City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Kathy Nyland, Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Councilmember Tim Burgess
            Councilmember Lisa Herbold
            Councilmember Rob Johnson

From: Kathy Nyland, DON Director

Date: July 15, 2016

Subject: RSJI Analysis of DON Grant Programs (20-1-A-1)

Statement of Legislative Intent 20-1-A-1, adopted with the 2016 Adopted Budget, required the Department of Neighborhoods to assess the accessibility and equity of the department's grant programs.

This is the second of two reports to Council that describes the analysis of issues identified and recommendations for actions to improve the accessibility and equity of DON grant programs. The first report submitted in March included an overview of the department's grant programs and programs the department manages including the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund.

This second report includes an overview of the major issues identified across grant programs and recommendations and action items that can be applied universally. Program specific items are called out in subsequent sections to address issues that are largely unique to the different programs. Finally, the racial equity toolkit worksheets are attached to the report as they provide additional data and information about key part of this assessment and the RSJI implications of some of the issues identified as well as proposed recommendations.

We look forward to working with Council to ensure that all of Seattle's residents have the opportunity to take advantage of the many grant resources available to them through the Department of Neighborhoods' grant programs.

cc:
Tim Wolfe, Department of Neighborhoods
Waslala Miranda, City Budget Office
Catherine Cornwall, City Budget Office
Ben Noble, City Budget Office
Maggie Thompson, Mayor's Office

City of Seattle

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Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 15, 2016

To: Councilmember Tim Burgess, Chair of Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods and Finance
Committee
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods and Finance Committee
Councilmember Rob Johnson, Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods and Finance Committee

From: Kathy Nyland, Director of Department of Neighborhoods,
Tim Wolfe, Department of Neighborhoods

Subject: Second Report Back to Council on SLI 20-1-A-1: RSJI Analysis of DON Grant Programs

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Background

As part of the 2016 Adopted Budget, the Council requested that the Department of Neighborhoods
(DON) analyze and assess opportunities to improve the grant-making programs' accessibility and equity,
including through the use of the racial equity toolkit. The first report to the Council described the
proposed approach and provided some initial data on the programs.

DON focused the analysis, including the racial equity toolkit, on the application processes for the grant-
making programs that the department directly manages or supports, including the Neighborhood
Matching Fund, the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund, the Neighborhood Street Fund, the Duwamish
River Opportunity Fund and Participatory Budgeting. For this assessment, DON included everything from
the application form to the interview and review process to the selection process and ultimately the
final award decision as part of the application process. Through the course of this assessment, the
department focused on different aspects of the application process by program as issues were identified
as being in need of more analysis.

As noted in the first report, the quality and level of data varies significantly by program and comparing
across programs too broadly is challenging due to the varied nature of the programs' processes;
however, there are several commonalities across programs as many of the community grant programs
are modeled after the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Process improvements that have been previously
identified or are identified in this assessment that are applicable across multiple programs will be
implemented as appropriate.

To support the existing program data, additional data was collected to support parts of this assessment.
This report includes information, outcomes and recommendations that are the result of the racial equity
toolkit analyses as well as other issues that have been identified over many years by past applicants,
staff and others. The toolkit worksheets are attached at the end of this report for Participatory
Budgeting, the Neighborhood Matching Fund and the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund for more

detail. The department began a toolkit on the review process for the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund; however due to commonalities in process with the other programs and the issues that had initially been the focus, the department did not finalize a toolkit report on that program. Current work and coordination between departments on Duwamish investments presents an opportunity to continue assessing ways to increase the accessibility of that funding opportunity.

The report is broken into recommendations and action items for different issues. Action items are issues that the department intends to proceed with and implement immediately, while recommendations have broader implications that need to be further refined before any action is taken.

Finally, this report represents the feedback, input and participation of numerous individuals in the community and City staff. Many of the themes described below and throughout the report have been highlighted before by staff and community members in the past and we would like to acknowledge the work that has been done for decades to make the department's programs more equitable.

Guiding Principles: Across all of the work that the department has done to look at reducing barriers to participation in DON community grant programs, the following principles were used as a framework for guiding the analysis. Using these principles helped provide a common thread throughout the analyses and allowed for the department to make connections between issues across programs.

- **Access:** including access to resources, networks of support, community capacity, transportation and basic needs, language resources or proficiency, and to information and process knowledge.
- **Transparency:** related to communications and documentation of application process, eligibility requirements, review processes and rating criteria.
- **Equity:** central to the racial equity toolkit analyses, examining ways that current processes support the racially equitable community outcomes of the programs and reduce/contribute to racial disparities in program participation.
- **Simplicity:** whenever possible, looking for ways to streamline and reduce process that has a disproportionate racial impact.

Common Themes Across Programs
Documentation of Processes
Through the assessments of the various DON community grant programs, gaps in documentation became evident as a root cause of many of the issues applicants experience. Without clearly documented application and review processes, applicants are left with little knowledge of how decisions are made, what to expect in review processes and what information is most important to emphasize in their applications and/or presentations. This contributes to feelings that processes are skewed to those with inside knowledge of how the programs work and that processes are more about who you know than the quality of the proposal.

Documenting processes also provides an opportunity to catch discrepancies in the ways that current review processes function. This is primarily related to the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund—a process that involves a huge number of individuals across the Neighborhood District Councils, the City and the community applicants.

- *Action Item:* As a baseline, all current processes will be documented and posted online for each individual program. This issue relates primarily to the Neighborhood Park and Street Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. The Neighborhood Matching Fund has extensive

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documentation of eligibility requirements, application guidelines and review processes. The program also regularly updates documentation and provides additional documentation when needed to support applicants or community review members through the process.

- *Recommendation:* Develop, document and post clearly defined selection criteria for the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. Information should be made available that clearly states how applications will be reviewed, rated and scored in advance of selection.

Application Form
Currently, application forms and formats vary across programs within the department. Some application forms are more extensive and require different levels of detailed information—the utility of which is sometimes unclear. There are also instances where information is captured multiple times across multiple forms during multiple parts of the process—causing increased frustration for applicants who must repeatedly enter in the same data.

For example, the Neighborhood Matching Fund application currently requires applicants to list by name every individual who will volunteer on a project and the number of total hours. Once awarded, grantees must list by name every volunteer hour worked by activity. This simple activity of reporting volunteer hours can sometimes lead to hours and hours of data input for grantees; however, this level of data is never utilized by the program or department.

- *Action Item:* Review the level of information collected on all application forms and reporting documentation and revise as needed to only collect data that is either mandated or warranted for monitoring and invoicing or that would be reasonably used by program, department or City staff to evaluate or assess projects, processes or programs. This applies primarily to the Neighborhood Matching Fund program.

- *Recommendation:* Simplify and consolidate forms, applications and standards to reduce confusion over various requirements across different programs. This will take time to manage across programs, especially if broadened beyond community grant programs within the department. This would be most successful if done in tandem with a new online grants management and application system that streamlines the application process for grantees. Information that is program-specific could still be collected as supplemental to a common set of information.

Reimbursement Policy
Due to a recent change in state law, it is now possible for the department to provide some amount of funding in advance of work performed on a contract with a community group. This issue of lack of startup funding for community groups and organizations, especially nascent, informal or grassroots organizations, has been a long-standing barrier to participating in community grant programs. It has also been an obstacle to community-capacity building activities that can be funded through the City. With the legal framework no longer the obstacle that it once was, there is an opportunity to work to develop some standards around when DON can provide funding in advance for community groups that need resources available in order to even begin a project.

- *Action Item:* Work with Law and FAS to develop a standard for community grants based on the type of contract, scope of work to be performed, the City's history with the organization and/or other factors that can be implemented beginning in 2017.

Review Processes

All review processes are run differently in line with the composition of the review team and to match the level of review necessary for the funding opportunity. Due to this, each review process has a unique set of challenges that merit their own consideration and recommendations; however, across all DON grant programs review processes need to be re-examined, clarified and formalized. The Neighborhood Matching Fund Large Projects Fund, the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund and the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund all have some form of community review team—each with a different makeup and process; however, there is significant overlap in who is eligible to participate between the Neighborhood Matching Fund and the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund.

This overlap in eligibility, as well as program timelines, often leads to strain on community groups to find able and willing participants for review teams. It also contributes to issues of attrition, both throughout the duration of the review process and between cycles, as competing timelines and other events take priority for many community review team members. The result is that community review teams are rarely fully constituted, with seats either never filled from the beginning or left empty as the process goes on.

The options below range from no community review process to maintaining the status quo. When weighing the role of the community review process, it is necessary to careful consider what the primary outcomes of the review process should serve. Running a fully staff community review process requires careful planning, training, recruitment, resources for the community review team, and adds additional time to the review process. Running a full community review process does allow for community members to provide nuance, context and their expertise to the review panel.

In contrast, City staff-led processes can be more efficient in process and get decisions recommended, reviewed, vetted and approved more quickly resulting in a considerably shorter turnaround time for applicants between time of submission and contracting. Running review processes in this manner can increase the responsiveness of community grants to community needs; however, it is essential that there is agreement and buy in from the community about the rating criteria, eligibility and other policies in place that the program is using to manage the program.

Options:
- *Option A:* Maintain the current community review processes as ad hoc formations from other existing community groups like the City Neighborhood Council and the Neighborhood District Councils.

- *Option B:* Create a standing board or commission that is tasked with review on all community grant processes currently involving a community review team component, in addition to other functions. This would look different for different programs as the review processes now have little in common. If directed, the department will develop a work plan for the commission that clearly outlines the responsibilities and function of the commission. This commission would provide consistency, both internal to programs and across programs, for review standards (i.e. training, experience or expertise) that is currently lacking.

- *Option C:* Eliminate community participation on review panels. Of the three options, DON would not recommend this one universally. There are cases, such as the Neighborhood Matching Fund Small Sparks and Small and Simple funding opportunities, where community participation is impractical without some formal mechanism for recruitment, training and retention. As it currently stands, the department recruits over 50 volunteers for the Large Projects Fund every year to serve on the Citywide Review Team and District Council Review Team. These individuals are largely recruited from the District Councils, which also serve in a community review capacity over the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund. The Duwamish River Opportunity Fund is also largely comprised of community members. These opportunities for community participation in the review process are valuable as they provide insight to all parties involved—community members are able to see the full range of requests that the City must prioritize on a microcosm and the City is able to gain insight and knowledge from a different perspective on issues.

Outreach, Engagement, and Communications

This applies to both projects and programs. One of the primary issues related to access is around knowledge of DON's grant programs. The Neighborhood Matching Fund is a well-established community resource; however, the other programs do not have the same name recognition or reach. This is especially true of the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. We also saw the issue of reach and messaging come through in the surveying done at the end of the Participatory Budgeting process.

Over time, we have seen that community grant programs stagnate and atrophy, the same applicants are aware of the funding opportunity, have knowledge of the process, and apply with regularity. We see this in all of the grant programs, but in particular the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. Looking at applicant information across years, we've found that close to 60 percent of Duwamish River Opportunity Fund applicants have applied for more than one cycle of funding. Ensuring that we're continually expanding the reach of the programs is essential to building capacity in communities and amongst community organizations.

- *Recommendation:* Develop strategies to leverage the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund and Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund with other City work, such as the Duwamish IDT co-led by the Office of Sustainability and Environment and the Office of Planning and Community Development. Both Duwamish River Opportunity Fund and Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund should be resources for communities to leverage, and a large part of this is ensuring that City staff are aware of these resources and view them as assets to community engagement.

