



## City Neighborhood Council

November 24, 2014

Mayor Ed Murray, 600 4th Ave 7th Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104  
**VIA EMAIL**

### **Re: CNC Response to Department of Neighborhoods (DoN), Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) Advisory Committee's Large Projects Fund (LPF) Proposed Recommendations**

Dear Mayor Murray:

On October 27, the City Neighborhood Council (CNC) was briefed on the Department formed, Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) Advisory Committee's Large Projects Fund (LPF) and Small Sparks Fund proposed recommendations released on October 3, 2014. Several points were conveyed:

1. DoN formed a Neighborhood Matching Fund Advisory Committee that began meeting in January 2014;
2. The Department's stated goal was to make improvements to the NMF - Large Project Fund application process;
3. The primary scope of work was to determine how to implement Citywide, non-geographically based project applications as part of the NMF Large Project Fund process;
4. Survey tool results were used as a basis for advisory committee discussions;
5. A copy of Resolution 27709, defining the duties of the Office of the Neighborhoods and function of the CNC and Neighborhood District Councils, (NDC) was not provided for member consideration during DoN NMF Advisory Committee deliberations;
6. The DoN NMF Advisory Committee discussed several options including the reduction of scoring values between the Citywide Review Team (CRT), a committee of the CNC, and District Council Review Team, (DCRT) existing NMF LPF review panels;
7. At the October 1, 2014 DoN NMF Advisory Committee meeting, 6 members in attendance were in support of the proposed outcome noted below:
  - a. Proceed to implement Citywide, non-geographically based applications for the NMF Large Projects Fund process;
  - b. Goal accomplished by discontinuing local, District Council level reviews and scoring of Large Project Fund applications, the CRT would become the only scoring panel;
  - c. Increase cap on Small Sparks Fund to \$2000
8. As of the October 27 CNC meeting, the Department of Neighborhoods, along with a representative from the DoN NMF Advisory Committee, were still in the process of briefing District Councils, DoN had not yet taken a position on these recommendations;
9. Per the attached overview provided by the Department, the timeline for possible adoption of any DoN NMF Advisory Committee's proposed recommendations was in November to coincide with the 2015 NMF Large Projects Fund cycle

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At the October 27 and November 24 CNC meetings, several concerns were voiced, noted below:

1. **Proposed Timeline:** The CNC and District Councils have not been afforded a similar timeframe of 9 months to discuss and review potential impacts in the DoN NMF Advisory Committee's proposal;
2. **Surveys:** An independent survey is recommended to obtain broader feedback on proposed changes;
3. **Implementation of Citywide, non-geographically based projects:** this use of NMF LPF funds has not been widely supported and in the current proposal, this action occurs **at the expense of the review and scoring** at the local District Council level, a significant departure from the duties of the District Councils established by Resolution 27709;
4. **Possible non-compliance:** Resolution 27709 - establishing the duties of the Department, CNC and District Councils; and Attachment A; Section 3; Part b – “**review and make recommendations regarding City budget issues including the general fund, capital and block grant budgets and the Neighborhood Matching Fund**”;
5. **Reduction of public review and oversight:** from approximately 60 review members down to 20;
6. **District Council actions:** Several are in the process of drafting letters;
7. **Citywide Review Team (CRT):** is a committee of the CNC and therefore, changes to the NMF review process must also be thoroughly reviewed, vetted and approved by the CNC
8. **DoN NMF Advisory Committee Meetings:** The CNC was not formally involved in discussions

The CNC recognizes the amount of work done by DoN Staff and volunteers to form a new NMF Advisory Committee to develop proposed recommendations over the past 10 months. The CNC NMF Oversight Committee reduced its work schedule for several months in 2014 to avoid duplicating volunteer resources and also reached out to the Department and the Mayor's office to further understand the implications of the formation of the DoN NMF Advisory Committee.

