of Neighborhoods is perceived to be a champion of communities, while other departments (e.g., Parks, SPU, SDOT) are seen as roadblocks – creates frustrations both within the City and out in the community. There is a perception that DON does not appreciate the need for other City departments to consider the long-term consequences of ongoing maintenance and operations needs for particular projects. DON needs to be hub of internal communications, managing these considerations so that the City can speak with one voice.

Interviews with executive staff in Mayor Nickels’ administration echoed many of the same themes that were captured in the focus groups.

– NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETINGS –

Neighborhood Matching Fund staff met with neighborhood district councils to solicit feedback about proposed changes to the various NMF funds. Seven District Councils, 3 community-based coalitions, and the Seattle immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board accepted the opportunity to discuss the changes at their respective meetings. An on-line survey was distributed to former Neighborhood Matching Fund awardees, resulting in 28 responses.

Small Sparks Fund and Outreach

Fund: All participating groups supported the idea of bringing Small Sparks and the Outreach Fund together into one combined fund. Most agreed to raising the funding limit to \$1,000 from the current \$750, though a few members raised concern that the proposed enhancement was too significant a percentage increase.

Small and Simple Projects Fund: The overwhelming majority supported the proposal of raising the funding limit to \$20,000 from the current \$15,000.

Large Projects Fund: Most participants were not supportive of raising the funding limit to \$150,000 from the current \$100,000 over concern that the increase would result in fewer awards being made. Some commented that the larger amounts would disproportionately benefit groups with greater capacity for fundraising versus newer, more grass-roots applicant groups.

There were varied opinions about how the Larger Projects Fund's citywide projects should be addressed. One group felt that citywide projects should be limited – perhaps to one funded each year – and another was more focused on not having decisions about citywide project funding made by district councils. Yet another group's concerns centered on its belief that projects with broad geographic reach dilutes the local focus that is supposed to be at the heart of NMF. One district councilmember suggested an alternative idea of allowing two or more neighborhoods to apply together to NMF – not quite citywide but broader than one specific neighborhood's reach. Numerous members agreed that because of the complexities around citywide project funding, application and review processes, these activities need further exploration.

General Comments: Several groups emphasized the importance of keeping the NMF program based in neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

Since the Neighborhood Matching Fund was established over 20 years ago, it has had a significant impact on strengthening communities and neighborhoods throughout Seattle. The more than \$42 million it has invested in over 3,500 projects has generated about \$65 million in matched cash, volunteer hours and donated goods, illustrating a strong partnership between community members and the City to build social capital between community stakeholders. As a program that is designed to be accessible and inclusive, the NMF has been able to engage individuals with burgeoning ideas and large community organizations with significant physical projects alike. Because the Fund is purposefully meant to be community-driven, the projects that NMF has supported over the years range widely, from planning activities to production of neighborhood gatherings to environmental initiatives.



Hat N Boots

As the movement continues for residents to choose living in dense urban settings where life resources – work, groceries, child care, open spaces, etc. – are within easy geographic reach, the importance of people knowing their neighbors and engaging with one another increases. Community members who are connected to one another through shared interests and values build stronger, healthier and safer neighborhoods that can thrive over the long term.

This section draws together program data and stakeholder feedback, and addresses the program’s strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, the consideration of which is critical to ensuring NMF’s long-term sustainability and viability.

Strengths

One of the greatest strengths of the Neighborhood Matching Fund is its explicit focus on **community-driven efforts**. The program believes that communities and neighborhoods know themselves best and, therefore, ideas for projects must come from them, from the ground up. This has realized a wealth of varied projects, from the construction of the Duwamish Longhouse to the presentation of Green My Ride, an alternative transportation fair, to the establishment of numerous farmers markets and P-Patch community gardens around town. This variety makes the NMF a vibrant program, with projects that grow out of community enthusiasm, conviction and hard work. The community-driven structure of the program also helps build **leadership** among members, giving them ownership to plan and implement activities. Though some projects may have a specific time focus, most have long-term impacts that positively change the way community members interact with one another.

Another core strength of the NMF program is its **community match** component. All awarded projects are required to bring in community resources (the levels of which vary depending on the NMF fund and/or the type of project) of cash, volunteer hours and in-kind support. (The Tree Fund calls for participation by at least five neighbors, though match documentation is not required.) The match encourages awardees to leverage NMF dollars to bring in local businesses, individual neighbors, foundations, corporations and, at times, other public departments to collaborate with them to realize project goals. Because the Fund also places worth on volunteer time – with \$15 counted for each volunteer hour contributed – people are valued for the time they put in. *Over the life of the NMF, the value of this match has been 152% of dollars awarded, a remarkable, quantitative demonstration of the depth of investments that people and groups have made in strengthening their communities.* This return on investment does not include reduced operations and maintenance costs of physical projects due to community commitments, or reduction in public safety costs when troublesome areas are improved.

The spectrum of the various NMF program funds encourages **accessibility** for all community members. With specific funds that range from Small Sparks to Large Projects Fund, there is a place for numerous uncomplicated efforts that need just a little financial support to get off the ground as well as a place for large-scale efforts that may involve multiple City departments, construction activities and complex planning and implementation. The smaller NMF components – Small Sparks and Outreach Fund – are especially nimble and responsive to community ideas: applicants can apply at any time and staff is able to respond to requests quickly.

Because the NMF is, often, the first major funder of a community effort, it has become an important source of **seed monies** that have helped propel community groups to create something larger and longer lasting. Without NMF's initial financial impetus, many groups would, at best, be delayed in launching their projects or, at worse, unable to get anything off the ground at all. Although NMF awards are time-specific – projects must be completed within a few months or a year – the early dollars that the Fund invests help groups establish a base of activity from which they can grow their

work and impact. For example, two NMF awards (in 2004 and 2007) helped create gathering spaces and mountain bike trails in Colonnade Mountain Bike Park, a project that had extensive input and involvement by youth. As a result of these NMF-supported activities, this organizing group was able to gain experience and forge relationships within the larger community. Today, it has formed as the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and is being approached by other community groups to assist their efforts to build similar projects throughout Washington State.