Technical Assistance

Many applicants to DON grant programs have expressed challenges and frustration with completing applications, submitting invoices once projects' are contracted, and other technical issues that could be mitigated with more opportunities for technical assistance throughout the process. This is especially true for the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund, but the quality of assistance could be bolstered across the board to reduce the number of applicants that are screened out for failing to meet basic eligibility requirements.

DON has implemented an intensive technical assistance workshop model for a one-time partnership fund with the Human Services Department recently. Multiple optional hours long opportunities for technical assistance appointments were made available at libraries and community centers to assist individuals or groups with their applications. The response was overall positive and the sessions have

involved numerous community organizations that DON has not previously contracted with through our community grant programs.

- *Action Item:* Starting in mid-2016, DON is bringing the contracting and invoicing process for DROF in-house to minimize the time and communication involved in the invoicing process. With this move, the objective is to better understand the particular issues that applicants are experiencing in order to tailor technical assistance and communication more clearly as well as provide a more consistent level of service for grantees.

- *Action Item:* Create and offer a workshop for grantees and applicants on the basics of budgeting and reporting as well as opportunities for community organizations to meet others doing similar work to build their networks and capacity. This could also be provided as an online resource for community organizations, potential applicants and grantees.

- *Recommendation:* Provide opportunities for application assistance in advance of funding opportunities. This is currently done with the Neighborhood Matching Fund program, however the other grant programs do not have ongoing formal technical assistance offered for applicants.

Feedback and Follow Up

The need to provide consistent, clear and helpful follow up and feedback is consistent across all community grant programs. This is especially the case for applicants who have not been awarded through the process as they are often times left feeling like they are not given a path forward from the City to implement the project that they have dedicated their time to.

- *Action Item:* While letters of no award will always be disappointing for an applicant, providing additional guidance, clear feedback and directing to an additional funding opportunity when possible or applicable should become standard practice. For some funds, this will be an additional step while others already take this step.

- *Recommendation:* In line with documenting and tightening up eligibility criteria, where able and practical letters of no award should clearly state the rationale. In cases where funding opportunities are extremely competitive, this should also be clearly stated in feedback to applicants. Tighter control of the review criteria and rating process will help alleviate this issue as well.

Program Specific Issues and Recommendations

Duwamish River Opportunity Fund (DROF)

Community Review Process: Similar to many other community grant programs, the DROF community review process needs to be clarified. In the current process, the review team is comprised of individuals from both the City and the communities that the fund is intended to serve. In 2016, an attempt was made to diversify the range of expertise of the review team in line with the multitude of different focus areas of the fund. Representatives from the City Budget Office and the Office of Sustainability and Environment from the City could weigh in on concerns around project feasibility, healthy food and environmental projects, while a representative from Seattle Community Colleges could provide some expertise on economic development proposals.

In spite of the more intentional design of the review team, issues around the role and scope of the review team and what the program's consultant and DON staff could and could not advise on was still not clear. This is an issue that could be easily addressed with an orientation or training for review team members—similar to what is provided for the Neighborhood Matching Fund District Council and Citywide Review Team members. Ensuring that review team members are objective in their evaluations and are clear about what they are tasked with evaluating and what information is allowable within the constraints of the review conversation is essential to reduce the perception that the process is "too political" as one past applicant felt.

Additionally, currently interviews are optional but "strongly encouraged." While most applicants attend an interview session, there has not been a single cycle in the three years of the program where all applicants have interviewed. During the interviews and presentations, applicants are advised to give a short presentation of their proposal and have an opportunity for question and answer with the review team. This added time to provide additional information and resolve any outstanding questions has the potential to impact funding and award decisions. While scores have largely aligned with funding recommendations over the three years of the program, there have been instances where applicant groups have moved in the order due to their presentation.

- *Action Item:* Formalize and conduct a required training and orientation for all members of the DROF community review team. This assumes continuing the current practice of establishing program specific community review teams.

- *Recommendation:* Establish a weighted evaluation tool to support the review team in their decision-making process. Scoring criteria has been established and used in the past rounds to generally group applicants into buckets of excellent, good, or adequate candidates for funding; however, this still provides ample opportunity for individual interpretation throughout the review process.

- *Recommendation:* Eliminate the presentation requirement for DROF applicants. While the interviews/presentations have not significantly impacted the final award recommendations of the community review team in terms of overall assessment of where the project stands in the group; comparing initial scores based on review of the application alone to ultimate funding decisions shows some variance in what projects are awarded. Given this, ensuring that all applicants have equal opportunity to provide information to the review team is essential.
  - In place of the optional presentation, the program could implement a model used by other departments in Request for Proposal review processes where the department collects questions on behalf of the review committee in advance and follows up directly with the applicant. After all of the questions and answers have been collected, the review team could then make their funding recommendations based on the application and additional information. This would provide all applicants with the opportunity to provide additional information, while reducing the time required to attend an additional meeting for the process.

Participatory Budgeting (PB)
Idea Collection and Vote Week: The participatory budgeting process is particularly light in the way of formal application materials. Taking the place of the traditional application process, participatory budgeting relies heavily on in-person meetings and online interactions. While removing a formal application process eases burden on one community group or individual, the subsequent structure and

process has its own host of issues that are inherent to the process. In order to assess the burden or benefit that certain methods had on participation, the department collected data continuously throughout the process.

Data from the first phase of the process reaffirmed the notion that people will participate when it is most convenient to them and in a way that is most convenient to them. Participation rates varied greatly between City-hosted events that were built as free-standing events and events that were held at schools or community organizations during regular meeting times or other times when people were already gathered for another purpose as noted in the table below. Contrary to standard practice and in line with models of outreach and engagement DON has been piloting in 2016, high intensity, low effort engagement practices, such as doing pop-up idea collection or voting at the beginning of civics classes, proved to be the most effective at encouraging participation in the process. Given the quick timeline for implementing this pilot project and the relatively simple engagement required to collect an idea or vote on the project list—this approach worked especially well to ensure participation was high and racially inclusive.

Table 1. Idea Collection Participation

| Assembly Participants	School Visit Participation	Ideas Collected	Public Assemblies Held in February	Mobile Assemblies Held in February
357	480	534	7	12

One interesting outcome of the first year that merits further work and refinement in future years relates to digital and online engagement Overall, we had little participation online or via the web during idea collection or vote week; however, given the limited staffing and short lead time to launch the program, these should be considered strong contributing factors to the take and utilization rates of those methods in this process. With more intentional planning and an integrated approach to social media and digital engagement, these methods could be more effective in the future in reaching a broader audience.

During vote week, we found that these trends continued from what we saw in the idea collection phase. As a result of the patterns of participation we saw during idea collection, we completely abandoned the approach of City-hosted events in the short vote week period. Participation was greatest at the middle and high schools that we worked to establish voting locations during the school day. Several schools ran polling sites through lunch hours, while others carved out some time at the beginning of class to vote. Ballots from schools accounted for close to 60 percent of the total ballots.

An additional 21 percent of ballots came from community organizations—helping us reach youth and young adults that we may not have otherwise reached through the schools. Similar to the approach taken during idea collection, special emphasis was made to partner with organizations that worked with immigrant and refugee youth, homeless youth and youth of color.

Chart 1. Vote Week Participation

Vote Week Participation by Type of Site

- Community Center
- Community Organization
- High School
- Middle School
- Online
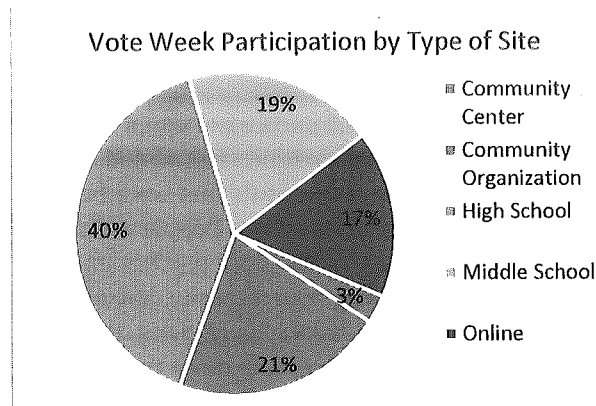
Given the low utilization of social media during the idea collection phase, an additional push was made during vote week to boost online participation. With this added emphasis and some paid advertising on Facebook to boost views, we were able to collect 517 ballots online. Demographic data between online and in-person voting varies significantly and highlights the need to maintain a balanced approach to engagement when trying to reach as broad and inclusive of an audience as possible.

In total, we were able to collect demographic data for over 2,300 participants or more than 75 percent of youth who voted in the process, both online and in-person. From this data, we see participation rates by race/ethnicity and gender varied by method of voting. White youth accounted for 55% of online voters and female voters outnumbered their male peers two to one in online voting. In-person voting was considerably more even, with close to an even split amongst male and female voters, with a small number of transgender or genderqueer youth voters as well.

The survey data collected also shows a broader range of participation at in-person voting. Of the 2,031 survey responses from in-person youth voters, 36 percent were white, 23 percent were black or African American, 16 percent were Asian, 14 percent were Hispanic or Latina/o, four percent were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, four percent were some other race, and three percent were American Indian or Alaska Native. In total, close to 64 percent of in-person voters were youth of color.

- *Recommendation:* Increase opportunities for individuals to participate in a variety of methods, levels of engagement and modes. In spite of the increased connectivity and digitization of processes, even amongst youth short and direct in-person participation was still the most favored method of participating in the process, and yielded more racially equitable participation. Additionally, reaching immigrant and refugee youth, especially those with limited or no English proficiency, requires intentional and intensive outreach throughout the process.

- *Recommendation:* Reassess process implementation timeline to allow for greater lead time in preparation for key stages of the process and outreach and engagement activities.

Project Development & Participation: In stark contrast to the rest of the process, the project development phase is an intensive, time-heavy process that requires youth to attend weekly meetings over the course of two months to develop ideas into projects. Unlike the idea collection and vote week phases of the process, project development requires a certain level of attendance and sustained engagement in order to participate.

This posed a number of challenges in terms of racial equity and access to the program. The approach favored youth who were already engaged in their schools or community organizations in order to find out about the opportunity. With limited staff and a constrained window of time between phases of the process, outreach was done largely at the City-hosted idea collection meetings. These meetings tended to favor youth that were already engaged in some way.

Additionally, with six weekly committees to manage and a small staff of only two people, concurrent meetings at a central location were necessary. While this provided increased opportunities for collaboration across committees, it also ran contrary to what we know to be good design. Ideally, budget delegate meetings could be hosted around the city at locations that were convenient for the participants; however, with a small number of participants in this phase of the process, determining a location that was convenient for all, or even most, was difficult and posed several logistical challenges.

- *Recommendation:* Identify alternative approaches to project development meeting-intensive format. The current process requires sustained and continuous interaction with the same group of youth who whittle the number of projects, with strong assistance from the City, and then work to create proposals. As noted previously, this process creates unnecessary barriers to participation and strain on resources and staff. Alternative models could include working with individual classes or community organizations on specific project topics that have already been whittled down by youth in a separate phase.
    - o One potential program strategy that was identified through the racial equity toolkit involves the development of area-based community coalitions. These coalitions would be formed by different community organizations within a geographic area (three to four covering the city) and would work together on developing proposals. Meetings could rotate around the various community organization locations and would offer a more robust opportunity to network with other local organizations and youth.

Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund (NPSF)

Establishing Purpose: Much of the discussion during the racial equity toolkit meetings with SDOT hinged on understanding the primary outcome of the NPSF. The NPSF was originally established in 1999 for "major maintenance projects identified in neighborhood plans" that are "identified and prioritized by the community, and selected for funding by the Department of Neighborhoods, SDOT, Parks, and the City Budget Office" as stated in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Over the years, adherence to this scope has changed. Projects that are selected for award are not necessarily tied directly to neighborhood plans or any other type of City plan. The broad definition of community has also created challenges for applicants in the process.

- *Recommendation:* Review the original intent of the fund and reassess or reaffirm the primary outcome. Providing some clarity to the desired outcome of the program will inform other program design questions, including the level of outreach and engagement on projects and the community review process that are otherwise unclear. At its core currently, the primary intention of the program is community prioritization of a limited pool of capital budget funding for transportation and parks projects.

Application and Review Process: The review process for the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund is currently the longest and most cumbersome process for any of the DON grant programs. Applications are submitted at the beginning of February and applicants are not notified if their project will be funded until September when the CIP Budget is delivered to City Council, with ultimate funding decisions tied to the CIP. Proposals go through multiple rounds of review and vetting, both at the City level and the community level; yet, in the current process it is still possible that projects that are ultimately selected for funding are not aligned with community priorities.

The NPSF review process is limited in the range of participation and requires intensive project-based outreach. From 2012 through 2015, 277 individuals have submitted an application for the program. Of the 277 applications, 71 individuals submitted more than one application. The effect of this is a large

sum of funding that has limited opportunity for community participation or input. Over the same period, more than $6.8 million was allocated through the process for local improvements in neighborhoods around the city.

The localized nature of the projects implemented through the program is one of the great strengths of the NPSF; however, the program's outcome of implementing projects identified and prioritized by "the community" would be better achieved through a more inclusive and open process for gathering ideas and prioritizing projects. The current process is meeting intensive and relies heavily on a small group of individuals making recommendations on behalf of a community.

Additionally, there are feelings that the current review process is a "popularity contest" as one former applicant stated and that the individual District Councils are left to decide their criteria outside of the stated selection criteria made available to applicants. One applicant has described the confusion and frustration this can cause if one experiences multiple District Council review processes over time and applicants must learn the unique characteristics that each is looking for without prior knowledge.

- *Recommendation:* Apply the participatory budgeting model to the NPSF in order to increase community participation during the input and idea gathering phase of the program. Applying this model, or a modified version, while keeping the current timeline for implementation (developing next year's project list during the current year) would:
    o allow for increased opportunity for participation,
    o reduce the amount of work required for an individual from the community,
    o provide SDOT and Parks the same amount of time, if not more time, to review, vet and conduct feasibility analyses of projects,
    o provide communities with an opportunity to generate project lists and prioritize through a more democratic process, and
    o maintain a Council District framework for allocating funding.

If the current model is maintained, at a minimum there is a need to establish clear and consistent rating criteria for the community review process to ensure that all District Councils are rating projects using a shared set of criteria. This could be achieved while also maintaining a level of 'local context.' Assessment of need and impact will always require local knowledge and is a valuable piece of the review process for capital projects.

Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF)
Large Projects Fund (LPF) Process: Currently, applicants must choose a home Neighborhood District Council (NDC) that their project resides in. Applications are then reviewed and scored by both a District Council Review Team (DCRT) as well as a Citywide Review Team (CRT). The NDC requirement extends beyond just identifying an area where the project will be implemented, but also dictates the composition of the project steering committee. This creates a tension for groups that do not neatly identify with one neighborhood or part of the city, but rather represent constituencies that are across the city.

Neither the Small Sparks nor the Small and Simple projects fund require groups to identify a Neighborhood District Council they identify with yet both funds remain solidly grounded in funding community building activities and projects rooted in neighborhoods while also providing opportunities for all of Seattle's communities to participate—including those that have been most impacted by displacement or are most vulnerable like new immigrant and refugee communities. This requirement

unique to the Large Projects Fund (LPF) process for projects between $25,000 and $100,000 creates what one NMF project manager has described as a glass ceiling for communities of color and other communities that are not neighborhood-based and is unnecessary for keeping the neighborhood and community values of the program alive.

- *Action Item*: Eliminate the LPF requirement that projects identify with a Neighborhood District Council and open the fund to city-wide and RSJI projects. Over the years, the Neighborhood Matching Fund program has worked with applicant groups to help them meet eligibility requirements when they would otherwise be restricted from applying for the LPF. This step that groups must take, such as realigning their steering committee or forcing a geographic lens on a project that may not inherently have one, is unnecessary to achieve the program's goals and in some ways actively undermines the values of community building across communities and neighborhoods that is it at the program's heart.

Community Review Process: The current process requires that Neighborhood District Councils identify three individuals to serve on a District Council Review Team (DCRT) and one individual to serve on a Citywide Review Team (CRT). The department appoints four individuals as well to the CRT and has used these appointments to diversify the review team, with a special focus on ensuring representation of people of color on the CRT. In previous years, the minimum of three individuals identified by District Councils to serve on the DCRT has not been strictly enforced, resulting in scenarios where a single individual's score comprises 50 percent of a project's total score. In 2016, the department instituted the three member minimum as a strict requirement. As of the deadline for NDCs to submit names for their representatives, only seven of the thirteen councils had the full representation necessary to constitute a DCRT.

Throughout the LPF process, which requires DCRT members to attend one open house where their district's projects present and the CRT members to attend all open houses as well as a wrap up discussion and recommendation meeting, representatives routinely drop off and are not able to attend the required sessions. Attrition is an issue for any program; however, for a process making recommendations on more than $1.5 million, attendance is a basic requirement that must be enforced.

- *Recommendation*: Redesign the Large Project Fund review process to reduce the level of attrition and retention as well to create a community review process that reflects the diversity of the city. The current system is time-intensive and there are limited opportunities for participation if an individual is not a member of a District Council.

Capacity Building Challenges: Several issues that have been discussed over the years and identified as potential barriers, obstacles or systems that create disparities relate to requirements or restrictions that the NMF program has that other organizational grant programs do not have. These differences are most stark between grant funding opportunities for community groups versus business organizations. Through the City's Only in Seattle program, business associations, business improvement areas and other business organizations can apply for organizational capacity funding, including technical assistance and outreach support, staff resources for program management, and funding for events.

In contrast, the NMF program does not provide this kind of broader organizational or program funding. All applications must be project-based—no support for ongoing program staff or for events that have been funded through NMF before since the start of the program. Event funding presents a particularly challenging issue on both sides—for community groups that would like to put on an event multiple years

in a row or build to a sustainable model of hosting their event, NMF is a one and done deal. For the program, it is hard to uniformly enforce this as there is no readily searchable forum for events funded by NMF. Compounding this, the NMF program moved from paper applications to an online system more than a decade ago and has since changed systems twice, making querying past five years exceedingly cumbersome and time consuming.

Taken holistically, these program policies which are not limited only to the NMF, but are similar to program policies for DROF, help create an inequity in available resources for community grassroots groups as compared to other types of community organizations, like business associations.

- *Recommendation:* Review program policies that restrict types of activities for which program fund can be used and align with other similar programs to create consistency across the City.

<u>Application and Reporting Information:</u> As discussed at the beginning of this report, the NMF application and grant reporting currently collects a level of information that may not be necessary for accounting, legal, or programmatic purposes and can be reduced. Some information is collected in multiple places within the application form requiring applicants to enter information in repeatedly.

- *Action Item:* Review the level of information collected on all application forms and reporting documentation and revise as needed to only collect data that is either mandated or warranted for monitoring and invoicing or that would be reasonably used by program, department or City staff to evaluate or assess projects, processes or programs and eliminate duplicative information or unnecessary details, such as requiring an individual's name be entered as a unique line item for each volunteer hour worked on a project.

<u>Streamline Funding Opportunities:</u> The NMF program is currently separated into three different tiers of funding: Small Sparks for projects up to $1,000, Small and Simple for projects up to $25,000, and Large Projects Fund for projects up to $100,000. Each tier has a different review process and length of time required for contracting. In the past the department has modified the frequency and timing of the funding opportunities to provide flexibility to community groups. Currently, Small Sparks are available year-round, Small and Simple are available three times a year, and Large Projects Fund is once a year.

The flexibility of the Small Sparks fund is vital to providing year-round funding for organizations, especially for events and other projects or series that are the primary recipients of the tier's funding. At the same time, the other two tiers require more intensive review and go through comparatively long processes. With an objective of simplifying processes, increasing the Small Sparks to $5,000 would provide an additional buffer for organizations to access quick capital.

Based on the historical number of Small Sparks applications and Small and Simple applications at or under $5,000 over the last three years, this would have a marginal impact on the number of applications for the Small Sparks. The number of projects between $1,000 and $5,000 between 2013 and 2015 would represent around a 6% increase in the number of Small Sparks applications per year. One potential outcome of increasing the limit on the most accessible of the funds could be an increase in the number of applications in that range however, as groups may currently be deterred from applying for small dollar amounts that are just over the threshold and compete with projects up to $25,000 for funding.

At the same time, collapsing the Small and Simple fund with the Large Projects Fund into a single fund for projects $5,000 to $100,000 has the potential to increase the nimbleness of the fund if offered quarterly instead of on the current schedule. Currently, the second Small and Simple and Large Projects Fund process overlaps, making it difficult for groups on the cusp of one fund or another to align their resources and time on one process. Simplifying the funding opportunities and adding a fourth tier would need to be paired with a thorough review of the community review process. As part of that review, identifying the primary outcome of the review process is key: getting funds out the door to community groups as efficiently as possible or having robust community participation in the review process. The two are not mutually exclusive, but clear direction on priorities is essential to create a system and process that achieves the desired outcomes.

Attachments
Attachment 1. Participatory Budgeting toolkit
Attachment 2. NMF toolkit
Attachment 3. NPSF toolkit

Attachment 1. Participatory Budgeting toolkit

Participatory Budgeting Racial Equity Toolkit Worksheet
<u>Overview and Outcomes</u>
Description:
Participatory budgeting is a new program in DON focused on youth ages 11-25 where youth develop and vote on projects that the City will fund. Anyone who is a resident of Seattle can contribute an idea to be developed by youth budget delegates into concrete proposals and eventually voted on by youth citywide, ages 11-25, to fund projects up to $700,000.

The program had a steering committee constituted before the first phase of the process made up of 19 community organizations that work with or serve different youth constituencies. The steering committee set the funding parameters and eligible project types, as well as set goals for outreach and engagement in the idea collection and vote phases of the process. Additionally, the steering committee was a key element of the outreach strategy throughout the process.

The process has four phases: idea collection, project development, vote week, and project implementation. The first three phases of the process are largely external facing and geared towards increasing engagement while the final phase is the responsibility of the City to implement. Idea collection was held over the course of a month at locations across the city including schools, libraries, community centers, and community organizations. Project development lasted roughly two and a half months and weekly meetings were held at City Hall. Vote week was also held at locations across the city and online for a little over a week.

1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue?
The primary racially equitable community outcome for this program is increasing participation of youth of color in the civic process. This outcome was defined by both the department and by the steering committee. The steering committee set specific goals around engaging immigrant and refugee youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth; Native youth; homeless youth and youth of color. Both the department and the steering committee also set outcomes related to reducing barriers to participation in the participatory budgeting process. At the beginning of the process, this was broadly defined to include all phases; however, over the course of the project and during evaluation, steering committee members and project staff focused specifically on the project development phase of the process.

