

Program Guide

Overview

The Neighborhood Improvements Funding Initiative (NIFI) is a one-time, Board of Supervisors' initiative to direct FY16 fund balance to drive investment in quality of life projects across the County's Development Areas through an inclusive, community-driven process. The total budget for NIFI is \$1.4 million.

The Board of Supervisors at the February 1 meeting approved phase I of NIFI, project identification and prioritization. The Board requested that staff bring the prioritized project lists from each Community Advisory Committee (CAC)-area to their May 3 meeting, at which time funding allocation between the CAC-areas would be considered. This Program Guide focuses on Phase I. More information will be provided on Phase II as it is available.

Program Goal

Create an opportunity to fund smaller scale neighborhood improvements (one-time capital investments) that benefit place-making and/or quality of life, focused on immediate small scale "built environment" projects or schematic design efforts that position a project to be considered for full funding as part of the established CIP review process.

Program Principles

- Transparent, fair, equitable, and inclusive process
- CACs perform a critical role as conduits to the community/broader community input is critical
- Projects/ideas should be consistent with master plans and broader Comp Plan; consideration will be given to projects that could/will leverage other funding sources; projects should have a clear public benefit; projects can be small capital improvements or planning/design studies
- The initiative is a one-time pilot

Process

Each CAC will be matched with a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to manage meetings pertaining to NIFI in order to ensure CAC members can fully engage in the discussion. Facilitators trained by the Community Relations office will ensure that all CAC's use the same process and receive the same information.

February 23 – Orientation for CAC members. Staff convenes all CAC members to orient them on the process for identifying and prioritizing projects and advise on CAC members' role in NIFI as conduits for a broad, community-driven process. Staff will provide lists of projects already identified in master plans, the Capital Improvement Plan, and transportation priority lists at that time, as well as general guidance on costs/timelines for various project types and considerations for evaluating projects (consistency with the Master Plan, ability to get grant or other funding, etc.)

March CAC meetings – Brainstorm project ideas, using the project lists as a starting point. An online opportunity to provide feedback and a push for community members to attend will supplement this in the week preceding the meeting.

April CAC meetings – Begin to prioritize project ideas – which ones seem to have the strongest support among your community. An online opportunity to provide feedback and a push for community members to attend will supplement this in the week preceding the meeting. Two-pronged prioritization for \$-projects and >\$- projects.

May 3 – Staff bring all of the prioritized lists to the Board of Supervisors for them to react to and consider funding allocation options.

Phase II will follow per Board direction.

Guiding Principles for Project Evaluation

These principles should be considered in April, during project prioritization.

- Conformity with the Comprehensive Plan
- Conformity with the Master Plan
- Conformity with the Board's FY17-19 Strategic Plan
- Strong community support
- Clear public benefit
- Leverage matching funds (Revenue Sharing, grants, etc.)
- Leverage existing resources (connect existing trails, sidewalks, etc.)
- Feasibility of project

Project Considerations

Installation/Construction Costs

- Contingency issues
 - Unsuitable soils
 - Unforeseen existing conditions
 - Bid prices higher than estimates
- Right of Way/Easements needed
- Utility conflicts/impacts
- Maintenance needs

Pedestrian/Bike/Road Improvements

- VDOT procedures and constraints for what is allowable
- Right of Way needs (see below)
- Utility conflicts/impacts

Planning/Design Efforts

- Could help position project for other funding sources (see below)
- Longevity of plan– environment changes impact plans, might need to be re-done at a later date
- No guarantee of future funding through CIP or other funding source

Right of Way / Land Acquisition

- Land values
- Time/effort for negotiation with landowners
- Obtaining land donations can be time-consuming – over 4 years for the Crozet Streetscape

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Process

- Annual Planning and Budgeting Process
- Technical Review Committee ranks all project requests against existing BOS-approved CIP criteria. Only top ranked projects typically funded.
- Biennial planning process, accepting new requests every other year. Next full request cycle is FY19.

Other Funding Sources

- VDOT Programs
 - Smart Scale
 - Next application period is in CY18/FY19, for funding likely in CY23
 - Revenue Sharing
 - 2+ years before funding is available for project to begin
 - Transportation Alternatives
 - Bike/ped or streetscape improvements
 - Application in Fall CY2017, funding available in CY2018
- See Grant Guide

FAQs

Is NIFI an annual program?

No. At this time, the Board has directed that this will be a one-time program.

What types of projects are eligible for funding through NIFI?

Neighborhood improvements that benefit place-making and/or quality of life, focused on immediate small scale “built environment” projects, planning documents, or schematic design efforts that position a project to be considered for full funding as part of the established CIP or other funding review process.

What types of projects not eligible for funding through NIFI?

Anything with ongoing funding needs is not eligible. Board policy states that one-time funds must be used for one-time costs, usually capital costs. Examples of ongoing funding needs include hiring staff, creating or supporting a program, or creating a new service (for example, curbside recycling pick-up or new transit lines). Events are also not eligible under NIFI.

What is the role of the CAC?

The role of the CAC is to serve as the venue for this community-driven process. CAC members will communicate to their constituencies (neighbors and colleagues) about NIFI, upcoming CAC meetings, and online opportunities to provide feedback during the process.

How much money is available for projects?

The total budget for NIFI projects is \$1.4 million. The Board of Supervisors will consider how these funds will be allocated between the Community Advisory Committee areas at its May 3 meeting. Focus first on identifying community priorities!

Program Contact

At CAC meetings, the facilitator assigned to the CAC will be the point of contact. Between meetings, please contact Emily Kilroy and copy the facilitator assigned to your CAC.

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