

**DATE:** December 12, 2024

**TO:** Council Neighborhoods Committee

**FROM:** Julie Barnard Affordable Housing Manager  
Anna Reynoso, Housing Specialist  
Parneet Dhindsa, Human Services Manager  
Kimberly S. Thomas, Deputy City Manager  
Wayne Chen, Housing Director

**SUBJECT:** **2024 Council Neighborhoods Committee Program and 2025-26 Neighborhood Grant Program Guidelines**

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Receive the summary of the 2024 Neighborhood Meetings and Fiscal Year 2023-24 Neighborhood Grant Program.
2. Receive input on and provide staff direction regarding potential modifications to the Neighborhood Grant Program.
3. Preview and provide input on the Council Neighborhoods Committee meetings for calendar year 2025.

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Council Neighborhoods Committee (CNC or Committee) oversees two major programs: the Neighborhood Grant Program (Grant Program) and neighborhood meetings. These programs continue to be popular and appreciated by the community based on feedback received from neighborhood groups. As in the past, this is the last Regular Meeting of the Committee for the 2024 calendar year, which is held to review the activities and outcomes over the past year, and to identify any areas for potential change going forward.

One of the key areas for potential change is related to the eligibility criteria for the Grant Program. In 2024, the Grant Program received a record number of applications from existing and new groups. This was a positive outcome because formation of new groups is a goal of the Grant Program as stated in the Program Guidelines. However, some of the groups proposed new types of activities that they hoped could be funded by the Grant Program. Additionally, some new groups proposed geographic boundaries that overlapped with existing groups. This raised

questions about program eligibility and criteria that have not been encountered before. During the April CNC grant review meeting and the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget process, staff noted that this item would be brought to the CNC for further deliberation during this last meeting. This will be discussed further below.

### **SUMMARY OF THE 2024 NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS**

There are seven neighborhood areas in the City (six geographically based neighborhoods and one for mobile home park residents, based on the type of housing). Neighborhood meetings are held in each area every two years.

In 2024, the Committee held three neighborhood meetings and one meeting for mobile home park residents, as shown in Table 1. Approximately 109 community members in total attended the four meetings, for an average of approximately 27 attendees per meeting. Dozens of questions were submitted by residents/attendees before and during each meeting.

**Table 1: 2024 Neighborhood Meetings**

DATE	NEIGHBORHOOD AREA	ATTENDANCE
May 15, 2024	Grant Road Sylvan Area	30
June 13, 2024	San Antonio Rengstorff Del Medio	27
September 25, 2024	Monta Loma Farley Rock Street	31
October 10, 2024	Mobile Home Parks	21
	Total Attendees	109

### **SUMMARY OF THE 2024 NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT PROGRAM AND APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Neighborhood Grant Program aims to provide some financial support to neighborhood groups for carrying out programs and activities that encourage participation, strengthen neighborhoods, and improve neighborhood conditions. There is no formal process for a group to be established, and these groups may be formed without City involvement. Rather, the City recognizes the groups once they are granted funds. Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to, block parties, holiday celebrations, and other social events. Many neighborhood groups also utilize grant funds for newsletters, website domains, and Zoom subscriptions. Per the current Guidelines, “neighborhood associations” or “groups” can be formal or informal if the grant proposal builds community and enhances the neighborhood. See Attachment 1 for the current Guidelines and the eligibility criteria are listed later in this memorandum.