1b. What racial equity opportunity area(s) will the issue primarily impact?
Education and community development

1c. Are there impacts on:
The participatory budgeting process is designed to increase youth participation in City government budgeting processes. The Seattle pilot set goals from the outset to focus on youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth, LGBTQ, Native and homeless youth as the target populations for outreach and engagement. The process is geared at building trust with communities that have not historically been engaged by government and requires intentional and inclusive outreach and sustained engagement with these communities. Additionally, by building relationships with these communities and organizations through this process, the intent is to develop partnerships to better serve these communities in the future.

<u>Stakeholder and Data Analysis</u>
2a. Are there impacts on geographic areas? Yes—all Seattle neighborhoods

2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?
According to 2010 US Census Bureau data, 69.5% of the city of Seattle identifies as White, 7.9% as Black or African American, 0.8% as American Indian/Alaska Native, 13.8% as Asian, 0.4% as Native Hawaiian/API, and 2.4% as some other

race and 5.1% reported as two or more races. Around 33.7% of the city's population identifies as persons of color. Of the close to 34% identifying as persons of color, 21.5% (44,035 youth) are under the age of 17, which represents 7.2% of the city's population and 49% of the city's population under the age of 17 (90,484 youth). While this age range does not align with the program's focus age range, it does provide detail in how the racial demographics of the city vary by age.

Around 18% of the city's population is between the ages of 11-25, the focus population for this program. According to the "Seattle Public Schools and Housing Report" from 2015, of the 52,000 youth that attend Seattle Public Schools, 2,370 are homeless. Seattle Public Schools also has demographic data on a number of relevant intersections between homelessness and other demographics. In a snap shot chart from 2014, Seattle Public Schools reported that black immigrant youth accounted for 75% of the homeless immigrant youth in the schools, while black immigrant youth comprised only 30% of the total immigrant youth population in the schools. Additionally, according to the "Homelessness Investment Analysis" from 2015, up to 40% of the homeless youth and young adult (YYA) population identify as LGBTQ.

Immigrant and refugee youth were also a focus population of the program. As of 2014, the Seattle Public Schools immigrant population was 0.02% American Indian/Native American; 41% Asian; 30% Black; 16% Hispanic/Latino; 2% Multi-Racial; 0.37% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and 11% White. These youths speak close to 130 different languages and as of 2013, Seattle Public Schools had over 5,000 English Language Learner (ELL) students enrolled. As of 2014, more than 25% of Seattle Public School students identified a language other than English as the primary language spoken in their home.

Lastly, there is also data to show the geographic distribution of youth across the city. Of the 44,000 youth of color in the city under the age of 17, nearly 35% live in Council District 2 and over 65% live in Council Districts 1, 2 and 3, based on 2010 census data.

2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?
Since this was the pilot year of the program, we heavily involved stakeholders in the design of the program as well as to collect feedback, input and gather concerns throughout the process. The steering committee served as our main vehicle for stakeholder engagement and included individuals (youth and adults) from community organizations that focused or worked with youth, especially immigrant and refugee, Native American, youth of color, homeless youth and other youth advocacy organizations. Ten out of the 19 organizations represented on the steering committee have their offices in Council Districts 1, 2, and 3.

This group established outreach and participation targets, decided on parameters for funding, eligibility for vote week and other criteria of the program. This community-driven process was supplemented by evaluation and surveying throughout the process at events, assemblies and voting locations. We gathered over 1,900 responses to our voter survey that captured key demographic data as well as allowed participants to provide feedback on the process. We also conducted interviews with members of the steering committee at the end of the process, received formal reports from several project development facilitators and had a focus group session with budget delegates, facilitators and some steering committee members to discuss process improvements and barriers/opportunities to improve future programming.

With each group of participants the DON staff spent a significant amount of time with (Steering Committee, Facilitators, Idea Assembly participants, and Budget Delegates) we had discussions on racial equity and its importance to participatory budgeting, a process designed to engage historically underserved populations. Through all processes and artifacts created in our process, we wove in equitable practices and discussed with participants the intentionality of this inclusion. Particularly, when Budget Delegates narrowed down the pool of ideas collected to just 19 projects that made it on the ballot, we worked with the youth volunteers to help them assess the need and impact of ideas and where they would be most needed in the city.

Attachment 1. Participatory Budgeting toolkit

2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people's lives and should be taken into consideration?

The data, community conversations and feedback combine to describe the unique experience of youth living in the city. Youth of color comprise a greater percentage of their peer groups relative to their white peers than the overall city population (49% vs 34%). These numbers alone speak to the need to ensure inclusive outreach in youth-focused programming is intentional and representative of the city's youth population. Additionally, the geographic dispersion of youth of color across the city indicates a need to be intentional in outreach efforts and to focus attention and resources on areas of the city where more youth of color live (it should be noted again that this analysis used 2010 census data and we know that demographics have changed rapidly in Seattle over the last six years. To the extent that the department can update this analysis with more recent data in the future that will be done).

The data and community conversations also speak to the intersections of race, socio-economic status and other issues like homelessness, access to resources and opportunity. The Office of Economic Development notes that the median wage per hour in Seattle for a white person is $27 while the median wage per hour for a person of color is $20. Time and location are two of the most important factors that influence participation rates in programs like participatory budgeting. To the extent that there is a relationship between race and socio-economic status and at the same time youth of color live predominantly in specific parts of the city, this has significant implications for access to meetings, events and other hosted program gatherings. For participatory budgeting, a fair amount of the program is designed to take place in person--every step of the process is meeting intensive.

Some of the feedback we got early on, especially from community organizations serving homeless youth was that it was difficult to convince youth in their program to attend events outside of the program as there were practical challenges around transportation, food and other logistic issues as well as social dynamics that youth are especially receptive to and aware of that can inhibit participation. Taking into account the time, location, and context of when and where events are held for the program is key to addressing racial inequities in the program's design. We saw and heard this social dynamic around youth participation with most non-school based youth we worked with through the program.

2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?

The root causes of these racial inequities relate to access--access to transportation, access to resources, financial or other networks of support to be able to participate, and access to organizations, groups or networks that know about City processes and programs. The idea collection and vote week phases provide multiple opportunities for engagement that can occur in a number of different ways—online or in-person, at school, a community organization, at home or at a City-sponsored event. In comparison, the project development phase required youth participants to attend weekly meetings after school at City Hall for eight weeks. These meetings required youth to arrange transportation and block off two hours of their afternoon every week to attend.

Some City and other government policies also are factors that created or contributed to racial inequities—specifically around allowable expenses related to stipends, transit and food. Current policies restrict what City funds can be used on in order to encourage participation in programs and services. For this process in particular, this contributed to existing inequities around access by limiting the mitigating strategies we could implement.

These causes also directly tie back to the broader racial inequities related to housing, employment, education and health among others that directly impact the lives of the youth. Issues of access that contribute to racial inequities are only amplified when working with youth. For many youth, decisions to participate or not participate were directly related to networks of support, such as schools, family, friends or community organizations that connected the youth to the program.

Determining Benefit and/or Burden and Strategies to Minimize Harm

3. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?

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The participatory budgeting process is designed to reduce barriers to participation in government processes. The program has multiple opportunities for individuals to get involved and in an array of capacities--there are multiple ways to be a participant of the participatory budgeting process and involvement is not necessarily continuous throughout the program. This is one of the ways that the program is intended to increase racial equity by providing different levels of engagement and participation that are all meaningful. The one chief exception to this is during the project development phase. During this part of the process, youth are required to attend eight weekly meetings to turn the ideas into projects. This creates a barrier to participation for youth that are not able to attend a weekly meeting.

The program does not require much in the way of formal application materials or paperwork, instead favoring a high volume of meetings to gather ideas and vote on projects. While this reduces the burden on individuals to fill out a long application, it creates another potential burden by requiring alternative ways of gathering ideas. There are three potential ways that this was done: online via social media and a web form, at events hosted by the City and at regular events or standing meetings hosted by schools and community organizations.

Based on the model used by other cities implementing participatory budgeting processes, the department focused its attention on building and hosting its own events for idea collection—creating one event in each of the seven Council Districts. This decision diverted attention and limited staff time away from building partnerships with community organizations and schools that ultimately proved to be more effective at reaching the youth focus populations.

Overall, the program seeks to increase racial equity by designing a process that reduces traditional barriers to participation, providing multiple opportunities for participation and at different levels of engagement that all achieve the same outcome (for the specific phase of the process), and by adapting the program model to the between phases to account for feedback and data from the phase before to ensure the program is reaching its target audience of youth of color.

4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity?
Program Strategies
There are several program strategies that were utilized and/or could be utilized in the future to address the impacts on racial equity.

1.) Collect feedback and evaluation data throughout the process. This was a program strategy used throughout the pilot that allowed staff to understand what was working and what was not as well as who we were reaching and who we were missing. This allowed staff to adjust the program model, refocus the outreach, and reallocate resources in ways that would increase the racial equity outcomes of the program.

One example of this is with regards to meetings. During the first phase of the process, the department placed a heavy emphasis on hosting its own events, driving attendance to those events and focusing less on existing community meetings. This was in line with the approach prescribed in the international model; however, after completing a few of the City hosted events and experiencing low yields, staff looked at the numbers and saw that participation was much higher at community organizations and schools where youth were already gathered. By the end of the first phase, participation data confirmed that we had diminished yields of ideas collected in direct relation to the "manufactured" quality of the events. The more able we were to set up community organizations and school staff with the materials and have them run the processes, the higher participation was likely to be. This was especially true for participation rates amongst youth of color.

2.) Meet people where they are at a time and place convenient to them. Driven largely by experience and data as mentioned above, this strategy also helps to mitigate issues of access to transportation or the time to attend another meeting.

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3.) Simplify the proposal development process with Budget Delegates. Even with a relatively streamlined process, there are opportunities to reduce the burden placed on individuals, especially school and community organization staff who would like to host an event, in order to increase the reach and participation of youth of color. Many community organizations and schools that serve primarily youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth and other vulnerable populations are already stretched thin for their own resources and time. Providing an opportunity for their youth while also minimizing the time and effort required of them to do so is essential to increasing racial equity in participation.

Instead of holding proposal development meetings at City Hall, a new mobile-participation model could be used that focus on different geographic-based coalitions spread throughout the city. These coalitions could be formed by different community-based organizations within the area that each bring several youth. These coalitions would work on developing proposals and possibly even having field trips to visit different coalitions. These coalitions could be matched with facilitators who have deep knowledge and skills on how to guide based on the make-up of the groups.

While the exact details to simplify the Budget Delegate proposal development process are still to be determined, one perk of meeting at a central location with youth from all over the city is that youth were able to interact with peers from different neighborhoods that they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet. The conversations between these youth from varying backgrounds were at times very eye-opening for them; however this process is modified in future years, retaining some aspect of youth from different neighborhoods meeting together would be a good aspect to retain.

4) Outreach to more immigrant youth and homeless youth. For this pilot year, staff focused engaging youth of color by focusing outreach in Districts 1, 2, and 3 as areas with the largest numbers of youth of color. But as immigrant and homeless youth are also populations that the City would like to increase participation in local government in order to achieve racial equity, staff will also target outreach to these communities and individuals that are dispersed throughout the city. If the program continues a second year, the department would be able to devote more time to outreach efforts, as many of the programmatic pieces have been established in the pilot year, freeing up time for increased and more intensive outreach.

5.) As this program moves into the project implementation phase, equitable RFPs and contracting must be made a priority. As this program is intended to engage participation from historically underserved communities, projects need to be implemented by and with the communities they serve.