The strong track record of past NMF projects not only has established it as a viable, trustworthy program, but also lends **credibility** to community groups who successfully receive awards. Many of these groups are grassroots and/or newly-formed, and have not yet built relationships or a reputation among other funders. Knowing that the NMF invests significant time and energies on vetting applicants, other funders can raise their comfort level with a community group unknown to them if that group has received a NMF award, a sort of “seal of approval” within the funding community.

Because of the variety of applicant projects that come into the NMF, the program has developed a strong level of **staff expertise** that has benefited delivery of services. Thanks to the NMF’s community-driven nature, staff has, collectively, built a great deal of knowledge about things ranging from traffic plans to special event production to after-school programming. This information base, coupled with the intensive one-on-one technical assistance work inherent to the NMF program, has helped staff better support community groups in developing strong proposals as well as in navigating resources to successfully implement projects. Staffing workload for Neighborhood Matching Fund projects is not necessarily correlated with the monetary award amount. Instead it is correlated with the varying levels of capacity of the community groups, project complexity, and number of partnering City and other government agencies.

Many NMF projects are activities that involve other City departments, most commonly the Parks Department and the Seattle Department of Transportation. The NMF’s **formal and informal partnerships with other City departments** allow it to deliver a stronger program to community members, with review and communications mechanisms already in place to ensure that key stakeholders are working together to provide input and structure to ensure successful projects.

When the Neighborhood Matching Fund was established more than two decades ago, it was the only public program in the country that called for community match to be a core component of activities. The match-fund structure’s successes have since been recognized as an effective way to leverage community resources and create accountability, and the program has been embraced by other public entities as a **replicable model** that can enhance their own public/private partnerships. Since the program’s inception, this model has been duplicated not only in other City of Seattle departments – including the Department of Transportation, Public Utilities, Parks and Technology Departments as well as arts programs – but also in other cities around the country and world, including Newcastle (United Kingdom) and Kobe (Japan).

The range of **award levels** allows the program to support community projects at various stages of community capacity and project development. This supports

emerging community groups in building their capacity to partner with City government and take on larger neighborhood challenges. This is reflected in the distribution of Small Sparks funds across the City's neighborhood districts. Tree Fund success has been variable, depending largely on available funding for the purchase of trees and staffing support for organizing community groups.

The **Small and Simple Projects Fund** is the lifeblood of the Neighborhood Matching Fund program. The award size and the frequency of multiple application deadlines over the course of a year have made this Fund highly accessible. For every Large Project Fund award of the maximum \$100,000, at least six to seven Small and Simple projects can be funded. This Fund allows groups to gain experience, gather support for their project, and get well-organized before applying for a Large Projects Fund grant.

Most community groups that apply to or implement NMF-funded projects are informal or newly-organized groups. Many times, these groups come from historically underserved communities that have little to no experience working with public agencies. Some groups are not aware that they have not yet reached a stage of organizational readiness that puts them in good position to be successful with an NMF application. The support provided by NMF staff in **management and project development** bridges community members' knowledge and skills gap and helps them to reach successes. This support is especially relevant for many immigrant and refugee communities who hold a distrust of government based on experiences from their homelands and benefit from the type of positive, targeted and personalized support the NMF program offers.



West Seattle Murals

Weaknesses

While the NMF has been able to effect a great amount of positive change in neighborhoods throughout Seattle, the program's **staffing levels and workloads** have not always been able to keep up with that which has been needed to meet community interest. The typical workload for NMF project managers has risen from 19.1 projects/person to over 40, impacting the focused technical assistance and other programmatic support that is key to the program's success in building partnerships with community groups. Currently, the NMF runs four program funds in addition to intensive management and project development services. Embedded within the Small and Simple Projects and Large Projects Funds – the two funds that bear the largest project scopes and award amounts – are funding categories (Race and Social Justice, Climate Protection, etc.) that offer distinct focus to project activities. While each initiative serves important purpose in strengthening the community fabric of Seattle, each requires staff training and support to successfully realize each initiative's goals.

The start-time needed when a new initiative is introduced and the training and support required to keep staff abreast of current issues, increase workloads. Additionally, because award deadlines occur across the calendar year, many are made in one City fiscal year but may not be expended until the following fiscal year. As such, staff are typically managing an award budget that is larger the amount officially allocated to the program for that given year.

While the **breadth of applicant projects** has led staff to develop a broad range of expertise, it also has meant that individualized support must be offered to help community groups reach successes. The range and variety of proposals is great – a strong tribute to the grassroots energy in Seattle neighborhoods that the NMF can encourage and support. At the same time, this program flexibility presents a challenge for staff and for program management procedures to keep activities simple and uniform. Each project must, necessarily, be treated uniquely. Projects on Parks Department properties, for example, require a different set of expertise and adherence to Parks and Recreation Department policies, procedures and requirements than projects on Seattle Public School properties. Even within the scope of Parks-related projects, one neighborhood's priorities can be dramatically different from another neighborhood's. Additionally, design process projects have guidelines that differ from event projects or youth-designed after-school projects, and so on. Thus, while there is a desire to be as transparent as possible with community members about the policies and guidelines on the front end, it is difficult to consistently anticipate the variety of issues that may arise with each individual proposal. In addition to expertise on scopes of projects – traffic circles, playfield improvements, construction projects; community event coordination, right-of-way banners, public art murals, etc. – staff's knowledge base must also extend to issues affecting NMF-funded initiatives, including climate protection, environmental justice, race and social justice, youth empowerment, and community organizing. As rules and regulations change externally, project managers must continually be kept abreast of issues and regularly re-trained. Currently, knowledge and experience gaps are mitigated by teamwork and knowledge-sharing, although turnovers in staff and management take time to reset this balance.

There are also numerous **fund-specific challenges**:

The **Outreach Fund's** attention on expanding membership and conducting outreach can be **too narrow a focus** for a community group's needs: groups may have small project ideas for community building that do not fit within the Small Sparks or Outreach Fund's parameters; timelines for projects may make it impossible for groups to apply to the Small and Simple Projects Fund; or groups lack the capacity to apply for the larger pools of funds.