The CNC responds to the DoN NMF Advisory Committee's proposed recommendations by urging:

- a) That no action is taken on this proposal for 2015 or future NMF LPF review cycles;
- b) That prior to any NMF LPF process changes, the CNC / District Councils and DoN jointly review this proposal and also revisit Department initiated process changes dating back to 2012, which may have contributed to the sharp decline in applications to the NMF Large Projects Fund

Thank you for considering the City Neighborhood Council's comments and recommended next steps. We look forward to hearing from you in December and to a broader, joint discussion on NMF Large Projects Fund recommendations reflected in the October 3 proposal and a review of prior Department initiated NMF LPF process changes in the immediate future.

Sincerely,



Laine Ross, CNC Co-Chair



Alexis Gallegos, CNC Co-Chair

C: Deputy Mayor Hyeok Kim, DoN Director Bernie Matsuno, Seattle City Council

This matter was discussed at the CNC's November 24, 2014 meeting where this letter was approved.

Recommended Change	Background and Rationale
<p><b>Small Sparks: Award Amount</b> Increase up to \$2,000 per project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by the NMF Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Supported by <b>82%</b> of 2014 survey respondents (146 total respondents)</li> </ul> <p><b>Small Sparks Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased award amount from \$650 to \$1,000 in 2010</li> <li>• Funding parameter for project types and applicants would remain consistent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large Projects Fund</b> Require only Citywide Review Team to review all LPF applications (both geographic based and non-geographic based applicants/projects)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by the NMF Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Supported by 43% of 2014 NMF survey respondents (148 total respondents) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 42% of survey respondents indicated that this change would allow for <b>District Councils to maintain their role</b> through their CRT representative</li> <li>○ 88% of survey respondents indicated that this change would create a <b>consistent process</b> where all LPF applications will be reviewed by the same review team</li> <li>○ 67% of survey respondents indicated one review team would be a <b>simpler review process</b> to administer and understand</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Would reduce the number of volunteers required to serve as review team members from 85+ to only 17 members—which reduces the significant level of planning and coordination required</li> </ul> <p>The District Council role in LPF review process will be maintained through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a CRT representative; participating in CNC approval of CRT members</li> <li>• Participating in CNC approval of CRT award recommendations</li> <li>• Requesting DC to provide letter of support or complete LPF form outlining their support for LPF project in their geographic or legislative district?</li> <li>• Invite DCs and community members to LPF Open Houses</li> </ul> <p><b>LPF Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 77% of 2013 NMF survey respondents supported allowing non-geographic based groups to be eligible to apply for Large Projects Fund.</li> <li>• Non-geographic based applicants includes groups that focus on youth, homeless, ethnicity, culture, refugee/immigrants, disability, gender, race, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rationale</b> for expanding the LPF funding opportunity to non-geographic based applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-geographic based projects and applicants have been eligible for Small and Simple and Small Sparks Fund since 2002</li> <li>• Creates consistency and equity for all community groups in Seattle</li> <li>• NMF funding remains in Seattle and benefits the City of Seattle</li> <li>• NMF funding parameters remain the same—support community building projects</li> <li>• Provides greater consistency in types of eligible projects across the 3 NMF funds</li> </ul>

## Timeline

- October 2014      Outreach—NMF Advisory Committee recommendations will be shared with:
- DON Director presented by NMF Advisory Committee members and NMF staff
  - District Councils presented by NMF Advisory Committee members
  - Mayor and City Council presented by DON Director
- November 2014      DON Director Decision on 2015 Recommendations  
Internal planning for implementation of any approved program enhancements
- December 2014      Release of 2015 NMF Program Guidelines, Deadlines, and Applications reflecting any approved policy changes.

## NMF Advisory Committee Recommendation Meeting

Held October 1, 2014

Members Present:    Janis Traven, Kristin Anderson, Carol Burton, Ben Grace, Richard Nelson, Stephanie Johnson Toliver

### Overview of Meeting:

- Reviewed 2014 NMF Survey results
- Discussed and developed NMF Advisory committee recommendations
- Developed outreach plan to share NMF Advisory Committee recommendations with their respective District council