6) Outreach should be more front-loaded than time allowed for during the pilot year. Inclusive outreach and engagement requires in-depth planning and forethought as well as continual opportunities for relationship building. If the program continues, more time should be allocated before the process begins to ensure that the proper steps are being taken to outreach to youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth, English-language learners, homeless youth, and LBGTQ youth.

Policy Strategies
Economic barriers around transportation and meals at meetings affected who was able to participate in the program. Since people of color make proportionally less money than white people in Seattle, the City must work to ensure that participation in this program has as few economic barriers to participation as possible. Ways that the City could improve this are to provide transportation or transportation stipends to youth who come to recurring meetings and making sure that meetings are held in centrally located areas. Also, providing meals at meeting will reduce economic burdens for youth and their families.

An equitable and meaningful strategy would be to continue participatory budgeting in some form for another year. There is a sentiment among communities of color that there are programs designed to engage underserved communities that are widely publicized that everyone becomes excited about for the first year, but then are not

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continued for subsequent years. Building a second year off the success of this pilot year might increase trust in communities of color.

Partnership Strategies
During this pilot year, the City has engaged many schools and community-based organizations in partnerships. The City will continue to work with schools and organizations that have large populations of youth of color and in potential subsequent cycles, the City will also strengthen the outreach to community-based organizations working with youth experiencing homelessness and school programs working with English Language Learners to deepen the engagement with these populations in particular.

Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability
5. How will you evaluate and be accountable?
Evaluation is a key component of the participatory budgeting process. We have embedded pre- and post-participation surveys into different steps of the program, as well as interviews, focus groups and general surveys into the process. From this, we have been able to capture a fair amount of data in the first year of the program. If the program were to continue, we would maintain this level of data collection to compare participation rates over time as well as to compare the efficacy of certain outreach methods and event styles.

Our evaluation time line is currently relatively tight--we aim to have our evaluation of the first year completed by the end of July on the external facing process. We will also review the full process, including contracting and project implementation, at the end of the year when we are further along in that phase of the work. In future years, we would maintain this level of data collection, analysis and reporting in order to make program adjustments between phases as needed.

Based on this year's experience and what the data shows about our participation rates--we feel that the program is well on its way to achieving its racial equity outcomes; however, we realize we can always do better. The program had a participation rate of 2.98% of eligible youth citywide, and more than 8% of youth in of focus populations participated. The national median for participation in participatory budgeting processes is 1.7% of the eligible population.

If the program continues a second year, we would like to retain some of the steering committee organizations on for a second year and infuse the group with some new energy as well. The role of the steering committee and the time and energy required on both sides to make that engagement meaningful was a learning lesson this year that we will fine tune between cycles given the feedback of this year's steering committee members.

To maintain accountability, we would also look for ways to increase participation in the project implementation phase in future cycles. The last phase of the process is largely left to the City to execute and diminishes the work that has been done up to this point to select the projects and the role of youth. We will continue to look for ways to involve youth and specifically youth of color in this work.

This process has also been a good first touch at raising awareness about racial inequity in processes and participation with our fellow City departments. Although the work required to vet and advise on the projects was confined to a short period of time, many of our City partners provided feedback that they enjoyed the process and were impressed with the number of youth and specifically the number of youth of color that participated in this process. As we look forward to working with others more closely in the future through this process and others, many of the lessons learned through this process will be shared internally and externally.

5b. What is unresolved?
Issues around access to transportation and creating meaningful opportunities to engage with English language learners are two issues we will need to continue to partner on and improve. Moving to a model of events hosted at regular gatherings, schools, standing meetings, etc. has helped address the first issue for the both the idea collection and vote

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week phases of the process; however, we have not been able to resolve this issue as relates to the project development phase and need to develop some creative options if the program continues.

Engaging youth who do not speak English or have limited proficiency is another challenge that we need to continue to partner with community organizations, schools, media resources, commissions and others with expertise and established networks in order to do better in future years. This outreach is intensive and requires resources; however, we need to prioritize this in future years to ensure that we're reaching the growing immigrant and refugee youth population in the city.

6. Share analysis and report responses from Step 5 with Department Leadership and Change Team Leads or the RSJI Subcabinet and members involved in Step 1.

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Neighborhood Matching Fund Racial Equity Toolkit Worksheet
<u>Overview and Outcomes</u>
Description:
The Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) program was established in 1987 by ordinance to provide neighborhood groups with City resources for community developed and driven projects. City funding is matched by the community's resources of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services and/or cash match. The NMF supports projects that feature community participation, are grassroots, offer a community benefit and are open and free to the public and have distinct outcomes. The NMF has three distinct funds with different eligibility requirements: Small Sparks, Small and Simple, and Large Projects Fund (LPF).

Small Sparks awards projects up to $1,000 for community capacity building projects. Applications are accepted year-round and are reviewed internally by NMF staff. Small and Simple projects can be up to $25,000 and are awarded three times a year. Applications are reviewed by NMF and other City staff. For both Small Sparks and Small and Simple, projects can be either neighborhood-based or City-wide as well as RSJ projects. The LPF is awarded once annually for projects up to $100,000. Projects must be neighborhood-based and are required to identify a Neighborhood District Council that is the home for the project and where the majority of the steering committee lives or works. City-wide or RSJ projects are not eligible for LPF awards due to this.

Small Sparks and Small and Simple applications are reviewed internally by City staff and have a turn-around time of a few weeks to a month and a half. The LPF is reviewed via a community process that includes a District Council Review Team (DCRT) and Citywide Review Team (CRT). Both the DCRT and CRT are comprised of representatives from the Neighborhood District Councils. The CRT has 17 representatives, with one from each of the 13 District Councils and four appointed by the program staff. The 13 DCRTs are each comprised of at least three representatives from member organizations. Applicants must attend an open-house to give a presentation for the CRT and DCRT and applications are then rated and ranked by both the CRT and DCRT, with each score counting for 50% of the project's total score. The CRT ultimately makes the funding recommendations for both bodies and those are then reviewed and approved by the Mayor and the City Council via ordinance.

This toolkit will focus on two particular aspects of the NMF application and review process, specifically: a) the geographic requirements for the LPF and b) the community review process for the LPF. Additional issues that are identified through this assessment or that may fall outside of this analysis will be addressed in a separate report.

1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue?
The primary racially equitable community outcome is eliminating requirements or processes in the NMF application process that disproportionately impact communities of color. Across DON grant programs, the department is looking at what barriers, requirements or processes are currently in place that reduce participation rates and the accessibility of funding opportunities, specifically for communities of color. By assessing what barriers exist and understanding the impacts, the goal is to increase the number of applicants and ultimately the number of projects awarded from communities that have not applied to the LPF in the past.

1b. What racial equity opportunity area(s) will the issue primarily impact?
Community Development, Jobs

1c. Are there impacts on:
Immigrant and Refugee Access to Services; Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement.

<u>**Stakeholder and Data Analysis**</u>
2a. Are there impact on geographic areas? Yes—all Seattle neighborhoods

2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?

The NMF program is a city-wide program although the LPF has geographic restrictions that the other funding opportunities do not have in place requiring applicants identify a Neighborhood District Council the project is based in and that a majority of the project steering committee must live or work in.

By neighborhood, the city has seen drastic changes by racial demographics since 1987 when the Neighborhood Matching Fund was created. Looking across census data from 1990, 2000, and 2010 by urban centers and villages shows how quickly movement has happened in Seattle. Between 1990 and 2000, the black population in the 23rd and Union-Jackson area went from comprising 64% (4,407) to 41% (3,287) of the neighborhood's total population. By 2010, only 28% (2,617) of the neighborhood identified as black.

These changes did not start in 1987, however, and the program's restrictions on geography-based LPF applications does not only have implications for the black community in Seattle. In the 1960s, the vast majority of Seattle's black population lived in the Central Area and adjoining communities due to institutional policies like redlining and racial covenants that restricted mobility across neighborhoods in the city. In contrast to the decades of forced restrictions maintained by institutional policies, the current situation is one of forced displacement. The same can be said of other communities, ethnic and racial, as well as other historically underrepresented communities who are experiencing similar dynamics. Additionally, the city has seen a huge influx in immigrant and refugee populations since the 1980s and especially in the last decade. Immigrant communities are the fastest growing population in the city of Seattle and over 129 languages are now spoken in the Seattle Public Schools. In the face of all of this, the City needs to constantly assess opportunities to invest in the communities that have lived here for generations as well as those that are new arrivals.

Although the city has changed dramatically in recent decades, several of the Department of Neighborhoods programs have not. For a separate analysis that was delivered to Council in May 2016, snapshot data taken from the District Councils' inclusion sign in sheets was used to understand the demographics of District Councils. The information included data from 150 District Council members in 2013 and revealed a fairly homogenous group of individuals. Of the 11 District Councils that had data, six had 100 percent white membership as reported and only two (Central Area and Delridge) were less than 70 percent white. In contrast, six Neighborhood Districts have populations that are less than 70 percent white (five of these were represented among the 11 with data, the sixth—Southeast District—did not have data).

The LPF review teams—both the District Council Review Team (DCRT) and the Citywide Review Team (CRT)—are recruited from members or member organizations of the District Councils; the program also appoints four at-large representatives, which the program uses to add racial diversity to the CRT. These four appointments are usually not from a District Council directly, but are former applicants or fiscal sponsors of NMF projects that are interested in participating in the community review process.

2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?
The NMF conducts regular surveys to assess the impact of programmatic changes, gather feedback and make process improvements. Online surveys, focus groups, advisory committees, and interviews have all been used in the recent past, and covered both of the topics that are the main focus of this assessment. Additionally, the NMF has been the focus of many prior analyses that have collected stakeholder input on the program that are relevant to this RET.

LPF Geographic Requirements and Community Review Process: In 2014, the NMF program formed an Advisory Committee comprised of roughly sixteen community members from different organizations including neighborhood groups, affinity groups and other community organizations to discuss the possibility of opening up the LPF to non-geographic-based projects, among other issues. Representatives came from District Councils, Legislative Districts, past awardees, and racial and ethnic organizations like Horn of Africa Services and the Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle.

As part of this past work, the department also reached out to the Neighborhood District Councils and the City Neighborhood Council to gauge interest and hear any issues or concerns they had with changing the eligibility requirements. While most were in favor of programmatic changes like increasing the maximum amount awarded through Small Sparks to $2,000, there was strong opposition by the District Councils to opening the LPF to non-geographic projects. Concerns raised included loss of District Council control of the process, worry about unfair

competition between neighborhood-based and non-geographic based projects, and concern that non-profits would take funding that was meant for neighborhood projects.

It is also telling to note that of the 173 respondents to the 2015 NMF Survey where 82 percent identified as former NMF applicants or awarded groups, more than 70 percent of respondents identified as white and over 78 percent were over the age of 42. Past survey results and focus groups also speak to the need for further engagement with underserved communities in the future as the program rolls out changes to the LPF process and requirements. Outreach in the past has been focused on the District Councils and City Neighborhood Council largely to ensure they were actively engaged in any process changes; however, this has come at the expense of broader outreach. Moving forward, the program will continue to engage with community organizations working with underserved communities to ensure they are engaged with the program and aware of the changes.

Conversations around changing the geographic requirements have also involved discussion around options for review teams, including the idea of splitting the fund in to one citywide and one geographically restricted as well as streamlining the two review teams into one review team. From the 2015 survey, the responses were almost evenly split, 43% in favor of one and 45% in favor of two with 12% other responses (these responses were largely either not informed enough to vote or were opposed to opening up to non-geographic based projects).