The **Tree Fund** has **limits on what trees are purchased and where they can be planted**. Each year, the City Arborist produces a list of the types of trees that are offered through the Tree Fund. Although community interest in fruit- or nut-producing trees and shrubbery has been increasing, this official list does not yet allow for purchase of these types of plants. Additionally, the Tree Fund currently restricts tree projects to residential planting strips in the street

right-of way. There is increasing community interest in broadening the list of eligible areas in which trees can be planted.

Award funding levels for the program have not been increased in 20 years, and have not been able to keep up with community needs. In particular, due to the rising cost of organizing and implementing community improvement projects, the current \$15,000 limit on **Small and Simple** Projects awards and the \$100,000 limit on **Large Project** awards are forcing budgetary boundaries on some projects that restrict their scopes of work. This also causes internal strain as total project funds increase, but award limits and staffing remain consistent or, in the case of staffing, reduced. This equates to increasingly higher number of awarded contracts for each project manager.

The **Large Projects Fund** is also challenged by **limited geographic parameters** placed on applicant projects. The review process for Large Projects Fund projects is designed so that community members and neighborhood district representatives lead the review and recommendation process. These projects must identify the neighborhood district within which its project is based so that the neighborhood's district representative can review the proposal and provide a score. However, given the broad geographic reach of numerous projects, it is challenging for some to identify themselves with a single neighborhood district. For example, a citywide film festival of documentaries focused on racial justice must, under the current guidelines, arbitrarily identify a district as its "home" district and 50% of its total score would be provided by that district's representative, even though the project is intended to benefit the entire city.

Applying for and managing NMF awards is an intensive and detail-focused effort. This builds commitment and engagement from community members, and supports the program in ensuring appropriate implementation and accountability of projects. This also means, however, that systems can be **labor-intensive** for community groups to manage. Many of these groups are grassroots and/or newly-formed and do not have experience handling or navigating through these types of systems. Because the fund is administered with public dollars, however, there is pressure for community groups to adhere to administrative procedures in order to demonstrate accountability of dollars spent and impact made. Some of these administrative requirements can be beyond the capacity or expertise of community volunteers. For instance, the community match component of the Neighborhood Matching Fund (which, admittedly, is one of the fundamental strengths of the NMF) poses logistical challenges for many grassroots groups who have little to no experience managing the level of paperwork and accounting that is required of NMF awardees. NMF staff has recently been taking steps to make processes more user-friendly, but more dramatic actions – such as establishing an online system – can further facilitate ease of use.

While the NMF has built a strong and positive reputation for supporting a broad range of community ideas, there is still a concern among some community members about **transparency of process**. While staff is accessible to all applicants and potential applicants through direct contact, workshops and other public gatherings, there is a

lack of understanding about the decision-making processes involved in the selection of fund awards. This question of transparency extends even to the Large Projects Fund, whose Citywide Review Team – which contributes 50% of an applicant’s score – is made up predominantly of representatives from each of the 13 District Councils. (The remaining four spots on the Team are at-large members appointed by the Department of Neighborhoods.) There remains an opportunity to communicate more clearly to the community on how funding decisions are made and what role the Citywide Review Team, District Councils, and the Department of Neighborhoods respectively play during application review and selection processes.



Maple Leaf Community Garden

The Department of Neighborhoods has been diligent in improving its quantitative tools to measure the impact of the Neighborhood Matching Fund – through studies of amounts of dollars awarded, numbers of projects in each district, numbers of volunteer hours, etc. That well more than 50,000 hours have been contributed by volunteers each year in recent years for NMF projects, for example, is an impressive illustration of the community engagement that NMF helps make possible. These

evaluative measurements are, however, unable to tell the fuller story of the NMF. Because quantifiable metrics to measure increased levels of community building – quality of life, public trust, sense of connectedness among neighbors, community pride, and civic participation – have been difficult to manage on a clear, apples-to-apples basis, the Department has been using quantitative metrics as the closest proxies to assess the level of increased community building that neighborhoods are experiencing as a result of partnerships with NMF. Yet, the Neighborhood Matching Fund is built around community engagement, connecting neighbors to one another and increasing social capital among residents. These are critical though abstract components of what makes up a healthy, thriving community. But, quantitative measuring methods fail in being able to gauge increases and improvements in the emotional and mental connections that people have to the neighborhoods where they live, work and play. This program can benefit from the identification of additional metrics that can assess not only the quantitative effects, but also the qualitative, social impact that NMF investments realize. This evaluation issue is especially relevant in measuring citywide efforts, which necessarily are not rooted in one specific neighborhood. A forum on social justice or a film festival, both of which hold extensive community-building potential yet draw participants from all around the city, are challenged to measure its impact only by the program’s current quantitative system.

The NMF’s founding resolution, dictating at least 51% of award funds to benefit low- to moderate-income people, as well as the introduction of specific initiatives, such as the Race and Social Justice and Climate Protection initiatives, have been effective in

helping the NMF reach more diverse populations that otherwise may not necessarily engage in the program. There is room for growth, however, and a continued need to create **better access for historically underserved communities and populations**, such as communities of color, immigrants and refugees, and renters. This broader support applies not only to providing accessible opportunities for these communities to participate in the Neighborhood Matching Fund program, but also to program staff facilitating introductions to other funders and community investors that can help these communities leverage NMF resources to build long-term sustainability.

Threats

Challenging the success of all community-based programs these days is **dwindling resources**. As programs like the Neighborhood Matching Fund become better known, the applicant pool will increase and diversify. However, if funding cannot keep pace with community interest, then human and financial resources will become stressed and overall impact of the program may diminish. With fewer staff and/or funding to, for example, conduct the expansive outreach that meets the directive of this community-based program, the NMF could risk becoming relevant only to mainstream communities that already also possess additional options for accessing resources. In times when competition for Matching Funds is high staff workload increases due to numbers of applications requiring review.

