



## Neighborhood Matching Fund Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of this handout is to assist community groups in working with Parks to create successful Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) projects. This is in addition to the project information you will receive from the Department of Neighborhoods.

For all projects, there will be a project manager at Parks. They will assist the community group in deciding what steps need to happen next. For example, for a physical improvement project, the Parks project manager will shepherd the project through Park reviews, attends public meetings and sits down with the community steering committee on a regular basis. They will also organize the construction processes coordinating with construction inspectors, facilities and ground staff as necessary.

I have an idea for a project in my local park. What do I do first?

- Look at the Department of Neighborhood's (DON) website <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/>
- Many Parks properties are not clearly marked. Parks will work with you to make sure that your site is a park and not in the public right of way or on private property.
- For more information about the possible project site, you can use the Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) mapping tools <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/onlineservices/> (check out their website) for further information about the possible park site. You can check Seattle Public Utilities for existing Right-of-Way locations
- Contact people in your neighborhood to see if there is local support.

What kinds of park projects are there, for example?

- Physical Improvements: play areas, neighborhood parks or small building renovations
- Individual purchases: such as bleachers, benches, bike racks
- Art: working with an artist to add an artistic element
- Habitat Restoration: replacing invasive plants with native plants
- Events: contact Jeff Hodges ([jeff.hodges@seattle.gov](mailto:jeff.hodges@seattle.gov) 684-4080) to get a permit for your event.
- Programs and Classes: your NMF liaison will give you a contact.

### How does the Parks Department review my application? What are the criteria?

While the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods makes the final decision on what projects are awarded funding, Parks does an initial screening and makes recommendations based on the following criteria:

#### High Priority Projects

- Play areas that are high on the Parks' Playground Assessment list (older or non-compliant playgrounds). Contact NMF Planner for further information.
- Projects that renovate existing park features such as park furniture, play spaces, gathering areas and landscaping.
- Projects that upgrade or add park elements in underserved areas.
- Habitat restoration projects, particularly implementation of approved [Vegetation Management Plans](#) and Trail Restoration Plans prepared by Seattle Parks and Recreation's Horticulture [Trails Program](#).
- Cultural celebrations, events, musicals, oral histories, research into park history and/or short term activity and athletic programs. *\*Not high priority, if project increases operations & maintenance costs and/or Parks staffing requirements.*

#### Low Priority Projects

- Development of new park features or facilities in areas already served (i.e., with similar elements nearby).
- Renovation of new or recently built facilities
- Projects that increase operations and maintenance costs. In some cases, community maintenance plans can be developed to reduce the future costs. As an alternative to rejecting an application due to increased operating costs, Parks may suggest changes to the project that would reduce the costs to an affordable level within Parks' existing resources.

#### Projects that will not be recommended for an award

- Large Award Physical Improvement projects that do not have an approved plan. This prerequisite may be satisfied by completing a Small and Simple project for planning and design. (Applications for Small and Simple capital projects may include design as part of the project.)
- Construction projects that require prolonged fund raising efforts or may not be able to be developed for some extended period of time.
- Design projects that would require the above efforts

### If I get an award from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, why do I need to coordinate with Parks?

While Seattle Parks and Recreation doesn't "own" the parks, they are the steward of parks for all people who visit.

- Parks is responsible for seeing that projects are consistent with health, safety and welfare regulations.
- Parks is also responsible for making the new improvements as user friendly as possible. We have requirements and suggestions that are based on our experience. This exceeds the minimum requirements by law.
- Parks requires that there is coordination to make sure city, federal and state regulations are upheld. Your Parks/NMF liaison will guide you in this process.

### After you are awarded funding, what are the next steps?

Once you are awarded funding, the PM will help you decide who to work with next. It may be a community center coordinator or other park staff. If it requires reservations or permits, parks can help you with that. It is important to remember that you can't assume that there will be parks or community center space or that you will get a discount on a room or park permit.

- For a physical improvement project, the Parks NMF project manager meets with the community to help with the consultant selection process. The community group contracts with the consultant directly. When the design is complete, the consultant manages the bidding following the City's public works requirements. The community group contracts with the contractor directly
- The Parks PM will also help with outreach. Parks requires as part of the Public Involvement Policy the following outreach tools. Of course you are encouraged to do more neighborhood oriented outreach:
  - a public meeting schedule is set up,
  - a sign is put up on site
  - a mailing is sent.

#### What types of review do physical improvement projects get?

- ProView (a Parks review team consisting of a landscape architect, maintenance staff, potentially the arborist or other people with specialty knowledge) will examine the project for design and basic maintenance concerns.
- ProView Tech (representatives from our shops (electrical, plumbing, etc.) committee reviews the construction documents to make sure they conform to park standards.
- During construction, a Parks inspector checks the work on a regular basis.

#### What other resources are there?

- City of Seattle Public Art [Roadmap](#)
- [Green Seattle Partnership](#)
- Existing vegetation management plans-[VMP](#)

#### What are some tips?

- Stick to your original idea. This is what was approved and it will be a valuable contribution to your neighborhood. One of the hardest tasks and biggest challenges is when projects grow and fundraising requirements increase. This changes the project from a community project to a fundraising project. People get burned out and the project is less fun.
- Communication is very important. Don't be afraid to "call or email too much". Parks has a wide variety of staff to give advice if your planner can't answer your questions.
- Talk to other community groups who have completed projects.

#### Are there other ways to volunteer in our parks?

Team up with your neighbors, community group, organization, or co-workers! Seattle Parks and Recreation will work with you to design a volunteer project your team will enjoy.

Check out [Volunteer opportunities](#)

#### For more information, contact

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