

What is the Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund?

On September 9, 2003, the voters of Tulsa County approved a one-penny, 13-year increase in the Tulsa County Sales Tax, to be used for regional economic development and capital improvements. Proposition Four of Vision 2025 included approximately \$2.1 million for neighborhood projects within the City of Tulsa.

The purpose of these funds is to support neighborhood projects including, *but not limited to* signage, neighborhood entranceways/gateways and neighborhood assessment projects (i.e. evaluation and planning projects).

Program Summary:

- Neighborhood-based groups, as defined, develop project ideas and contact the City of Tulsa’s Public Works Department.
- Groups submit a simple, two-page “Concept Screening Form,” and consult with the Public Works Department about legal and technical considerations.
- Groups whose projects satisfy basic threshold criteria as determined by the Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Task Force (TNFTF) will be asked to submit a Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Application to request funding – up to \$25,000. Projects not meeting the criteria will be denied, and reasons will be provided.
- Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Applications are reviewed and scored by the Vision 2025 TNFTF. Applicants are notified of their decision. If funding allows, applicants may have an opportunity to modify their requests and re-apply in the next funding cycle.
- The Public Works Department implements approved projects in partnership with neighborhood groups.



Who can apply?

- Neighborhood-based organizations of residents and/or businesses (*for purposes of this program, a neighborhood is defined as an area of geographically contiguous properties which is registered with the Mayor’s Office for Neighborhoods*), **or**
- *Ad hoc* groups of neighbors that form a committee solely for the purpose of completing and maintaining a neighborhood project.
- No more than one group in a defined Neighborhood may submit an application in a particular phase/cycle. For example, XYZ Neighborhood, a defined neighborhood, may only submit one project Application during any particular Phase .

Awards will **not** be made :

- To individual persons or individual businesses, or
- For projects that are located on Private Property unless the property owner has granted an easement to the City of Tulsa or has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) committing to grant an easement to the City of Tulsa, and the property is open to public use and/or enjoyment. (*For example, some newer Neighborhood Associations have Reserve areas (green space) that is owned by the Neighborhood Association for use by the Neighborhood Association members only. In order for a project to be eligible for funding within one of these Reserve areas, the Neighborhood Association must execute a use easement to the City of Tulsa, and the Reserve area would then become open to the Public in general.*)
- To applicants who have failed to fulfill obligations with regard to projects previously funded with Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Funds.

What is the funding limit?

Each application for Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Funds is limited to \$25,000. Once a funded project is complete, and if sufficient funding is available, successful applicants may submit another “Concept Screening Form” for another project or another component of an ongoing project. For example, if a project was approved in a previous funding phase, an applicant would be required to wait until a future phase to request funds for a new project or additional funds for their ongoing project.



What types of projects are eligible?

To be considered for funding, a project must:

- be located within the city limits of the City of Tulsa;
- provide a public benefit, resulting in a product that enhances a defined neighborhood; and
- emphasize involvement and support by neighborhood residents and/or partners in its planning and implementation.

The following are examples of projects that will be considered for funding:

1. **Neighborhood physical improvements**, including, but not limited to:

- neighborhood bike lanes and bike storage facilities
- neighborhood gateways and entranceways(See Note 2)
- neighborhood lighting (does not include monthly electrical expense)
- neighborhood signage
- neighborhood art
- neighborhood gardens
- neighborhood park improvements (see Note 1)
- neighborhood playgrounds
- neighborhood school amenities (see Note 1)
- neighborhood sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian improvements
- neighborhood streetscaping
- neighborhood trees and other landscaping

Note 1: Because City-owned Parks and School Districts have other funding sources, any Public Schools and/or Parks Department improvements will be considered for funding on a case-by-case, limited exception basis.

Note 2: Perimeter Fences will not be allowed.

2. **Neighborhood assessments, evaluations, plans, and/or designs**, outlining specific actions and physical improvements, which will serve as a guide for neighborhood enhancement.



A Note about Neighborhood Assessments and Planning

A neighborhood assessment is an evaluation of a neighborhood’s strengths and needs. It is a process whereby neighbors come together to honestly evaluate their neighborhood and to develop improvement strategies that will guide neighborhood enhancement.

A good model for developing an assessment of your neighborhood is the FOCUS Kansas City program (www.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/focus/home). FOCUS Kansas City is that city’s strategic and comprehensive planning process, which recognizes the importance of strong neighborhoods.

You can see many great examples of neighborhood assessment reports developed by Kansas City neighborhoods at www.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/web/reports.