Dwindling external resources also stress staffing workloads in supporting new groups to learn how to work with the City. As neighborhood needs increase, interest in the Neighborhood Matching Fund also increases. Yet, more applications – particularly from groups that represent emerging communities – require support from NMF staff to help applicants successfully build their communities' capacity and understand how to work in partnership with City departments and regulations. This technical assistance, naturally, increases staff workloads.

An increasing focus within the philanthropic world on **outcomes-based results** could divert attention away from other, less quantifiable means of measuring impact. Expectations based on numbers of people served, dollars awarded, etc. tell an important part of the NMF story. Equally important, however, is the qualitative impact. As a result of an NMF-funded project: does a resident feel more connected to her neighbors? has someone become inspired to join a community effort? does a senior feel more secure because he knows his neighbors are watching out for him? These less tangible experiences are as important to the success of the Neighborhood Matching Fund as the numbers-based outcomes, yet too much focus on the latter and not enough attention to the former could risk appropriate understanding about what NMF's true effect is on communities throughout Seattle.

Opportunities

Many items that currently present themselves as weaker points of the Neighborhood Matching Fund program also offer opportunities for strengthening it. Identifying resources to conduct **qualitative and longitudinal ways to measure outcomes** will allow the NMF to more fully articulate both the ways in which community members engage in its work as well as how its investments have long-term results. This is not about substituting the current evaluation methods for another, but rather about enhancing them so that the heart of the program – building social capital – can be effectively assessed.

Today, numerous **technological tools** exist that can facilitate community members' ability to access NMF materials and information. The current website, with its historical electronic log of past NMF award recipients, is a good example of using technology to make information available to the public. Increasingly, more private and public funders are moving to online-based processes, a system that can provide certain simplifications and/or consistencies in the distribution and collection of information as it relates to applications, reporting and invoicing. (It should be noted that, because the NMF funds a broader cross-section of the community than many funders, it will need to ensure that, even as it makes technological advances in the communications or delivery of its work, it continues to be accessible to those who may not have computers at their disposal.) Additionally, a stronger data management system will improve staff's efficiencies in tracking project performance and measuring program impact over the short and long term.



SODO Urban Art Corridor

The NMF, with its long success record and staff who have deep connections to innumerable communities throughout the City, is in good position to **reach out to as yet unserved and still underserved populations**. Guided by strategic identification of outreach priorities, NMF staff can be well-situated to tap into existing networks to forge new relationships that can lead to engaging constituents not currently served by the NMF. The NMF has the additional benefit of being able to serve as an opportunity for these populations to build trust and relationships with the City and subsequently become active in seeking other City services and more deeply engaged in other City activities.

Because the NMF is designed to be a community-driven program, the publicity that is generated for community projects often focuses on the community groups and not necessarily on the NMF Program. While program staff have no desire to shift public attention away from community groups' hard work, the program could benefit from more strategic **public recognition** for the projects it has been able to make possible. This could be realized through concerted communications-focused technical assistance provided by one or more NMF staff that both help community groups garner public attention as well as educate the media about the behind-the-scenes role that the NMF plays to support community-based efforts.

Some initiatives, like the Race and Social Justice Initiative and Climate Protection, are unique within the NMF program because these projects are not necessarily tied to one specific neighborhood. While this can present some logistical challenges for applicants, it also offers great opportunities to **engage community members across neighborhood boundaries**. So often now, people live in one neighborhood, but also feel emotionally, culturally or otherwise connected to one or more other neighborhoods. Interest in issue- or values-oriented activities is an effective way to engage community members, and these types of citywide projects offer creative means to bringing diverse groups of people together.



Seattle Youth Initiative 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS



2009 Award Winners with Mayor Nickels and Councilmember Clark

As a result of analyses described in the previous sections and in response to qualitative and quantitative information compiled for this evaluation, the Neighborhood Matching Fund program would benefit from the following actions to strengthen alignment with program goals and values, improve administrative and process performance, and increase efficacy in community impact.

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
Customer Service	Labor-Intensive Application and Reporting Processes, especially for new and emerging community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C1. Streamline application, reporting and invoicing forms to create better ease of use for applicants and awardees. C2. Explore improved processes for groups with language and cultural barriers, such as oral applications. C3. Develop web-based applications and reporting systems. C4. Review and streamline Large Project Fund review process.

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
	More and Effective Support Needed for Historically Underserved Communities	<p>C5. Partner with formal and informal community-/population-specific community-based agencies to deliver outreach materials and application trainings.</p> <p>C6. Partner with local fundraising, philanthropy and capacity-building organizations (Northwest Development Officers Association, Puget Sound Grantwriters Association, Philanthropy Northwest, Nonprofit Assistance Center, etc.) to co-sponsor meet-the-funder forums and other related programs.</p> <p>C7. Tailor trainings to outreach, cultural and language needs.</p> <p>C8. Provide translations of all program information.</p> <p>C9. Formalize options for administrative support for community groups through community-based organizations (Seattle Neighborhood group), Nonprofit Assistance Center, etc).</p>
	Improved Outreach to Potential Applicants	<p>C10. DON should coordinate information about all City community grants, advise on best fits for project proposals, and provide referrals.</p> <p>C11. Provide more community trainings, related handouts and website information (tips, FAQs, etc.) so that applicants are more ready and better prepared by the time they enter into the application process.</p> <p>C12. Develop communications strategy to inform a broader public about access to the Funds.</p>
	Better Transparency about Review Criteria and Processes	<p>C13. More consistently and thoroughly communicate review criteria and procedures – particularly as it pertains to the Large Projects Fund – at all appropriate communications opportunities (website, guidelines, application forms, trainings, outreach events, etc.).</p>

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
	Train and Improve Consistency in Staff Support	<p>C14. Align staff strengths with community needs.</p> <p>C15. Conduct regular training of staff in customer service and workshop facilitation to provide equitable services across groups.</p>
	Coordination with other City Departments	C16. Improve coordination with City Departments requiring review/permitting to provide clarity on requirements and streamline timing issues for community volunteers.
Systems Management	Program Evaluation	<p>S1. Identify additional evaluation metrics that can assess not only the quantitative effects of NMF, but also the qualitative, social impacts, human service support, public safety improvements, economic development improvements that NMF investments help realize.</p> <p>S2. Develop internal data collection and management systems that better track the social impact of NMF community building to more fully assess the contributions of NMF.</p> <p>S3. Develop data collection methods that more specifically track the reach of community relationships (such as the amount and types of collaboration between projects and local businesses, relationships formed between community groups and funders, etc.) that arise as a result of NMF.</p> <p>S4. Identify additional evaluation tools – such as annual surveys to be completed by awardees – to measure full reach of NMF projects.</p> <p>S5. Conduct return on investment analysis for City funds leveraging private investment and on-going impacts on public safety, operations and maintenance costs.</p>
	Labor-Intensive Application and Reporting Processes	S6. Update technological systems to include online applications, reporting and invoicing as well as to improve e-communications with potential applicants, current applicants and awardees.

