Community Fund: FAQ

Who is eligible to submit an idea?

If a community member is interested in submitting an idea for the Community Fund, the below requirements must be met:

- Community member must live, work, or go to school in the City of Auburn
- The project must fall within the Valley geographic (North Auburn, South Auburn, Plateau) area of Auburn (see attached map at end of document), and be on City-owned property
- If community members submitting the ideas/s are from the community area, that community member must be willing to support efforts to outreach to other members of the community about the project or submit another community member who will do this outreach
- Project idea must be open to all residents, including young people between the ages of 12 to 18 and senior citizens. Membership fees, or comparable devices, cannot be used to restrict any resident within the designated area from voicing thoughts on matters concerning the Community Project

If the applicant is a for-profit organization or business, they must demonstrate that they are working to benefit the community. Examples of demonstrating this include a certain portion of profits going to a charity, payment of livable wage to all employees, investment in the health of the community targeted by the project, 35% of occupants paying rent with HUD assistance or a voucher, etc.

Who is responsible for maintenance/continuity should the project require it?

Projects requiring ongoing maintenance will not be considered without a maintenance plan being presented and agreed upon by all affected parties. Should the project require ongoing maintenance and is on public property (for example, a City Park, city-owned parcel of land, etc.) the City will handle maintenance costs.

How big (or small) should project ideas be?

The budget for this program is small. However, since we are just in the idea gathering stage, we don't really want to limit your creativity! Throw your ideas out there and we'll see what we can do. When we get to the voting stage, we will be presenting feasible options/projects to the community to vote on.

What is the maximum amount an idea can be eligible for?

The budget for the Community Fund is $25,000. During the voting process the cost of the idea will be shown. So, a community could have one big project, or multiple small ones.

What types of projects can be submitted?

This program is meant to fund fun projects that help you as residents feel connected to where you live. Here are some concrete examples we came up with but these are just ideas, please do feel free to submit your own!

Little Free Library: these small boxes provide communal areas where residents can share books (and DVDs, food, etc...anything you put in there really!)
Community Garden: these have so many benefits, it's hard to list them all.
Park refurbishment: is there a small neighborhood park in your area that needs a little love? Let us know!

What is the difference between the Community Fund and the Matching Grant program?

The Matching Grant program is a long-established program here in Auburn. In this program, residents initiate the projects, manage, and complete them. Due to some of the restrictions placed on the City as a government entity, the Grant funds have quite a few limitations. For example, the City has to partner with an incorporated entity (i.e. an organization that has a tax ID) on these projects. This often meant that HOAs applied for these funds, leaving out those neighborhoods in Auburn without HOAs. Additionally, the community applying for the Grant has to pay for the project entirely up front and be reimbursed by the City's Grant program. This means that those neighborhoods that can't get the cash together for the project up front can't apply for the Grant.

By contrast, the Community Fund projects will be managed by the City (with participation from residents). By doing this, the City can partner with residents anywhere in Auburn (not just with an incorporated entity). This will also mean the City can pay for the project up front, making this option better for those communities without cash reserves on hand. Another important piece of the Community Fund is that this is for underserved and underrepresented communities in the Valley and Plateau area of Auburn. Historically we have seen how funding and programming has not been tailored for communities in these areas of Auburn, so the Community Fund was designed for reaching those areas.

At the end of the day, each program has its value and place and we hope that a combination of the two will mean funds are available to complete fun neighborhood projects for everyone in Auburn.

Why are you looking for projects specifically in the Valley area of Auburn?

We used demographic and economic status data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to identify low to moderate income areas within Auburn. Through this process, we identified focus spots in the Valley and Plateau areas of Auburn that City funding historically has not reached. The intersection of low to moderate income areas of Auburn and communities of color intersected at these areas as well, leading us to specifically center our focus for the Community Fund in these areas. Other communities outside of the Valley area are welcome to apply for community projects using the Matching Grant program (EXTERNAL LINK), but at this point the Community Fund is specifically for communities who live, work, and/or go to school in the Valley and Plateau areas of Auburn.

