

Neighborhood Improvement Program Policies and Procedures

Purpose

The City of El Paso's Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) provides the opportunity for Recognized Neighborhood Associations and Civic Associations to request small-scale permanent physical improvement projects to enhance the quality of life in their neighborhoods. The intent is to facilitate an organized process for residents to have direct input on physical improvements in their neighborhood.

Program Coordination

The Community and Human Development Department's Neighborhood Services Division is designated to implement the NIP and is the liaison between neighborhood associations and other City departments throughout the application and implementation process.

Funding

The 2012 Quality of Life Bond included \$10 million for the NIP and funds are to be allocated equally among all the Representative Districts at \$1 million per District and a maximum 20% or \$2 million set-aside for project design and engineering services.

- Requested project cost may range from **\$5,000** to **\$100,000**.
 - Any unallocated funds in a round or remaining funds from an awarded project will roll over to the same District's next round.
- Any unexpended funds from the project design and engineering set-aside will roll over from round to round until the final round.

Total funds per District	# of scheduled rounds per District	Funds available per round for each District
\$1,000,000	10	\$100,000

- Annual funding cycles will be open to all Representative Districts per project round. Each District will participate in ten rounds of NIP at \$100,000 per District per round (plus any roll over funds).

Eligibility

All NIP applications must be submitted by a Recognized Neighborhood Association (RNA) that is in compliance with the City's *Neighborhood Association Recognition Ordinance* (NARO). These groups include:

- **Neighborhood Associations** - organized groups of 15 or more residents with defined neighborhood boundaries.
- **Civic Associations** - organized groups of 100 or more residents with boundaries that cover an entire City Planning Area (i.e. *Central, East, Northeast, Northwest, and Mission Valley*)

Applications

- Applications are competitive among others submitted within the same District.
- Each association may submit no more than 2 applications per round.
- Civic associations may apply for projects on behalf of areas that are not represented by recognized neighborhood associations (Project Support requirements apply).

Eligible Projects

Project feasibility shall be determined by the City department responsible for implementation and maintenance of the completed project based on their policies, regulations and standards. *(Please see Potential Project Types)*

- **Examples of potentially eligible projects are listed below under “Potential Project Types”**

Ineligible Projects

- **NIP may not fund the following types of projects:**
 - Projects on private property
 - Purchase or acquisition of land or other property

Potential Project Types

All project requests will be reviewed by the City and are subject to various federal, state and local regulations. Examples of projects include:

- **Bicycle Amenities** – bike racks; striping of bike paths
- **Crosswalks** – retrofitting existing crosswalks with stamped (decorative) concrete
- **Decorative Street Signs** – street signs for designated historic districts
- **Landscaping** – must be on approved tree, shrub or plant lists; irrigation requirements may affect cost and long-term maintenance
- **Park Amenities** – picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles and playground equipment; specific installations may depend on current availability from vendors
- **Park Lighting** – requires connection to electric conduits
- **Park Signs** – must comply with regulations and be consistent with existing park designs
- **Sidewalks** – limited to connecting or repairing sections of residential sidewalks
- **Streetlights** – requires connection to electric conduits *(Property owners signatures will be required during Phase 3 of the application process.)*
- **Walking Paths/Trails** – existing irrigation and slopes may affect cost and routing
- **Neighborhood Traffic Management** – must have a warranted traffic study from the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) *(Proposed project must be on NTMP waiting list to be considered for NIP.)*

(This is not a comprehensive list of all possible projects. If a proposed project is unique from projects listed, Neighborhood Services will coordinate with appropriate City Department.)

NIP Application and Review Process

Phase 1: Application Submittal

- Applications will be submitted to Neighborhood Services who will verify association recognition status and contact the appropriate City department to determine project feasibility.
 - All project requests must be complete, with supporting documents, by the application submittal deadline.
 - Incomplete or illegible applications will be returned to applicants. (*Applicants may re-submit application, ONLY if it is before the deadline.*)
 - **Please Note:** Neighborhood Services will assist associations with the application process and encourages associations to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline.

Phase 2: Project Feasibility Determination

- Project feasibility shall be determined by the City department responsible for the implementation and/or maintenance of the completed project.
 - Associations with project proposals deemed to be feasible will receive a notice that their applications are moving forward to the Project Design Team for a cost estimate.
 - Associations with project proposals determined to be unfeasible will receive notice that their application will NOT move forward. (*That notification will include an explanation of the determination.*)

Phase 3: Pre-Design Meeting (*Only for projects requiring design*)

- Applicants with projects that require design will be required to attend a pre-design meeting with the responsible City department and Project Design Team to refine the project concept for a cost estimate.
 - Neighborhood Services will coordinate meetings between applicants and City departments.