## 2024 Process

- The application period opened on March 1, 2024 and applications were due by March 31, 2024. During the application period, there were two Grant Preparation Calls held to assist grant applicants with the process. One call was held on March 13, 2024 and another on March 19, 2024. Both calls had interpretation in Spanish and Chinese available. The allocated budget amount was \$40,000. Note that during its meeting held on December 7, 2023, the Committee discussed increasing the neighborhood grant program to \$50,000 on an ongoing basis due to continued increased interest for the funding and the potential for new neighborhood groups to form and hold activities. The Housing Department included the Committee's request for an additional \$10,000 in the "base budget" as part of the department's Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget request. This was ultimately approved when Council adopted the City's Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget on June 25, 2024. However, at the time of the application period was opened, the additional funding had not yet been approved; therefore, the available funding was \$40,000.<sup>1</sup>
- The number of applications for the Grant Program has expanded considerably over the past two years. In 2023, 21 applications were received which was an increase from the 17 applications received in 2022. This year, a total of 29 neighborhood groups applied for a total requested budget amount of \$58,579, exceeding the \$40,000 budget. Staff made recommendations to fund 28 of the applicants at a reduced award amount (68% of their funding requests). This included new applicants who were in neighborhoods contained within currently funded groups and special-interest groups. One applicant, an HOA, was deemed ineligible and was not recommended for funding because HOAs are expressly excluded from the program per the program guidelines. The current guidelines are not explicit regarding the eligibility of the other new groups. This greater number of applicants led to some groups that had previously received funding to express concerns about the program guidelines and eligibility criteria.
- At the CNC meeting held on April 17, 2024, the Committee awarded grants to 24 neighborhood groups. The Committee did not recommend four applicants for funding because they determined that they did not meet the eligibility criteria. The total funding request from the 24 eligible neighborhood groups was \$50,813.

The \$50,000 budget aligned closely with the \$50,813 funding request made by the 24 recommended applicants, and the grant amounts were reduced slightly to align with the budget as shown in Table 2 below.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that over the past few years, per three budget increases recommended by the CNC, the Grant Program budget has increased from \$30,000 to \$50,000 (an initial 10% increase from \$30,000 to \$33,000; a second increase from \$33,000 to \$40,000; and the third increase from \$40,000 to \$50,000) for the purposes of supporting existing associations and the formation of new ones.

A preliminary budget request for \$50,000 in Fiscal Year 2025-26 grant funding has been developed to fund the current level of program enrollment. Staff is also recommending an additional \$7,500 in pilot funding to create space for the Committee to fund new groups that may apply, without a need to reduce the funding for existing groups or to place existing groups and new groups into competition with each other. It will also be helpful to clarify existing program guidelines regarding what types of neighborhood-based groups are eligible.

**Table 2: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Neighborhood Grant Program Summary**

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP	TIER AND MAXIMUM ELIGIBILITY	AMOUNT REQUESTED	TOTAL GRANT AWARD (2024-25)
Blossom Valley	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
<b>CalTega*</b>	<b>Tier D, \$3,333</b>	<b>\$3,333</b>	<b>\$3,379</b>
Community Action Team	Tier D, \$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,281
Cooper Park Neighborhood Association	Tier B, \$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,969
Cuesta Park Neighborhood Association	Tier D, \$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,281
Dutch Haven Neighborhood Association	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Gemello Neighborhood Association	Tier B, \$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,969
<b>Grupo de Embajadores de Mountain View*</b>	<b>Tier B, \$2,000</b>	<b>\$2,200</b>	<b>\$2,067</b>
Hedgerow Group	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Martens Carmelita Neighborhood	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Monta Loma Neighborhood Association	Tier C, \$2,667	\$2,667	\$2,625
Moorpark Mobile Home Parks	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
North Whisman Neighborhood Association	Tier B, \$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,969
Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association	Tier D, \$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,281
Rex Manor Neighborhood Association	Tier B, \$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,969
<b>Sahara Mobile Village Neighborhood Association*</b>	<b>Tier A, \$1,333</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>	<b>\$1,377</b>
Santiago Villa Neighborhood Association	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Shoreline West Association of Neighbors	Tier D, \$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,281
Slater Neighborhood Association	Tier D, \$3,333	\$3,200	\$3,150
Springer Meadows Neighborhood Association	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Springer Tree Neighborhood Association	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,333	\$1,312
Sunset Estates Mobilehome Owners Association	Tier A, \$1,333	\$1,450	\$1,312
Varsity Park Neighborhood Association	Tier B, \$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,969
Wagon Wheel Neighborhood Association	Tier C, \$2,667	\$2,667	\$2,625
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$50,813</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

\*Indicates a new group

## **POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

As mentioned above, during the Fiscal Year 2024-25 grants cycle, previously unencountered issues surfaced regarding the Grant Program eligibility requirements.