What is this Fund not intended to be used for?

This project fund is not designed for infrastructure projects. Meaning, we won't be funding street lights, signs, speed bumps, etc. We also will not be funding sidewalk projects. Sidewalk projects can be submitted through SpeakUp Auburn's CDBG Page (EXTERNAL LINK). Other infrastructure projects can be submitted through the See Click Fix page and app (EXTERNAL LINK).

This Fund is also generally not designed to fund projects on properties owned by non-City agencies or by private land owners. This includes property owned by PSE, King or Pierce Counties, WSDOT, etc.

We are not able to fund human services with this funding source. For this type of application, please visit the City of Auburn's Office of Anti-Homelessness Department website (EXTERNAL LINK) to learn more about non-profit funding opportunities for service delivery.

In general, ideas submitted that do not represent the Auburn community are not eligible. Ideas designed to elect candidates to public offices or lobby legislation are not eligible for funding. Ideas that would bar entry (for example – a playground area being enclosed by a gate) are not eligible.

Ideas for religious projects are eligible provided the project does not discriminate against any person because of their religion or give preference or limit services on the basis of religion. The idea cannot provide any religious instruction or engage in any proselytizing while on the project site or while engaged in the business of implementing the project. The project cannot contain religious symbols or decorations other than those permanently affixed to a pre-existing structure or normally and routinely worn as part of the participant's clothing or apparel.

How many ideas can a community member submit?

A community member can submit multiple ideas, provided the projects follow the guidelines, increase the wellness of residents, character of neighborhoods, and promote inclusive participation and service. If you do submit multiple projects, remember that funded projects will need to have local support. So be strategic in the projects you propose!

What are ineligible projects and costs?

The project must be non-profit in nature and must be developed and completed in compliance with city guidelines and requirements. The following are projects and costs that are generally ineligible for funding through the Community Fund:
- Projects that do not comply with City guidelines and requirements.
- Projects outside of Auburn City Limits.
- Infrastructure projects. Sidewalk projects can be submitted through SpeakUp Auburn's CDBG Page (EXTERNAL LINK). Other infrastructure projects can be submitted through the See Click Fix page and app (EXTERNAL LINK).
- Projects on private property.