Additionally, the NMF program has repeatedly looked at and raised the issue of the racially disparate impact of the geographic requirement of the LPF for decades. Past and current program staff, applicants and others have raised this as an RSJI issue that has not been addressed.

2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people's lives and should be taken into consideration?
LPF geographic requirements: The data and past stakeholder engagement reveals the disparate impacts that geographically-restricted funding can have in Seattle. Many of the responses to a 2015 survey on the issue that did not support opening up to beyond geography-based projects were based on maintaining neighborhood control of the process, local context and knowledge of need and support for projects, and distrust of large non-profits taking over the fund. The responses that were in favor of non-geographic projects being eligible for the LPF called out populations served as just as important as geography and highlighted populations like veterans that are not geography-specific.

The data and conversations also are telling in the ways that non-geographic groups must navigate the process to be eligible for funding. The current LPF process requires that communities that are not defined by geography develop round about ways to be eligible for this source of funding. This sometimes requires applicants to change the composition of their steering committee to match the resident requirements. For many groups, this requires them to find other sources of funding for their projects—especially projects that are population-focused and city-wide in nature. One example of this is a project in the Central Area that was based around an event series in a historically and culturally significant building for the African-American community; however, the project steering committee largely lived outside of the neighborhood.

In spite of the current restriction on RSJ projects eligibility for the LPF, over the last five years, more than 40% of awarded projects have had "RSJ elements"—projects that under the Small and Simple or Small Sparks funds would be considered RSJ projects. Because of the strong beliefs of program staff and the value they place on RSJI, they have consistently worked with groups and applicants to find ways to make their project ideas fit within the current construct of project eligibility.

2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?
LPF geographic requirements: The root causes creating these racial inequities range from the macro to the micro-level. There are issues related to broader policies around housing and displacement that directly impact where people can afford to live and histories tied to institutional policies that are described earlier. These larger factors that impact where people are able to live in the city directly relate to the racial equity of a policy of neighborhood-based funding restrictions that require residency. Individuals and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by gentrification have limited access to this funding. Additionally, no one is allowed to apply for a citywide project

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regardless of geography, creating a systemic gap at the City for funding work that impacts citywide race and social justice issues.

Community review process: Barriers to participation in the community review process are two-fold: one of the root causes creating racial inequities is tied to the District Council system and the other is tied to the requirements of participating on the CRT or DCRT. District Council participation presents multiple barriers that are not easily addressed in the current system—the time of meetings, the frequency, language proficiency and location. There are limited opportunities to participate if you cannot attend a monthly night meeting in-person. A separate toolkit on the District Council system will elaborate on the barriers to participation than can be addressed here; however, the connection is critical since the CRT and DCRT are culled from the District Councils. The current CRT and DCRT review format closely replicates many of the barriers of the District Councils.

Participating in the CRT review process requires a commitment to meeting anywhere from five to more than eight nights over the course of a few weeks to hear presentations, review applications and make funding recommendations. Meetings are often three hours or longer on weekday nights and are held at City Hall. Both CRT and DCRT representatives are volunteers. The program does provide parking passes/transportation reimbursement as well as meals at each of the meetings to address some of the issues related to the time of the meetings.

Determining Benefit and/or Burden and Strategies to Minimize Harm
3. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?
LPF geographic requirements: communities that are not defined by geography are excluded from the LPF funding opportunity. As the city's racial demographics by neighborhoods have changed over the decades and the program requirements have not, the impact has been to limit the participation of largely non-white community groups from the LPF. The notable exception to this, especially in recent years, has been ethnic community centers in Southeast Seattle that have applied for physical improvement projects through the fund, like the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities. Because certain groups are not eligible to receive funding through the LPF, it also impacts the range of outreach that the program staff conduct related to the LPF as well as the potential reach of the program. The geographic requirement limits the potential engagement to new applicant groups to a fraction of the potential community organizations that could utilize the LPF for projects.

Community review process: As noted earlier, the CRT is comprised of 14 out of 17 representatives from the District Councils and the DCRT is entirely composed of District Council members. This limits the opportunities for participation for individuals and organizations that are not a part of the District Council system. The four members of the CRT that are not from District Councils are appointed by the department. The District Council system requires a high level of time commitment in order to attend regular meetings that are held locally around the city. While the meetings are held at largely accessible locations, there is no other way to formally participate on a District Council as a member. To be a part of a District Council also requires that an organization, community group, or affiliation is aware of the District Council system as well as the responsibilities related to grant review that they have, and is contingent on the engagement to historically underserved communities to participate in the system.

In addition to requiring participants of the CRT and DCRT to be from District Council member organizations, the current CRT and DCRT process is itself time intensive and requires participants to attend multiple nights of presentations and group discussions. The program does currently provides reimbursement for transportation/parking passes and meals at the events as the meetings are multiple hours on week nights; however, members must attend multiple in-person meetings in order to participate.

4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity?
Program Strategies:
- LPF—eliminate the geographic requirements to open the LPF up to all community organizations consistent with the Small and Simple and Small Sparks requirements. Removing this restriction will provide access to the largest funding opportunity that the program administers, while not reducing the access to the program that existing eligible groups have to the LPF. By doing so, the LPF may experience a significant increase in the number of

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applications. The program would monitor this over the course of at least three cycles to understand the long-term impact the change has made and, if necessary, to find ways to right-size the funding to meet the potential demand. With the current LPF process, there is considerable variance in year-to-year number of applications. Due to this, we would want to evaluate the impact over the course of more than just the first year in order to have sufficient information to compare across the current system and the new system.

- Community review process—reevaluate the current model and assess different options for the community review process. This assessment could look a few different ways depending on the outcomes of a separate analysis on District Councils, but will have some community engagement component to it. This may take the form of a newly established community commission advising on the community review processes for grants and what that could look like or it may be a stand-alone advisory group that addresses the community review process just for the LPF process. Currently, recruitment for the DCRT and CRT is a challenge to find enough people willing to participate on the review teams; however, there are always more than enough individuals from outside of the District Councils that are interested in serving as one of the four at-large seats. If the community review process is maintained, opening up the review team to include interested individuals from organizations outside of a District Council would help address issues of representation as well as issues the program has around retention and attrition.

- There also needs to be added clarity around the goal of the community review process. If the goal of the LPF is to provide resources to community organizations and neighborhood groups to implement projects in an efficient manner, having an intensive community review process adds increased complexity and time to the review process. If the goal is to create community through the review process, there is additional added impetus to change the way that the review team is currently composed. Opening up the review team to include individuals from organizations outside of the District Councils will increase opportunities for more inclusive community-building across organizations.

Policy Strategies
- Other community grant funding programs should carefully consider programmatic restrictions put in place that are not dictated by funding source or other mandate, especially around geographic-based restrictions that are tied to residency in some way. One strategy is to regularly reassess the validity of programmatic requirements and restrictions with an RSJI filter and to routinely analyze the organizations that are receiving funding through the program.

Partnership Strategies
- The NMF program is premised on building community and community partnerships. As this analysis and many others before it have confirmed, there are community groups that are not currently able to apply for the LPF that serve a variety of different populations—racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQ, homeless, affinity groups, veterans, and many others—that the program could expand its relationship with if eligibility requirements are changed.

- To increase the reach of the program and in addition to partnering with community organizations, the program can continue to look for ways to leverage the work of other City and department programs, like POELs and PACE, to develop connections with new or emerging communities and community organizations and ensure City staff are familiar with the program and general guidelines. This is vital to expanding the reach of the program as referrals are consistently the number one way that applicants hear about the NMF.

Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability
5. How will you evaluate and be accountable?
The Neighborhood Matching Fund program already collects a fair amount of information about applicants. In order to understand the impact of these changes, the program could look at the number of first time applicants to the LPF next year as well as the number of applications that come in that are for citywide projects. Additionally, looking at the type of

community organizations that apply and assessing how many of the projects would not have been eligible with the current restrictions will help us understand the impact of eliminating these requirements. A future toolkit can also look at outreach and engagement around the program to understand how to better work with community organizations serving underserved communities and what opportunities exist to improve outreach strategies.

Evaluating the replacement for the community review process currently utilized by the LPF process will be dependent on the form it takes; however, we will want to track and show metrics around representation and participation rates as well as retention and attrition. Active engagement is one of the challenges of the current system as a small number of people are consistently tapped for multiple opportunities. When these opportunities are not seen as highly valuable they are reprioritized and we see issues of attrition over the course of the process.

As part of a year-end report, the NMF program will report back on the metrics above as well as the qualitative feedback from applicants and others on these changes and others that are recommended as part of a SLI response on grants. While changing these elements may decrease the barriers to participation in the LPF process—it is necessary to develop a strong outreach plan around these changes and include organizations and groups that the program has not worked with in the past, specifically ethnic and racial groups.

5b. What is unresolved?
If the program changes its review process and/or guidelines—additional assessment on the new proposed structure or process is necessary, including an RSJI analysis of the unintended consequences of a new review process for the LPF. We need to ensure that we are not replacing one system that has created racial inequities with another that does so by design. Broader community conversations about what this new process of community engagement should look like is necessary as well, including conversations with individuals and organizations who have not been a part of the review process in the past that work with communities or color and immigrant and refugee communities.

Additionally, clarity around the goals of the community review process will help inform what options to explore. As one of the anchor community grant programs in the City, the NMF is oftentimes called in to be responsive to multiple, competing needs and demands. Although the program has clear guidelines about what is eligible and ineligible, as well as a set of "core values," the program needs to establish priorities around outcomes. This could be informed by more engagement with communities—including current and past applicant organizations, racial groups, immigrant and refugee communities and organizations, other affinity groups and other community-based organizations that could apply for the LPF.

Finally, these two aspects of the LPF process are just a step towards increasing the racial equity of the program and its outcomes. Future work and RSJI analysis is needed around outreach and engagement and potentially other issues that have not been as analyzed previously as the two issues that were assessed here. These two aspects of the program were partially chosen because of the long history of work that has been done by community members and staff in the past to highlight this as an RSJI issue.

6. Share analysis and report responses from Step 5 with Department Leadership and Change Team Leads or the RSJI Subcabinet and members involved in Step 1.

Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund Racial Equity Toolkit Worksheet
<u>Overview and Outcomes</u>
Description:
The Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund was started in 1999 with $1 million set aside for major maintenance projects identified in neighborhood plans. Projects are identified and prioritized by the community, through the Neighborhood District Councils, and selected for funding by the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the City Budget Office. In the last two years, the program has awarded more than $2 million each year as a result of a budget increase by the Mayor. More than 80 percent of projects are transportation projects that are funded through the process.

Applications for the NPSF are due in early February and are submitted online or in-person using a basic application form asking applicants to identify a problem, potential solution and stakeholder engagement that they've done both with City staff and other community members. Applications are reviewed and prioritized by City staff and District Councils twice throughout the process until final decisions are made in late August. Funding recommendations are included as part of the CIP every year.

1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue?
The most important racially equitable community outcome is equitable access and opportunity to participation in the Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund (NPSF) process for communities of color. As a subset of this primary outcome, there are several other outcomes that DON and SDOT identified that support or tie into this outcome: physical benefits of the projects implemented benefit a broad spectrum of the population; selection process and mechanisms are inclusive by design; and under-served or under-resourced areas will benefit from the projects selected.

1b. Which racial equity opportunity area(s) will the issue primarily impact?
Community Development, Environment

**1c. Are there impacts on:** Immigrant and Refugee Access to Services, Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement.