Issue Area	Problem Description	Recommendation
Resource Allocation	Staffing Levels / Workloads	<p>R1. Refocus staff job duties to provide support to new and emerging communities and other groups who do not have experience interacting with City departments.</p> <p>R2. Reallocate project assignments to individuals or teams who specialize in areas of expertise by project type, communities, etc., to streamline project management efficiencies.</p>
	Limits on Funds' Granting Parameters	<p>R3. Conduct analysis to determine relevance of current award levels and scope to ensure that communities' needs for successfully implementing projects are met. Ideas to be considered would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding scope by project and applicant criteria of the Outreach Fund to better bridge current gap between the current Outreach Fund and the Small and Simple Fund. - Explore raising award ceilings for the Small and Simple Fund and the Large Project Fund to address inflation. - Improve and update Tree Fund policies that better address residents' interests. - Establish an equitable review process outside of the current neighborhood-specific criteria for citywide Large Projects Fund projects. <p>R4. Institute a process for regularly conducting (perhaps every two or three years) this review of relevance of award levels and scope.</p>
	Engage Community Members Across Neighborhood Boundaries	<p>R5. Eliminate policy and process barriers to cross-neighborhood collaborations</p> <p>R.6 Provide networking opportunities and trainings for cross-neighborhood collaborations</p>

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Consultants for Stakeholder and Key Informant Feedback
- Appendix B: Focus Group Schedule
- Appendix C: Focus Group Invitation Letters
- Appendix D: Sample Moderator's Guide
- Appendix E: Key Informant Interview Guide
- Appendix F: Neighborhood Matching Fund Guidelines
- Appendix G: Funding Levels Matrix Exercise

APPENDIX A: Consultants for Stakeholder and Key Informant Feedback

George Cheung and Associates

Soya Jung Harris

Gabriela Quintana

Xuan-Trang Tran-Thien

George Cheung, CEO of Lopez & Cheung, Inc.

- Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Masters in Public Policy, 2000
- South-end resident for many years; background in public policy with social science research.
- Founded an independent consulting practice focusing on organizational development and social science research for public and nonprofit organizations in 2000.
- Directed a HUD-funded research project to collect data from 200+ one-on-one interviews with recent homebuyers to inform enforcement and education initiatives. A two-year project.
- Experience creating research questions.
- **Approach:** Evaluate what is the public value of our programs.
 - Assemble focus groups of awardees
 - Conduct 1:1 interviews with policy makers to determine the return on their investment.
 - Compare the two: awardees and policy makers to make sure the policy makers understand the value.
- Tell the story of the change that has taken place.
- Worked on NMF project in 2005 "From Hate to Hope," an RSJ project.

APPENDIX B: Focus Group Schedule

Area	Group	Location	Time	F/U
NMF-- Central	Awardees	Jefferson Community Center	Wednesday, April 23 6-8	Confirmed
NMF-- Central	Awardees	QA/Mag NSC	Monday, April 28 6-8pm	Confirmed
NMF— Central	CRT/NMF	Langston Hughes	Tuesday, April 29 6-8	Confirmed
NMF—South	Awardees	High Point Community Center	Monday, April 21, 6-8	Confirmed
NMF—South	Awardees	Southeast NSC	Saturday, May 3, 10am-noon	Confirmed
NMF—North	Awardees	Ballard NSC	Thursday, May 1 6-8pm	Confirmed
NMF--North	Awardees	Lake City NSC	Thursday, April 17 6-8pm	Confirmed
	CNC		Monday, April 28 6-8	Stella/
	Partners Grp			Laurie
	Parks		Tuesday, April 29, 10-12	
	SDOT/SPU		Wednesday, April 23, 8-10	

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Invitation Letter

April 11, 2008

Dear «Project_Sponsor_Name»,

Nếu quý vị cần dịch vụ thông dịch, xin gọi Xuân-Trang Trần-Thiện,
(206) 769-7569

需要中文翻譯
請電：George Cheung, (617) 290-1818

Si usted necesita interpretación, por favor llame a Gabriela Quintana
206-240-8250.

Hadii aad u baahan tahay turjumaan luuqada Soomaaliga, waxaad nagala soo xiriirtaa
halkan Mai Nguyen (206) 684-0359

**በአማርኛ የስተርንሚ አገልግሎት ክፈለጉ በ Mai Nguyen at (206) 684-0359
ቴሌፎን ያድርጉልን።**

The Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) is a hallmark of the City’s partnership with community members. 2008 marks the 20 year anniversary of NMF. It is a great time for us to review, revise, and improve our programs in an ever-changing environment.

I’m writing to you to request your participation in a focus group concerning our Neighborhood Matching Fund program and services. As someone who has worked with the Neighborhood Matching Fund, you have insight into this important program that provides a unique public benefit to our city. Here’s your chance to tell us what works and what doesn’t. Your feedback will help us improve our services and be more responsive to the needs of Seattle neighborhoods.

To that end, we are partnering with an independent research consultant, Cheung and Associates, to host a series of focus groups around the city. We invite you to share your experiences with the Neighborhood Matching Fund and provide your suggestions for changes and/or improvements. The neighborhoods with date and time are as follows:

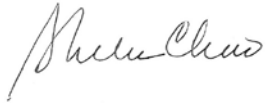
Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, April 29, 2008	6 pm – 8 pm	Central Seattle

We will provide a light meal, reimbursement for transportation expenses and on-site child care upon request.