Phase 4: Neighborhood Improvement Review Committee Recommendation

- The Neighborhood Improvement Review Committee (NIRC), which will consist of City staff from City Development, Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Engineering, and/or Museums and Cultural Affairs, will review the project application, cost estimate and applicant presentation in order to make their recommendations for which projects to send to City Council for final approval.
 - Each project proposal will be scored on a 100-point scale by NIRC members and the average from all reviewers' score sheets will be the final score for each proposal.
 - Applicants will be given an opportunity to speak on behalf of their project proposal in front of the NIRC. (*Presentation guidelines will be given to applicants during this phase.*)
 - Applicants with recommended projects will receive notice that their applications will be presented to City Council for final approval.
 - Applicants with non-recommended projects at this time will receive notice that their project will NOT move forward along with a copy of their scorecard.

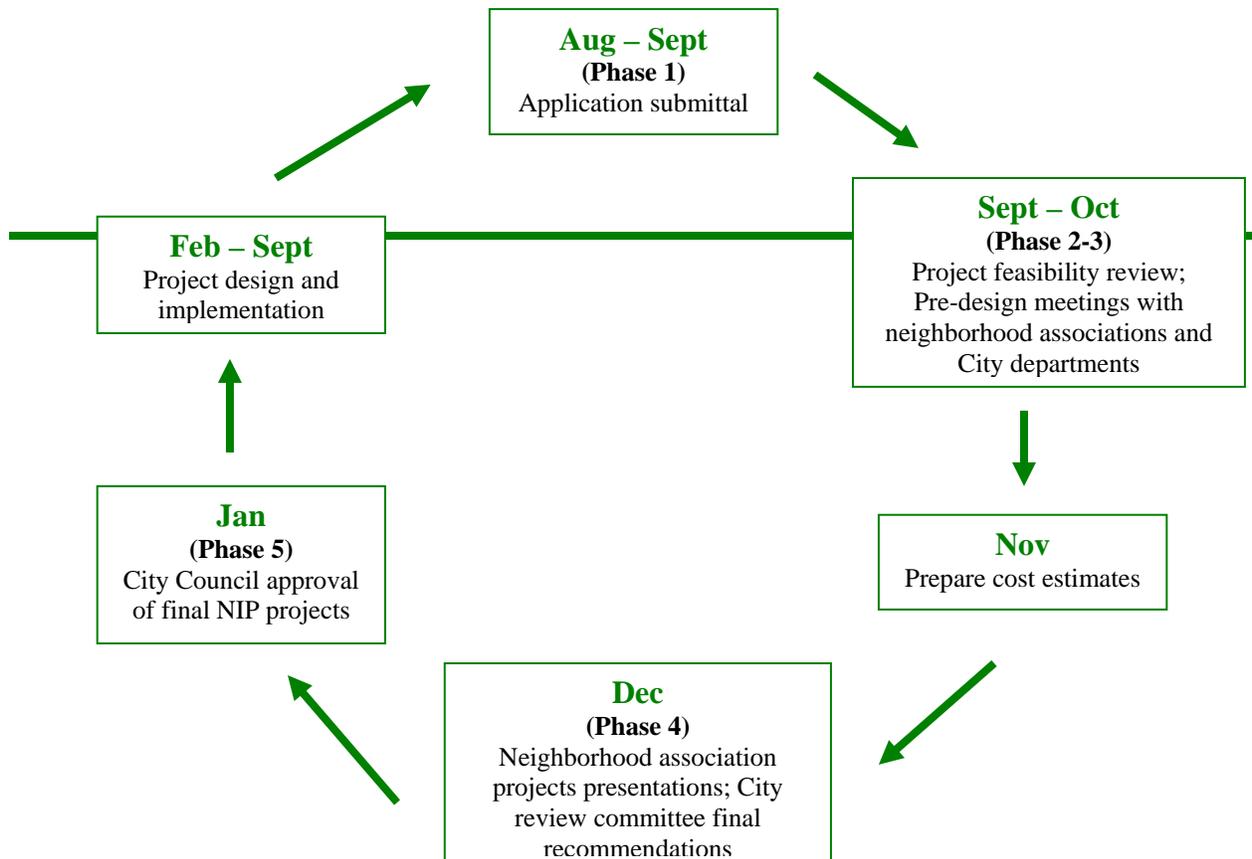
Phase 5: Final City Council Approval

- Final project approval will be determined at a regular meeting of City Council.