- Projects consisting of vegetation maintenance including but not limited to invasive species and tree planting or removal. Community gardens may have exemptions for vegetation purposes.
- Ongoing services or programming are not eligible for the Community Fund. Ongoing services are defined as activities and/or products that community groups currently provide without the Community Fund.
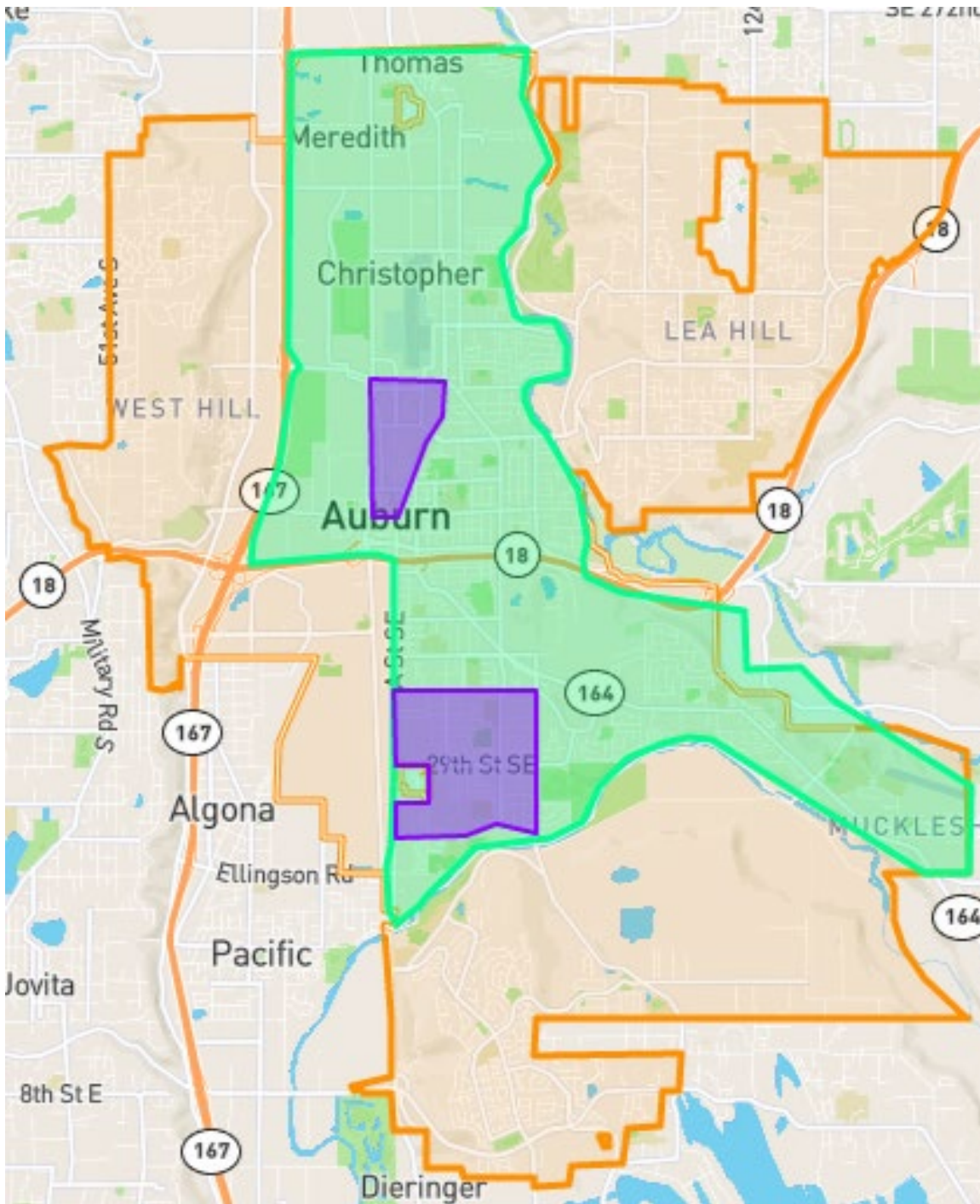
How are the bills paid?

The City will purchase all supplies directly. Any contractors required will be hired by the City and be paid directly for their work as outlined by a contract and corresponding scope of work.

What is the process for selection of projects?

The Neighborhood Programs Coordinator will use a rating system application rubric (EXTERNAL LINK) to determine initial eligibility. Other factors taken into consideration will be timeline (can the project be completed in this calendar year), potential impact on the community (who is being served by this project), and the scope of the project. To see more of the questions that will guide feasibility and eligibility, look at the Community Fund Project Questions document (EXTERNAL LINK).

After the application goes through this process, a team of City staff representing all applicable Departments will review the applications, paying special attention to any permitting requirements or potential concerns from their departments as well as the factors given above. This process will happen after applications close with the goal of selecting applications to be voted on during the summer months. After the City staff have signed off on the project or projects, there will be a voting process to determine what project or projects will be chosen by the community to move forward. During this process, the budget for each submitted idea as well as the overall budget for the Community Fund ($25,000) will be given as info to guide the selection of projects by community members.

For any projects submitted, the Neighborhood Programs Coordinator will provide feedback and/or the rubric and notes from the selection process internally.

Legend:

Orange shaded area - Auburn City Limits

Green shaded area - Community Fund Eligible area

Purple shaded area - Focus areas (#1 and #2)