Please let us know which date will work best for you by contacting Judy Brown at judy.brown@seattle.gov or (206) 684-0714. Our coordinator will then provide you with the exact location.

Once the results are compiled and analyzed by the consultants, the information will be available in July. Thank you for considering this important request. Your input is highly valued.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stella Chao".

Stella Chao, Director
Department of Neighborhoods

APPENDIX D: Sample Moderator's Guide

Department of Neighborhoods
Focus Group on Neighborhood Matching Fund Awardees
Prepared by George Cheung
April 28, 2008

Welcome

"Welcome! My name is (NAME OF MODERATOR) and I'll be moderating this focus group today. You have been selected from (METHOD OF SELECTION) to share your ideas on *building strong neighborhoods and communities*. The City of Seattle is interested in hearing your thoughts in order to improve its services in this area, particularly the Neighborhood Matching Fund, which is now in its 20th year.

At this time, I'd like to introduce (NAME OF CO-MODERATOR/NOTETAKER). They will be helping me run this focus group to make sure we maximize our time together. Also, with your consent, I'd like to tape record this session. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. Finally, as moderator, I want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to participate. I may, from time to time, move the conversation along – so that those who have not spoken can share their thoughts. With that said, let's begin!"

Opening

1. Tell us your name, organizational affiliation, where you live, and, in a few words, something you love about your neighborhood.

Introduction

1. Describe elements of a strong neighborhood or community.

Key

1. Let's talk about how people in our city build stronger neighborhoods or communities. What are successful strategies that you have seen? (PROBE: What role did or could the city have played?)
2. Tell us about what led you to apply for award from the Neighborhood Matching Fund and what was most useful aspect of using it?
3. EXERCISE: Now, I'd like us to move to an exercise. In this exercise, we want you tell us how you would re-design the Neighborhood Matching Fund. From your experiences, we want you to look at several aspects of the NMF.

On the sheet in front of you, we have created a matrix. Going across the top, we have created space for up to four (4) separate funds within the Neighborhood

Matching Fund. For instance, you can think about different funds simply by the maximum award amount. Additionally, you can define a specific issue area – like addressing climate change. You don't need to use all four columns – if you think there only should be two different funds, just fill out the first two columns.

For each separate fund, we want you to fill out the five boxes underneath with the following information:

- A) Maximum Award
- B) Frequency of Applications
- C) Role of Staff – in identifying and developing proposals
- D) Review Process – in particular who makes award decisions and
- E) Typical Project – give an example of a typical project awarded under that level.

Let's take about 5 minutes to fill this out – and then we will talk about your thoughts.

4. What was the biggest challenge in using the Neighborhood Matching Fund? (PROBE: How did you overcome this challenge?)
5. EXERCISE: There are many ways to support "community building", of which financial resources are very important but only one strategy. Let's talk about other ways to support community building. On the back side of the matrix, I'd like you to write down three non-financial resources that would be beneficial in supporting "community building" in the City of Seattle. For instance, you may find fundraising training helpful. Let's take three minutes and then we'll talk about what you came up with. (WE WILL GO THROUGH A BRAINSTORMING BUT HAVE A PRE-PREPARED LIST. AFTER THE BRAINSTORMING, WE WILL CONDUCTING A VALUES VOTING PROCESS TO RANK THEM IN IMPORTANCE)
 - A. Media training
 - B. Convenings/networking
 - C. Leadership development
 - D. Professional facilitators
 - E. Fundraising training
 - F. Marketing TA
 - G. Volunteer recruitment
 - H. Capacity building

Ending

1. If you were in charge of the NMF, what would be the first change you would make that could be implemented right away?
2. (GIVE SUMMARY OF SESSION). Did we miss anything?

APPENDIX E: Key Informant Interview Guide

NMF & P-Patch Evaluation Interviews w/ Key Stakeholders

1. Describe your past and current relationship to these programs.
2. Please describe elements of a strong neighborhood or community. And given your understanding/knowledge of the NMF and P-patch programs, how do these two programs support/advance this vision of a strong neighborhood/community?
3. What is the most important essence/element of each program?
4. What do you see as the current strengths and weaknesses of these programs?
5. What are some of the short-term and long-term opportunities would you like to see the two programs seize and why?
6. What, if any, specific improvement would you like to see implemented and why?
7. Anything else?

APPENDIX F: Neighborhood Matching Fund Guidelines

City of Seattle 2008 Neighborhood Matching Fund

Small and Simple Projects Fund

Large Projects Fund

What Is the Neighborhood Matching Fund?

The Neighborhood Matching Fund supports projects and activities that bring people together to build stronger communities. During the course of a project, the process of bringing people together and building relationships along the way is considered to be as important as a completed project. Community building projects offer an opportunity for the community to participate in a project that will:

- improve the quality of life in a specific neighborhood or community
- foster and sustain positive change
- honor the culture, traditions, values, and relationships in that community

Grass roots organizations and neighborhood groups can apply for Neighborhood Matching Fund dollars to initiate, plan, organize and implement a project in partnership with the City of Seattle. The neighborhood or community matches the Matching Fund award with contributions of volunteer labor, donated materials and professional services, or cash.

The Two Funds:

Small and Simple Projects Fund – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides awards up to \$15,000• Accepts applications 4 times a year• Review of applications by a team of DON staff and a community person• Notice of award within five weeks	Large Projects Fund – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides awards \$15,000 - \$100,000 (\$100,000 award maximum per single project, excluding SAS awards)• Accepts applications once a year• Review by Citywide Review Team and District Council volunteers• Notice of award within three months
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Who Should Apply?

- Neighborhood based groups of neighbors/community members who want to do a project as a means of building a stronger community.
- Community members whose community extends beyond a single neighborhood, e.g. racial, ethnic groups, gay-lesbian groups, members of a disability community (Small and Simple only).