The **existing Grant Program Guidelines** require that all three of the following criteria be met:

1. “Applicants must be representatives of an existing neighborhood association within the City of Mountain View or a group of individuals who are organizing to form a new neighborhood association. Informal neighborhood groups and mobile home park resident committees may also be eligible if their grant proposal builds community and enhances the neighborhood or mobile home park. Individuals, businesses, fraternal or religious groups, universities, and public agencies are not eligible to apply. However, organizations that are eligible for neighborhood grants may partner with these ineligible groups to plan and implement activities/events.”
2. “Activities/events must be neighborhood-based and initiated by residents living in the neighborhood or mobile home park.”
3. “Activities/events must be aimed at improving communication and participation or improving physical conditions within a neighborhood or mobile home park.”

Staff is proposing modifications to clarify the criteria and seeks Committee input on the items below.

- **Clarifying Specific Geographic Location**

One of the applicants that was initially recommended but ultimately not funded (Eagle Park Youth Ultimate Frisbee Group) did not specify a geographic location for the group and would be open to all youths in the City of Mountain View boundaries.

The above Guidelines language clearly notes that applicants and activities/events be a neighborhood association/group and be neighborhood-based, which is commonly understood to be tied to a specific geographic location. However, the Guidelines do not include language specifying or requiring that an applicant be of a specific geographic location. If the Committee believes that the Grant Program should be place-/neighborhood-based, it may wish to consider updating the Guidelines to clarify that a neighborhood association or group represents a specific geographic location in Mountain View to avoid any future ambiguity.

***Staff Recommendation No. 1: Clarify that applicants must specify a specific geographic boundary and may not be a Citywide or general group not tied to a specific location within Mountain View.***

- “Special-Interest” Groups

Two groups applied for but ultimately did not receive funding: Eagle Park Youth Ultimate Frisbee Group (as noted above) and Arts Mountain View. The Ultimate Frisbee Group was primarily interested in organizing frisbee events for youths, while Arts Mountain View requested funding to paint a mural within a specific geographic boundary. It appeared that the primary focus of both groups is an interest about a specific topic as opposed to a specific neighborhood. While the current Guidelines do not specify any prohibition or limitation of these types of “special-interest” groups to apply, at the April 17 meeting, the Committee noted that this issue needed to be reviewed and updated.

***Staff Recommendation No. 2: In accordance with the Committee’s direction in the April 17, 2024 meeting, special-interest groups are not eligible applicants for the Grant Program. This ineligibility requirement will be incorporated into the revised guidelines.***

- Overlapping Geographic Boundaries

One of the key discussion topics that arose this year was the issue of overlapping boundaries. Some new neighborhood groups that submitted applications were situated within the existing boundaries in whole or in part of existing, larger neighborhood groups that has previously received funding. The current Grant Program Application Guidelines do not include any language related to or prohibit overlapping boundaries.

*Considerations*

- Some of the concerns expressed by existing groups is that funding a new group that overlaps with an existing group is duplicative funding and is, therefore, an inequitable distribution of funds.
- Staff received feedback from some of the new groups that their interests may not be fully/adequately represented by the existing group. For example, there may be a disconnect due to differences in language, culture, and/or socioeconomic background, and new groups may wish to hold events that reflect their experience of their neighborhood.

- One of the stated purposes of the Grant Program is to “provide financial support to encourage groups to form new neighborhood groups as well as to support existing groups with funding for neighborhood events.” However, as shown in the neighborhood group map in Attachment 2, most of the residential neighborhoods in Mountain View are represented by groups which are relatively large and may have distinct smaller groups within them. If the Grant Program seeks to retain the purpose of promoting the formation of new groups, there may be limited geographic areas for this to occur unless overlapping boundaries are allowed.
- Two new groups that had boundaries wholly within an existing association boundary (Vincent and Beyond Association and Loreto Street Neighborhood Groups) did not receive funding.

Staff recommends that overlapping geographic boundaries be allowed in new revised program guidelines so long as the boundary of any new group is geographically contiguous and reflects a distinct neighborhood, even if it is within or overlaps with a larger neighborhood. Staff proposes piloting this concept to determine the level of interest and the funding that may be needed. Staff further proposes budgeting an additional \$7,500 to support such potential new groups. This \$7,500 would be set aside for new groups and would only be utilized to the extent that new groups apply and are determined to be eligible. This additional pilot funding will make it more possible to fund existing groups at their current levels without excluding new groups or putting new and existing groups into competition. Staff will review the number of newly formed groups that receive grants, the number of participants or residents served/engaged, and the potential for creating connections across groups that may share some overlap in boundaries. Staff will report back to the Committee with this information for a discussion on whether the pilot should continue or whether the program’s base budget could be modified, in December 2025.

