

Frequently Asked Questions about the Neighborhood Street Fund

What is the Neighborhood Street Fund (NSF)?

The Neighborhood Street Fund is a program to fund community identified and prioritized neighborhood transportation projects. The Bridging the Gap transportation levy passed by voters last November includes an additional \$4.5 million over three years for the Neighborhood Street Fund Program; this funds the Large Projects. This is in addition to the \$1.2 million available for the 2008 Small Projects.

I am familiar with the NSF from past years, what is different about this year?

There are two new goals for the NSF program this year: to conduct broader, more inclusive outreach, and to build larger projects. New to the NSF is a Large project selection process.

What outreach was done this year?

DON and SDOT are committed to increasing the number and diversity of citizens who participate in the NSF process and have taken several steps to support this goal including:

- DON mailed invitations to participate to over 1,500 community contacts, including groups such as immigrant and refugee communities and mutual aid organizations, as well as the traditional district and community councils.
- Once the invitations were mailed, staff made follow up calls to groups who had not participated in the past to encourage their participation and offer assistance.
- This summer we will continue our efforts to increase participation and broaden involvement by engaging with the immigrant, refugee, and other groups to create a dialogue around transportation problems and solutions through such means as focus groups, presentations, festivals, etc.

This outreach was in addition to SDOT and DON presenting at CNC, District Council, and District Coordinator meetings to provide information on the process.

As a result of the expanded outreach, DON received **over 500 project applications**, significantly more than the approximately 100-125 received in the past.

What is the difference between a Large Project and a Small Project?

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) reviews each application to determine which category of funding is most appropriate.

Small NSF Projects have an anticipated cost of \$100,000 or less and generally take one year to complete. Some past examples include: 1 block of sidewalk, a traffic circle, or several curb bulbs at one intersection. Parks projects are also eligible for this funding category.

Large NSF Projects have an anticipated cost between \$100,000 and \$500,000 and take multiple years to complete. Some potential examples: 2 or more blocks of sidewalk, traffic calming along multiple blocks, or multiple improvements along a corridor (including traffic signals). Only transportation projects are eligible for this funding category.

How will I know if the application I submitted became a Small or Large Project?

SDOT and DON sent letters to project applicants informing them whether their project is Small or Large. If someone submitted more than one application they may receive both a Small and Large project letter.

What about projects that don't fit in either category?

Some of the transportation requests received need to be directed to other agencies (e.g. King County Metro for improved transit service). Others were for items SDOT can install without NSF funding (e.g. bicycle racks). SDOT will be following up individually with the citizens who submitted these types of requests.

What is the NSF Small Project selection process?

The 13 District Councils were provided the list of Small projects from their district. Each Council will identify and submit at least the top 5 Small projects from their district. Depending on the proposal, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) or the Parks Department conducts a feasibility analysis for the 5 highest priority proposals from each district, and then sends the feasible projects with costs estimates back to the District Councils for final ranking. The District Councils then submit their recommended project list to the City for final approval by the Mayor and City Council.

What is the NSF Large Project selection process?

This summer the Large project or problem ideas received will be analyzed to determine feasibility and cost. SDOT will prepare project descriptions and cost estimates for those proposals that are feasible and fall within the cost criteria. These proposals will be displayed at Open Houses in September. This will be an opportunity for the public to prioritize the proposals. Based on the prioritization gathered at the Open Houses and other criteria such as safety and geographic equity, a group of citizen volunteers will recommend which projects to fund to SDOT, the Mayor and City Council. This Large Project Review Team will include one representative of each of the 13 districts, plus at-large members.

How Frequently are the Small Project and Large Project Processes Conducted?

Small Project funding is done every year due to the relative ease of design and construction of these projects. These projects are less complex and are typically able to be designed and constructed by SDOT.

Large Project funding is done on a three year cycle as these projects take multiple years to design and build. These projects are bigger, more complex and, generally, are built by outside contractors. Before this funding was available, larger projects have not been funded, or have been funded in phases.

Large Project Timeline:

2007: Selection of projects that total approximately \$4.5 million, distributed equitably across the North, Central and South areas of the city (generally north of the Ship Canal, Between the Ship Canal and I-90, and south of I-90).

2008, 2009: Design and construct projects

2009: Conduct the next round of Large project identification and prioritization process.

How will citizens know what happened to their project ideas?

At the Open Houses in September, citizens will be able to see how each of the projects submitted was addressed.

You received a large number of applications, what will happen to project ideas that are not funded?

DON and SDOT received over 500 applications demonstrating a strong demand for community transportation projects. Unfortunately we cannot fund them all this year. The projects not ultimately selected for funding will be retained for possible funding consideration next year, and for other possible funding opportunities that may arise.