All applicant groups must have an open membership and actively invite involvement from new members. Applicants must represent people who live in the City of Seattle.

Awards are NOT made to:

- Individual persons or individual businesses.

- Religious organizations, government agencies, political groups, district councils, universities, hospitals, newspapers, non-local organizations.
- Applicants who have failed to successfully carry out projects funded in the two preceding years.

What Kinds of Projects Are Funded?

To be considered for funding, a project must demonstrate it is building a stronger and healthier community. It must:

- Provide a public benefit, resulting in a project or activity that either:
 - benefits a geographic neighborhood or
 - improves race relations and social justice, strengthening understanding of multiculturalism
- Be free and open to the public
- Emphasize self-help, i.e., neighbors/community members doing for themselves, in partnership with each other and with local organizations and local government
- Involve neighbors/members of the community in planning and implementing the project

Neighborhood Matching Fund Awards cannot be used to:

- Support ongoing programs or services or duplicate an existing public or private program
- Replace funding lost from other sources or provide gap funding
- Pay for an organization’s operating expenses that are not directly related to the awarded project
- Pay individuals who developed the project idea and/or submitted the application
- Purchase land or buildings
- Pay for food, beverages, and/or catering services
- Pay for out of City travel expenses
- Support events and/or activities that require an admission fee
- Support fundraising activities for any group or organization
- Pay for expenditures or financial commitments made *before* the organization is under contract with the City of Seattle

Project Types

Race and Social Justice (RSJ) – Create grassroots opportunities for diverse communities to interact, encourage mutual understanding and respect, celebrate uniqueness, address issues of racial and social inequity, and help improve the quality of life for all City residents. RSJ projects do not have to be neighborhood based under the Small and Simple Projects Fund category.

Climate Action Now! Create opportunities for neighbors to connect and collaborate on community-driven approaches to addressing climate change. Projects funded under this category do not have to be neighborhood-based but must still build meaningful connections between Seattle residents.

Neighborhood Planning and/or Design Project A plan, design, or report outlining specific actions that will serve as a guide for future action in, or changes to, your neighborhood.

Capacity Building Project— Create, diversify, or enlarge participation in a community, neighborhood-based association or organization in a low-income neighborhood that diversifies and benefits community members in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Physical Improvement Project — Build or enhance a physical improvement in your neighborhood.

Neighborhood Non-Physical Improvement Project — Is an activity or event such as a festival or celebration, a training session, an educational campaign, or a workshop. A festival or celebration must be free and open to the public. Events will be funded only one time.

Public School Partnership Project — Pilot or start-up program that directly benefits the families and children/youth at a neighborhood public school and its immediate neighborhood.

Steps in Developing a Project

1. Select a Project and Build Support within the Neighborhood or Community

- Choose a project that will generate community support and address a known problem, concern, or opportunity for making positive change.

2. Contact the Department of Neighborhoods

- Meet with a NMF staff person to discuss your project idea before applying.
- Call the Department of Neighborhoods, 206-684-0464.

3. Gain Site Control and City Advice

- Secure written permission from property owner, if your project involves use of, or changes to property that your organization does not own, e.g., Seattle School District, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation, or private property owner.
- Clearly articulate the “benefit” the City will receive in consideration of its award of NMF dollars if you’re proposing improvements to property not in public ownership, your application

4. Determine Resources Needed

- Determine all the resources that will be required, such as professional expertise, equipment, supplies, volunteers and services. If you expect a City department to provide a service, contact them in the earliest stages of planning to determine the cost.

5. Develop a Project Budget

- List needed resources and begin to estimate costs.
- Get cost estimates for each budget item from more than one reliable source.
- Keep careful notes of all conversations with vendors or contractors that involve estimates.

6. Determine the Match

- Identify all possible match resources (cash, donated resources, professional services or volunteer time) and follow the guidelines covering Match Requirements.

7. Research Regulations

- Determine which permits, insurance, or design review are required for your project.

8. Keep in Mind these Suggestions to Help You Complete a Competitive Application:

- Plan for community participation before you develop the application. Think creatively of ways to involve all types of different groups.
- Create a timeline, starting with the application due date and working backward. Allow adequate time to publicize community participation events.
- Use the budget forms provided in the application or replicate them exactly. Forms are available in a digital format or can be downloaded from: www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf However, only printed-out paper copies with attachments, and one with a real signature, will be accepted.
- Assume that reviewers are not familiar with your community. Include documentation and relevant data. Clearly describe how this project will build community, the public benefit and the opportunities for broad-based public participation.
- Work with the property owner to develop a written maintenance plan for any type of capital improvement project.

Application Review Criteria

Project Idea (20)

- Provides a good description of what the project is and why you want to do it. (10)
- Based on principles of local control, self-help, collective action with a clear public benefit (10)

Builds Community (30)

- Encourages widespread participation and provides opportunities to bring people together to work on a neighborhood/community issue. (10)
- Promotes interaction and builds community between different groups, such as renters, business owners, seniors, or different ethnic or racial groups. (10)
- Provides a “neighborhood to neighborhood” connection with opportunities for communities to learn from each other and act as partners. (5)
- Promotes meaningful collaboration between youth and adults. (5)

Project Feasibility (15)

- Reasonable and appropriate budget. (10)
- Well-planned activities, timeline is realistic, and project has a clear beginning and end. (5)

Community Match (25)

- Documented match is realistic and appropriate to the project and is representative of the demographic make-up of the community, i.e. represents different segments of the community. (10)
- Documented match with signatures demonstrating widespread participation and support for the project. (15)

Outcomes (10)

- Describes how the neighborhood/community will be different as a result of this project with anticipated outcomes clearly identified. (10)

Match Requirements

Physical improvement projects (something constructed) require a 1:1 match (one-dollar value of neighborhood match for every dollar awarded by the City). All other activities, including planning and design, neighborhood organizing, one time events, workshops or training, or race and social justice projects require 1/2:1 match (.50 cents value of neighborhood match for every dollar awarded by the City). **Documenting match is very important and match pledge forms should be submitted with the application.**

Following are requirements for eligible match.