***Staff Recommendation No. 3: That overlapping geographic boundaries be allowed and establishing an additional \$7,500 set aside pilot budget to support the formation of new groups.***

- New Group Bonus

As noted above, one of the purposes of the Grant Program is to encourage formation of new neighborhood associations/groups. Under the current Guidelines, a \$100 bonus is awarded to new/emerging groups that have applied for funding for the first time. Staff received objections to the new group bonus, expressing that the bonus further diluted the pool of funding that could be distributed.



***Staff Recommendation No. 4: Eliminate the bonus for new groups In light of the pilot approach proposed above.***

- Additional Considerations

In preparing this report, staff researched whether other jurisdictions offered similar neighborhood grant programs, and, if so, how they addressed some of the questions above. While staff did not identify an exact program equivalent in another jurisdiction given limited capacity to conduct comprehensive research, staff did come across a couple of analogous programs (with one being in the [City of Sunnyvale](#) and another in the [City of Campbell](#)). These programs incorporated funding guidelines that sought to address issues of funding being oversubscribed and implementing a methodology to allow new groups to access funding as opposed to continuing to fund the same legacy groups year after year.

Following the assessment of the proposed pilot, the Committee may wish to establish a new base level of funding for the program. If the program is oversubscribed beyond this base, the Committee may wish to discuss implementing a competitive application process in which grants are reduced or grantees are not necessarily funded every year. New criteria could be included to determine the program's effectiveness and fairness and the extent to which the program is able to continue to meet the diverse needs of the community. In the event of the need to consider such a change to the application process, staff would provide information and seek input from existing groups/grantees in advance to support a smooth transition in the implementation of any approved program modifications.

In addition to obtaining the above feedback from the Committee, staff desires to obtain feedback from current grantees. Grantees can provide feedback at the December CNC meeting and/or emailing [neighborhoodgrants@mountainview.gov](mailto:neighborhoodgrants@mountainview.gov) or calling 650-903-6301.

### **PREVIEW OF 2025 NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT PROGRAM**

In 2025, staffing and administration of the CNC will transition from the Housing Department to the City Manager's Office (CMO). This includes CMO staff overseeing the Grant Program and neighborhood meetings, with transitional support from Housing Department staff. Staff from both departments look forward to continued collaboration for a successful transition of the program and providing the Committee responsive support.

### Preview of 2025 Meetings

As part of the two-year meeting cycle, in 2025, the in-person neighborhood meetings will be held in the following three neighborhood areas: Moffett Whisman Neighborhood Area, Central Neighborhood Area, and Springer Cuesta Phyllis Neighborhood Area.

An overview of the schedule is provided below. It will be finalized at the first Committee meeting to discuss and set forth the work plan (February 2025). Once the City Councilmembers for the Committee are determined, staff will contact the members to schedule the work plan meeting and discuss the calendar for 2025. Staff recommends the meetings occur on Thursday evenings to incorporate the Multicultural Engagement Program attendance.

- Work Plan Meeting: February 2025
- Grant Application Process: March 2025
- CNC Committee Meeting (grants approval and networking reception): April 2025
- Neighborhood Meeting: Moffett Whisman Neighborhood Area: May 2025
- Neighborhood Meeting: Central Neighborhood Area: June 2025
- Neighborhood Meeting: Springer Cuesta Phyllis: September 2025
- Year-End Summary: November/December 2025

### NEXT STEPS

Committee input will be incorporated into the Grant Program Application and Guidelines for next year, with the draft Guidelines being presented to the Committee at the February 2025 meeting. Staff from the Housing Department and City Manager's Office will continue to collaborate to ensure a smooth transition of the Grant Program and neighborhood meetings from the Housing Department to the City Manager's Office beginning in 2025. Staff from the City Manager's Office will present the updated guidelines and grant application process at the first Committee meeting in 2025.

JB-AR-PD-KST-WC/AR/4/HSN  
844-12-12-24M

- Attachments:
1. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Neighborhood Grant Program Application Guidelines
  2. Neighborhood Group Map, Fiscal Year 2024-25