<u>Stakeholder and Data Analysis</u>
2a. Are there impacts on geographic areas? Yes—all Seattle neighborhoods

2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?
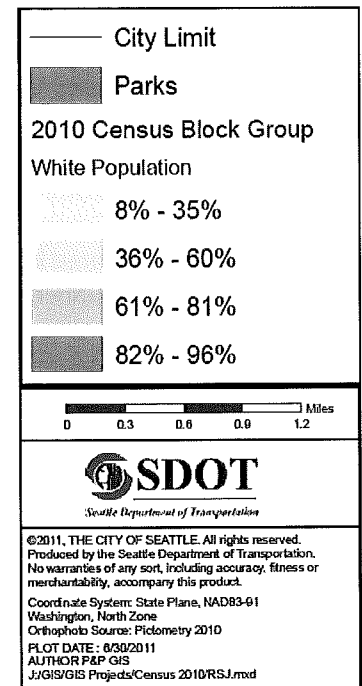Although the program is city-wide in nature, NPSF projects tend to be small infrastructure improvements by nature of the amount available to each District Council for funding. The maps on the next pages show the awarded projects over the last four cycles (2012-2015) mapped to comparative 2010 census block maps by population (white and people of color). These maps provide some insight into where the awarded projects are located and the neighborhoods that are directly benefitting from the program as a result of infrastructure projects that are chosen through this process. The table below summarizes the distribution of awarded projects by percent of the population that is white versus people of color. From this, it is apparent that there is a relationship between race and project location. Over 70 percent of projects were located in areas of the city where the white population is greater than 60 percent, compared to just 11 percent of projects located in areas of the city where the population is more than 67 percent people of color.

The second table looks at the racial demographics by Neighborhood District. While the maps below are a good way of approximating the racial demographics of the areas where projects are located, the nuances of the racial demographics of neighborhoods are oversimplified in these two maps. The second table, however, provides more detail on the composition of the Neighborhood Districts, the geographic construct that the process uses to divide funding evenly across.
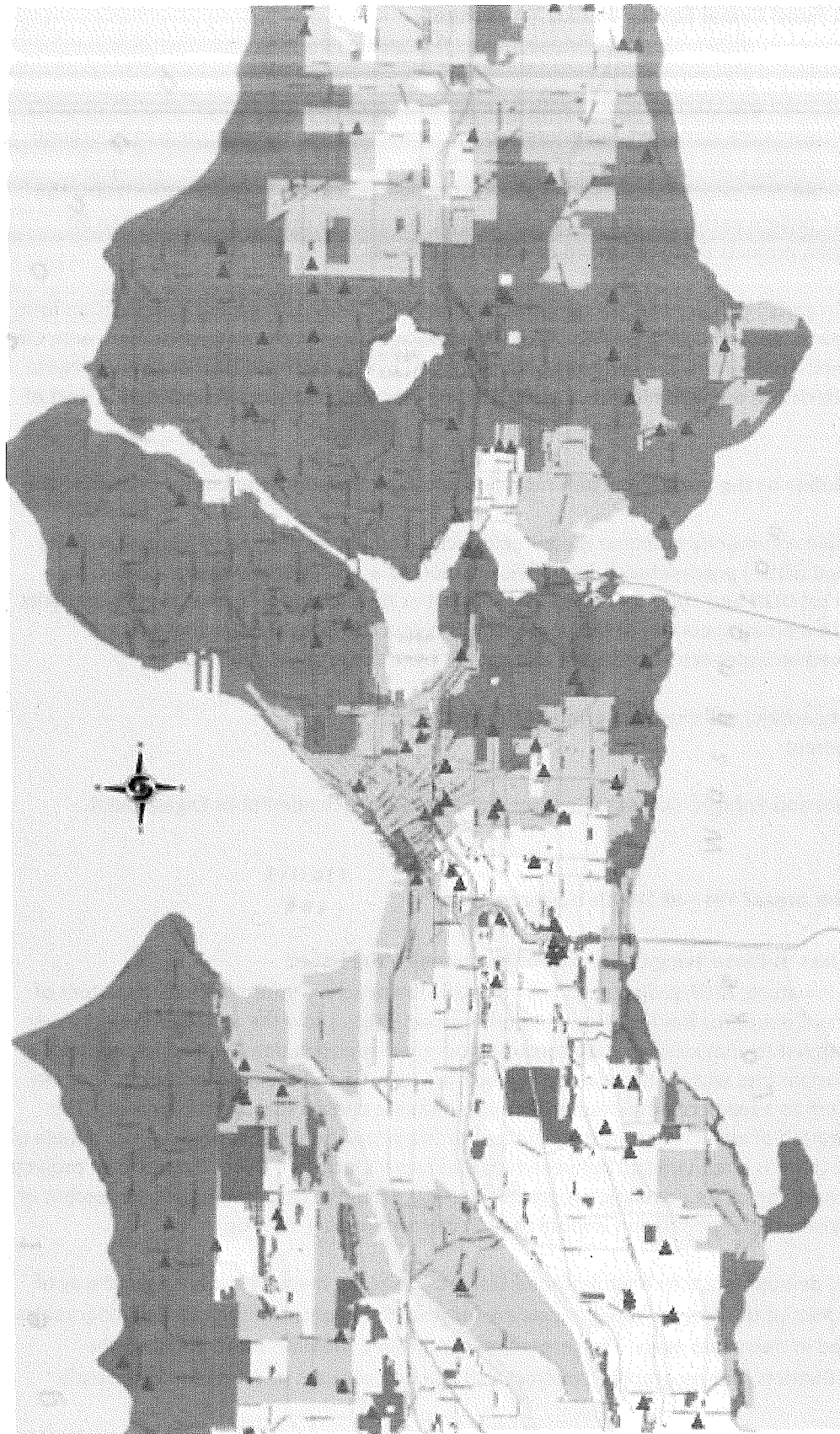
Map 1. 2010 Census Block Group Percent White and NPSF Awarded Projects (2012-2015)
Purple triangles indicate NPSF awarded projects from 2012-2015 mapped to the project location. For projects that spanned one or more blocks, the mid-point of the length of the project was used for mapping purposes.

City Limit

Parks

2010 Census Block Group
White Population

8% - 35%

36% - 60%

61% - 81%

82% - 96%

Miles
0   0.3   0.6   0.9   1.2

SDOT
Seattle Department of Transportation

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merchantability, accompany this product.

Coordinate System: State Plane, NAD83-91
Washington, North Zone
Orthophoto Source: Pictometry 2010

PLOT DATE : 6/30/2011
AUTHOR P&P GIS
J:/GIS/GIS Projects/Census 2010/RSJ.mxd
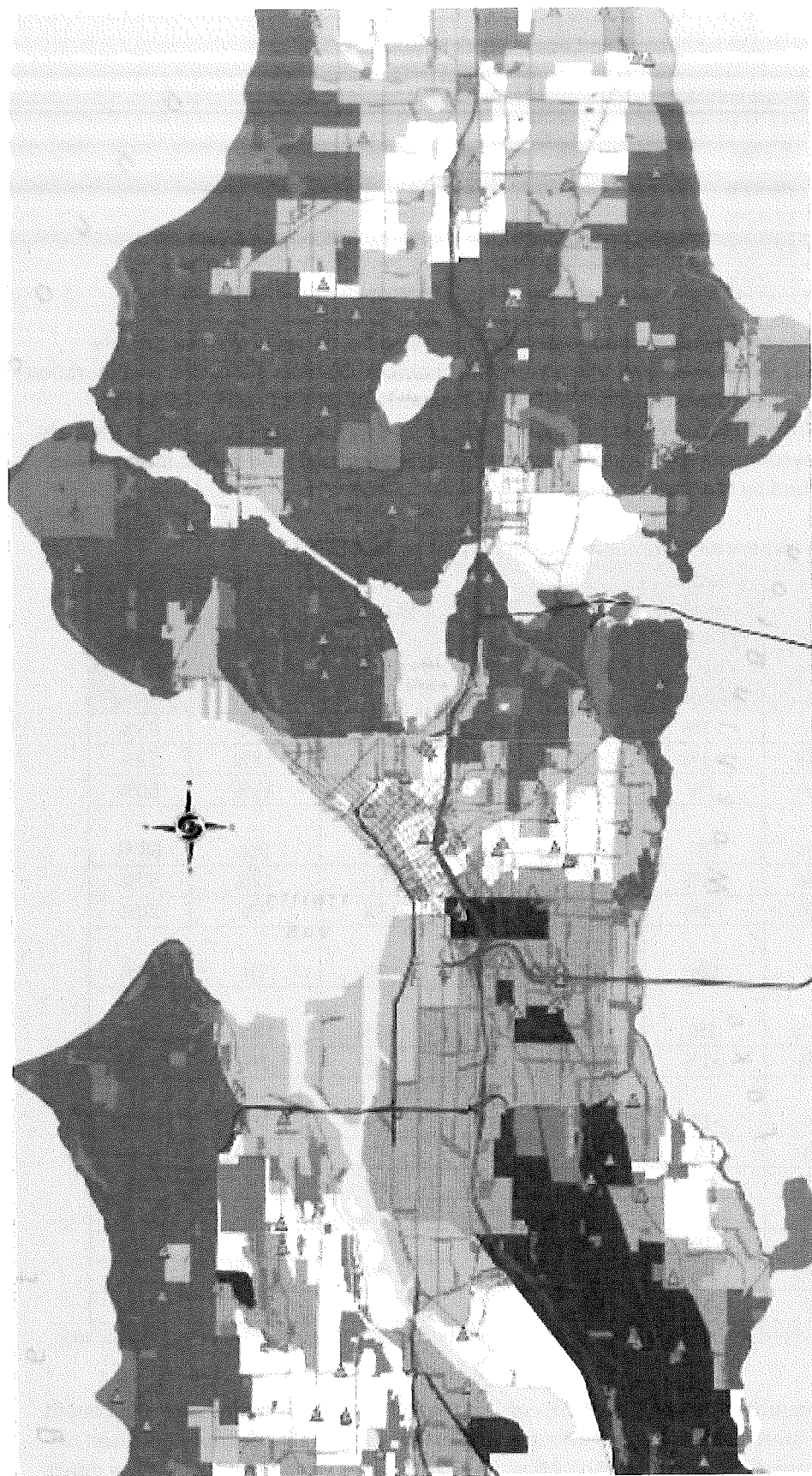
Map 2. 2010 Census Block Group Percent People of Color and NPSF Awarded Projects (2012-2015)

Teal triangles indicate NPSF awarded projects from 2012-2015 mapped to the project location. For projects that spanned one or more blocks, the mid-point of the length of the project was used for mapping purposes.

City Limit

Parks

2010 Census Block Group
People of Color Population Distribution

5% - 19%

20% - 31%

32% - 47%

48% - 66%

67% - 89%

Miles
0   0.3   0.6   0.9   1.2

SDOT
Seattle Department of Transportation

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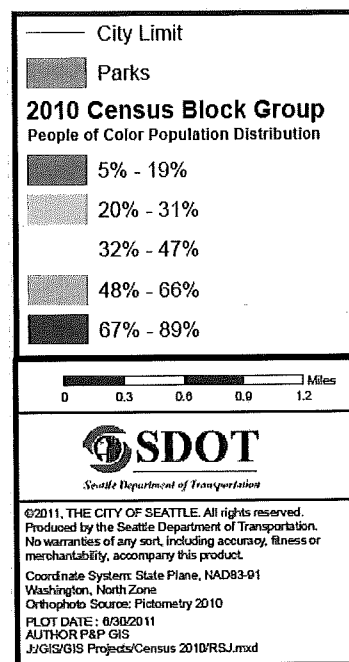J:/GIS/GIS Projects/Census 2010/RSJ.mxd

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Table 1. Number of NPSF Projects (2012-2015) by Percent of Census Block Population

Census Block Group White	Number of Projects	Census Block Group People of Color	Number of Projects
8-35%	13	5-19%	36
36-60%	24	20-31%	24
61-81%	42	32-47%	20
82-96%	46	48-66%	16
		67-89%	14

When considering the racial demographics of the Neighborhood Districts that the projects are broken into for the NPSF—it is important to note the diversity within, between and across Neighborhood Districts. Six of the Neighborhood Districts have populations that are at or under 67% white. Of the eleven Neighborhood District Councils that the department had voluntary sign-in data from 2013, only two had membership that was less than 70% white. A separate analysis focuses on the District Council system; however, the connection to the process and fund here is important as projects are reviewed, rated and prioritized by the District Councils.