- The amount and type of match must be appropriate to the needs of the project.
- At least 25% of the match must come from the neighborhood or identified community rather than from foundations, the County, School District, State, or other entities.
- All volunteer labor is valued at \$15 per hour.
- Professional services are valued at the reasonable and customary retail value of the product or service, not to exceed \$75 per hour.
- Volunteer time spent on fundraising, planning, design and organizing will be counted starting on the application due date. Ten hours of volunteer time may be credited for preparation of a Small and Simple Project Fund or Large Project Fund application.

Funds from other City of Seattle sources cannot be counted as match. City of Seattle Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Pro-Parks, and Cumulative Reserve Funds, as well as City staff services, are included in this prohibition.

Match Tips

To begin, list all the resources needed for the project. Then identify which items might be available in the neighborhood/community and solicited as match for the project.

Volunteer Labor: Pledges of volunteer labor can be documented by using pledge sheets. A pledge sheet is a list of volunteers who have made a commitment of time to work on the proposed activity or project. Pledge forms are available with Matching Fund application forms and should include the name and address of the volunteer, the number of hours pledged and type of work to be completed. All pledge sheets should be attached to the application. Early on in developing a project, the applicant should discuss potential volunteer activities with the property owner. A property owner may require skilled professionals, instead of volunteers completing some of the work.

Professional Services: The Neighborhood Matching Fund will recognize the value of professional services at their customary rates (not to exceed \$75 per hour) assuming the services provided are needed and valued in proportion to the scope of the project. Applicants should decide early on whether professional services will be donated to the project or purchased with the Neighborhood Matching Fund award. The donors of professional services must document the hourly value of their services on their letterhead, i.e. landscape architect, graphic designer, or web designer. An individual or firm whose services will be purchased with the NMF award cannot also pledge volunteer time to be counted as match.

Donated Materials or Supplies: Are valued at their retail price, i.e., food and borrowed tools. Borrowed equipment can also be considered as part of the match and valued at the standard rental fee. The donor must provide documentation of the value and quantity of the match.

Cash: Donations may be secured with a written pledge signed by the donor, rather than collecting the cash up front. If you have money in the bank, include a bank statement or a letter from the fiscal sponsor documenting the cash. A detailed fundraising plan must be included with the application. It should specify fundraising activities, including amount of money is expected from each activity, when each activity will occur, and which grant-makers will be applied to. The plan should demonstrate to reviewers that the applicant can raise adequate funds within the six months after the application is submitted.

Contracts and Public Funding

Because this is public funding, there are conditions that apply to Neighborhood Matching Fund projects. Being aware of those conditions now will help you plan your budget and timeline. **You cannot incur costs to be paid with the Matching Fund award before you have a contract with the Department of Neighborhoods.**

Award recipients get their money by means of a written contract between the applicant and the City.

There may also be a third party: the organization's fiscal sponsor (see explanation below). The contract explains the terms and methods of getting the money, based on the budget and work-plan you propose in your application. The money is provided to you in installments on a reimbursement basis. As you incur costs, you invoice the City for the money; we send a check for the amount you claim; then you pay all your vendors. Included with each invoice submitted, you report to us on the match you have expended and on the project's progress.

Fiscal Sponsor: A group can serve as its own fiscal sponsor or, if the group does not have experience handling as much money as the project involves, can use a fiscal sponsor. Typically, fiscal sponsors charge a fee of 3% to 10% of the money they handle. That expense can be included in your budget.

An organization does not need to be an IRS-recognized non-profit charitable organization or 501(c) 3 to receive City funding. However, donors cannot claim tax benefit for their donations to you unless you are, or are affiliated with, a 501(c) 3. If you plan to do significant fundraising, it makes sense to choose an IRS-recognized nonprofit 501(c)3 as your fiscal sponsor. (Becoming a 501(c) 3 requires an IRS filing process, a fee, is a long process, and is not usually a practical option.)

A fiscal sponsor for your project can be a community-based nonprofit, a small or large business, or any group reliable, able, and willing to monitor your progress and to report to the IRS at the end of the year for you on the disposition of funds. The fiscal sponsor usually handles only the cash and not other kinds of donations to your project. You will still be held responsible for tracking and reporting on volunteer time and other donations.

If you want to be your own fiscal sponsor, the Department of Neighborhoods can provide advice on recordkeeping systems and with acquiring an IRS Employer Identification Number. You will need to make annual reports to the IRS about disposition of the money you have received.

Insurance: If your project is funded, the City will provide insurance covering volunteers while working on the project. If there is considered to be risk, you will be asked to purchase Commercial General Liability insurance for the project to limit the liability of your organization and the City. Depending on the project's scope, the price will range from \$300 to \$1,000.

Competitive Bid: The City requires that you give opportunity to a broad set of businesses, to bid on the work you are generating. The City encourages opening that opportunity to women and minority-owned businesses. If you wish to secure consultant services, you must solicit at least three responses to a written scope of work. If the consultant is to receive more than \$10,000 of City funds, you must advertise for those services. Vendor or contractor services (such as printing, or construction work) of more than \$5,000 must also be advertised and selected only after receiving three written bids.

Contingency: All capital construction projects must include 15% cash contingency fund.

APPENDIX G: Funding Levels Matrix Exercise

Re-Designing the Neighborhood Matching Fund

	NMF Award Level I	NMF Award Level II	NMF Award Level III	NMF Award Level IV
A. Maximum Award				
B. Frequency of Applications	Once/year Twice/year Three times/year Four times/year Rolling basis	Once/year Twice/year Three times/year Four times/year Rolling basis	Once/year Twice/year Three times/year Four times/year Rolling basis	Once/year Twice/year Three times/year Four times/year Rolling basis
C. Role of Staff in Identifying and Developing Proposals	Large Medium Small	Large Medium Small	Large Medium Small	Large Medium Small
D. Review Process	Internal (DON) External (CRT) Combination	Internal (DON) External (CRT) Combination	Internal (DON) External (CRT) Combination	Internal (DON) External (CRT) Combination
E. Typical Project				