Approved NIP Projects and Implementation

- Neighborhood Services will notify associations of the approval of their project proposals and will coordinate with City departments to set up project budgets.
 - Any associations that proposed project leverage in the form of monetary donation will enter into a legally binding commitment and will be given 30-days to deliver the donations to the City.
- Neighborhood Services will meet regularly with the Project Design Team and other City departments to ensure that projects proceed in a timely manner.
 - A Project Design Team will handle all designs and contract bids unless otherwise specified and/or required by a City Department.
 - Projects may be Open Requirement Contracts that combine similar project types.
- Neighborhood Services will coordinate any required meetings between the awarded association and the City department responsible for implementing the project.
 - Associations may be asked to submit signed consent forms during the coordination process and prior to implementation of approved projects (i.e. *Transportation Division requires a Streetlight Petition form; Parks and Recreations Department may require an approval form on park amenities style, color and location*).
- Any remaining funds from a completed project will roll over to the next funded round in that district.

NIP Timeline



General Instructions for NIP Application

Components of Application:

- Representative District**
 - Identify the Representative District where the project will be located.
- Contact Information**
 - Name of associations and a minimum of two (2) points-of-contacts
- Project Type by City Department**
 - General category of project improvement to be implemented by a City department
- Physical Address**
 - Location of requested project (i.e. park name and address; street block)
- Project Goal**
 - One sentence that states main goal of requested project
- Project Description**
 - One to two sentences describing the intended use of the requested project
- Project Background**
 - One to two sentences explaining the need for the requested project and/or how the project will contribute to the enhancement of the neighborhood.
- Project Map**
 - One-page map that is marked with the general location(s) of requested project (i.e. map may be hand-drawn or a print-out of an internet map with hand-drawn marking)
- Project Picture**
 - One-page with 1-4 current photos of the proposed location
 - Digital printouts preferred over actual photograph prints
- Project Illustration**
 - One-page visual of what the association envisions the project to look like if completed or a picture of similar project to replicate (i.e. specific type and color of park amenities; generic design of public art or historic street sign)
- Project Support**
 - Dated petition with a minimum of 15 household signatures that are in close proximity to the proposed project site (If support is gathered digitally or by telephone, a list of resident supporters including addresses and phone numbers may be submitted.)
- Project Leverage (optional)**
 - Statement of monetary donation to contribute to project.
- Date and keep copies of all materials submitted for personal record**

NIP Project Score Card

All NIP applications submitted by neighborhood/civic associations will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- **Project Goal (0-5-points)**
 - How well does the applicant provide a clear & concise goal for proposed project?
- **Project Background (0-10-points)**
 - How well does the applicant describe a significant community need/problem?
- **Project Description (0-10-points)**
 - How well does the applicant clearly describe the project they are requesting?
 - How well does the applicant make a case for how the proposed project will address the stated need/problem?
- **Project Map (0-5-points)**
 - How well does the applicant clearly label the general location(s) of proposed project or proposed project items?
- **Project Picture/Illustration (0-5-points)**
 - How well does the applicant provide a clear picture of what the current site looks like?
 - (If required) How well does the applicant provide a clear illustration of what they envision the project to look like?
- **Neighborhood Support (0-10-points)**
 - How well does the applicant demonstrate community support from the surrounding area?
 - How extensive were the applicant's outreach efforts?
- **Project Leverage (0-5 points)**
 - Has the applicant secured any monetary donations to contribute to the project?
- **Budget (0-15-points)**
 - 15-points, if project cost is below \$25,000
 - 10-points, if project cost is \$25,000 to \$49,999
 - 5-points, if project cost is \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - 0-points, if project cost is \$75,000 or over
- **Technical Merit (0-5-points)**
 - How well did the applicant follow the application instructions & include all the required attachments?
 - How well did the applicant develop their project proposal?
- **Strategic Alignment (0-20-points) - (For City User Department ONLY)**
 - Does the proposed project align with City department's strategic plan, standards or policies?
 - Does this proposed project require low maintenance/upkeep?
 - Is this an appropriate use of NIP funds or are there other funds available? (*i.e. If other funds are available, what is the likelihood and availability of those funds to cover this project?*)
 - Overall, does the City user department support the proposed project?
- **Bonus Merit (0-10-points) - (For Neighborhood Services ONLY)**
 - 10-points, if applicant has never been awarded NIP funds
 - 5-points, if applicant has not been awarded an NIP project in the previous 5 years
 - 0-points, if applicant has been awarded an NIP project less than 5 years prior to the current round.