Table 2. Neighborhood District by Race (American Community Survey, 5-year series 2009-2013)

Neighborhood District Council	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or more Races	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	White
Ballard	>1%	5%	>1%	>1%	3%	6%	1%	85%
Central Area	>1%	10%	>1%	>1%	7%	6%	18%	59%
Delridge	1%	17%	1%	>1%	5%	11%	15%	50%
Delridge/ Southwest*	0%	11%	0%	0%	5%	7 %	9%	68 %
Downtown	1%	21%	>1%	1%	4%	5%	12%	57%
East	1%	11%	>1%	>1%	4%	7%	7%	70%
East/ Central Area*	>1%	6%	0%	>1%	4%	6%	5%	78%
Greater Duwamish	>1%	41%	1%	0%	4%	12%	18%	24%
Lake Union	1%	12%	>1%	>1%	5%	5%	2%	74%
Magnolia/Queen Anne	>1%	7%	>1%	>1%	3%	4%	3%	82%
North	1%	15%	1%	>1%	4%	7%	6%	67%
Northeast	>1%	14%	>1%	>1%	5%	3%	2%	75%
Northeast/East*	>1%	4%	0%	0%	4%	4%	2%	86%
Northwest	1%	10%	>1%	>1%	5%	7%	3%	74%
Southeast	>1%	25%	1%	>1%	5%	9%	23z%	36%
Southwest	1%	6%	>1%	>1%	4%	5%	2%	83%

* Some ACS census tracts cross multiple Neighborhood District Councils and have been pulled out of either Neighborhood District Council and reported separately.

In general, the equal nature of the distribution of funding for NPSF ensures that all neighborhoods receive and benefit from projects. This equal distribution of funds also places limitations on the extent of equitable distribution based on other considerations. The racial demographics between neighborhoods in Seattle varies significantly, which has direct implications for the racial equity of this process. This variance between neighborhoods alone though does not preclude a process that is dependent on equal funding allocations by geography; however, it does require careful consideration to issues of race, access to processes, resources and opportunity.

2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?
SDOT and DON ran this Racial Equity Toolkit jointly and also included similar elements of the Neighborhood Street Fund (NSF) in the review, although SDOT and DON will conduct a more extensive review of the NSF process separately as well as significant differences in process were highlighted through discussions. DON received feedback from current and former applicants of the process through feedback this year and last year. Notably, DON received feedback from several former and current applicants who have been most successful at receiving an award through the NPSF that the current system is neither accessible nor equitable.

Much of the feedback that was gathered from applicants focused on the lack of clarity and consistency that is pervasive in the current review process. One of the most successful applicants who has had a number of projects funded through this process stated that if their project did get awarded they "probably wouldn't be upset and say the process works well." This is a common refrain heard from applicants; however, even those that are successful have expressed genuine frustration with the cumbersome and convoluted process. The same applicant cited above was also able to describe the differences in the review process that applicants experience from District Council to District Council. This is a subject of much conversation—the weight that local context and processes should play in these community grant review processes. Another applicant organization that has had numerous projects funded through the process, described the current process as a "popularity contest," while another expressed frustration with the feeling that only "pet projects" of District Councils are chosen.

In addition to feedback gathered from past applicants and awardees, Neighborhood District Coordinators input was gathered through a focus group discussion and survey. Additionally, three former members of the Bridging the Gap Levy Oversight Committee who were involved in the Neighborhood Street Fund were surveyed to gather input for their perspective on the review process.

Outcomes of this analysis would need further engagement around the review process. If the current review process is no longer used in the future, we would want to work with community organizations, individuals and groups to roll out a new process. Depending on the model that is pursued, continued engagement, communications and potentially running another toolkit on the proposed review process would ensure that the new proposal was achieving the racial equity outcomes stated earlier.

2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people's lives and should be taken into consideration?
The NPSF was established in 1999 under a construct that, while still in existence and used occasionally, is not relevant to much of the city or its residents. Created to implement prioritized major maintenance projects identified in neighborhood plans, the NPSF is in need of a new outcome. If the intent of the fund is to allow all community members an opportunity to weigh in on capital projects that they will be able to see directly implemented in their neighborhoods, the current process can be seen to be only moderately successful at best from a racial equity perspective. As the data shows, while improvements may be equally distributed across Seattle's Neighborhood District Councils, who benefits from these improvements is not.

Conversations with stakeholders and even a basic analysis of the current process also highlights that the current process is very singular in focus, for better or worse. One individual can propose an idea that is then vetted and voted on by a small handful of individuals from a District Council. All projects must go through a District Council which serves as a key part of the prioritization and selection process. From 2012 through 2015, 277 individuals submitted an application for an NPSF project and of these 277 individuals, 71 submitted more than one application. Over the same time period, more than $6.8 million was allocated and spent on these projects through NPSF.

2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?
There are several causes and factors creating racial inequities within the program. Although less pertinent as the NPSF funds relatively concentrated and largely transportation-related infrastructure improvements, the neighborhood-based approach to the process essentially restricts non-geographically based communities or issue-based groups from being competitive with an application much in the same way as is present in the Large Project Fund through the Neighborhood

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Matching Fund. Projects are vetted through a community review process that is run entirely through the District Councils. This District Council system is the focus of another racial equity toolkit and the root causes and factors that are described there are relevant to this analysis.

Additionally, the allocation of the funding for the NPSF program can also be viewed as a root cause of these inequities. Equal funding by Neighborhood District will have obvious implications for creating a racially equitable outcome as the data shows that there is huge variance between Neighborhood Districts. Since the current system does not have any firm requirements or criteria around equity when rating applications, there is nothing in the process to mitigate the potential risks to racially equitable outcomes. Equal funding by geography does not necessarily mean that the process will be inherently inequitable; however, there need to be elements of the review process that weigh or prioritize equity in order to ensure that the process does not have racially disparate impacts.

Finally, the current process is resource and time intensive for a limited group of individuals. The current process is very much centered around individuals within the process—both the applicant, the review team, and the City. Given the limited staff capacity on the program, there is a lack of opportunity for others to engage with and in the process that are not already aware of the District Councils and the NPSF or are engaged by the District Councils through inclusive engagement.

Determining Benefit and/or Burden and Strategies to Minimize Harm
3. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?
There is a burden of process as currently designed that acts as a barrier for many to participate. Many first time applicants are turned off of the process after one round through the review process as there is a perception that the current process is more of a "popularity contest" than based on any defined criteria. It should be noted that this perception of personal or political interests dominating the process are not limited to the NPSF—this is feedback that DON has also received regarding the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. Across both funds this acts a barrier to participation for many who have submitted or who will not submit an application restricting the full potential participation.

Tied to the burdensome process and in response to the current design, outreach is limited to a relatively small group of individuals as the process is dictated by individual applicants and not a more community-driven process for identifying infrastructure needs or opportunities. This has the effect of reducing the reach and quality of outreach that can be done as the current process requires intensive engagement for someone unfamiliar with the process to submit an application and go through the nine-month review process. Outreach for the process is also focused largely through the District Council framework since the District Councils are integral to the review and prioritization process. This limits the outreach and engagement that is focused on other community organizations and groups that are not part of the District Council system, helping to keep the NPSF to a limited amount of individuals.

The current process also requires applicants to have identified an issue and provide a detailed level of information about where and exactly what the problem is. It also requires applicants have some knowledge of the type of improvement that could be made, or the time and knowledge to contact SDOT, Parks or DON to discuss the problem and then potentially be referred to the NPSF program if another solution is not available. This all requires a great amount of expertise, government process knowledge, and time that many people do not have to dedicate. The burden of process and proof is currently largely on the community or individual to identify problems and have knowledge of the resource.

4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity?
Program Strategies:
- One of the challenges of this analysis was a lack of demographic data on program applicants and participants. Increased use of voluntary data collection methods to better understand who is utilizing the NPSF program will help identify populations that are not currently participating or are underrepresented through this process.

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Collecting more data on applicants and where projects are implemented will also help program staff assess the efficacy of proposed changes as well as retool or refocus outreach efforts.

- Assess the current community review model and develop other options that would increase participation of community members. One potential model for this could be the participatory budgeting model that was successfully piloted this year. A separate toolkit assessed the pilot program's effectiveness at increasing participation of youth of color in the process and found that the program was successful at doing so.

- Review the application form to reframe information collected to focus on outcomes rather than problems or solutions. This will help reduce inequities that arise from knowledge of processes or technical expertise between individuals and communities.

Policy Strategies:
- Reassess the original intent of the fund to implement priority projects identified through neighborhood plans. This is not consistently applied currently and all neighborhoods do not currently have neighborhood plans. Reviewing and redefining the purpose of the fund will help create clarity around desired outcomes as well for the program. As a policy, reviewing the founding goals or outcomes of community grant funds (and other programs that provide resources to communities) to ensure that they still make sense is recommended.

- Part of the challenge with the NPSF is the inconsistency between review processes, making it difficult to even assess the program's outcomes uniformly as there is variance between practice between District Councils. Establishing a uniform set of criteria for assessment would help address issues of inequity between review processes. When establishing these criteria or rating tools, a racial equity toolkit will be applied to understand and mitigate any potential racially inequitable impacts.

Partnership Strategies:
- Regardless of other process changes, DON, in partnership with SDOT and Parks, should develop a new outreach strategy for raising awareness about this program specifically with racial and ethnic groups that have been underserved by this program and particularly in areas of the city where projects have been heavily concentrated in heavily white areas. Doing targeted outreach in these areas and building off of existing relationships that the department(s) may already have with communities and organizations in these areas will help to increase awareness with a goal of increasing the number of applications that are yielded.

Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability
5. How will you evaluate and be accountable?
The first step we will take is to collect more data around participation to be able to better track program participation moving forward. This will help us develop metrics around participation and outcomes to better understand how successful outreach activities are as well as how successful applicants are through the process by demographic. Additionally, we will need to continue tracking where projects are implemented over time and develop a more sophisticated methodology for doing this to help us evaluate what communities are directly benefitting from the projects that are implemented through this process.

Any change to the community review process will be assessed separately as well to compare participation rates between the two models. DON will continue to review and aggregate data about the existing model to develop a baseline for comparison. Data collection and demographic analysis was a large part of the participatory budgeting pilot this year and helped the program address issues around program design and outreach mid-stream which would be a useful tool to have for this program.

5b. What is unresolved?

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Several issues were brought up through this analysis that merit further discussion, analysis and action. Perhaps the most significant of these issues is the onus of outreach for individual projects.

6. Share analysis and report responses from Step 5 with Department Leadership and Change Team Leads or the RSJI Subcabinet and members involved in Step 1.