You might also consider more formal or technical planning for your neighborhood. For example, you might want to develop streetscape and pedestrian plans. You might want to create an infill development plan. Or, you might even want to begin developing a full-blown neighborhood master plan (or district plan), to be submitted to the Planning Commission and the City Council for formal adoption into Tulsa’s Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about local examples of neighborhood planning, visit the following web pages:

www.tulsadevelopmentauthority.org/plans_kendall.html

www.tulsadevelopmentauthority.org/plans_brady_infill.html

Neighborhood assessments and planning projects might be facilitated by city staff, if staff levels and budgets permit, or by independent planning consultants.

What kinds of projects and budget items will not be funded?

Project applications are not eligible for funding if they:

- duplicate an existing, funded, public or private initiative, or
- conflict with existing city policy, or
- are projects that have separate funding sources available (exception, see Note 1 above)



Project budget items not eligible for funding include:

- ongoing services, operations, or maintenance, or
- food, beverages, lodging, or travel expenses, or
- expenditures or financial commitments made before a project is formally approved

How will projects be selected?

Eligible projects that are legal and technically feasible (within proposed budgets), and which demonstrate *neighborhood support*, may be selected, based on ranking by the TNFTF, as funds are available. If projects are not selected for funding, applicants will have an opportunity, if necessary, to modify their requests and re-apply in the next funding phase.

All applications will be scored according to criteria described below. In the event that the total amount requested in any award period exceeds available funding, projects will be funded based on ranking, i.e., projects that score higher will be funded before lower-scored projects.

Projects that have not received prior funding will be given preference over those applicants that have received money before.

Are matching funds required?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage Vision 2025 Neighborhood Funds with cash donations, and donated goods and/or professional services. While matching funds are not strictly required, a strong commitment of neighborhood support and participation *is* required. If applications exceed available funding, matching contributions are among the criteria by which projects will be compared and scored.

What are the project selection criteria?

All Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund applications are rated using the following criteria. As you plan your project and write your application, keep these criteria in mind and be sure the application addresses each of them.



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Community Benefit (25 points)

- 1. The project proposes a clear and concise approach to a neighborhood issue and it provides a measurable benefit to the neighborhood and the City of Tulsa. (0-15 points)
- 2. Project activities create stronger bonds between neighbors and the neighborhood as a whole. (0-10 points)

Project Feasibility (25 points)

- 3. The proposed project is cost effective, well planned, documented, and ready for implementation. (**Incomplete Applications may be denied.**) (0-15 points)
- 4. The budget reliably represents the project’s expenses. If ongoing operations and maintenance are required (for example, watering, weeding, mowing, utility service, etc.) these items must be identified and their annual cost and method for payment accounted for on the application. (0-10 points)

Neighborhood Participation (35 points)

- 5. The project demonstrates strong support by the residents and promotes interaction of diverse parts of the Neighborhood (e.g., renters/owners, businesses/residents, people of different generations, people of different abilities, and people of different cultural backgrounds). (0-35 points)

0-5	low participation
6-15	moderate
16-35	high

Participation will be determined by, but not limited to, the number of planning meetings held by the Applicant’s group, the number of neighborhood participants showing support for the project by completion of a sign-up sheet, and (where applicable) volunteer participation by neighborhood residents and/or partners, etc. Appropriate documentation such as meeting notices, surveys and survey results must be attached to the Application.

Leverage/Matching Contributions (15 points)

Matching contributions must be accurately documented and needed to complete the project.



6. The applicant group has secured cash contributions toward the total cost of the project. (0-5 points)

0	None
1	5% of the total project cost
2	10% of the total project cost
3	15% of the total project cost
4	20% of the total project cost
5	30% of the total project cost, or more

If the proposed project is located in a census tract with a median household income of \$35,000 or less, as identified in the most recent federal census, applicants will be awarded 5 points in this category. See a median household income census tract map at www.ersys.com/usa/40/4075000/income.htm.

7. The applicant group has secured donated goods and/or professional services for the project. (0-5 points)

For purposes of this program, donated goods are valued at retail and professional services are valued at the professional's quoted rate. Professional services must be reasonable and be directly tied to the recommended project. Donated goods and professional services not required for a project will not be counted by the TNFTF.

0	None
1	10% of the total project cost
2	20% of the total project cost
3	30% of the total project cost
4	40% of the total project cost
5	50% of the total project cost, or more

8. In order to support smaller projects, the following points will be added to an applicant's score based on the funds requested from the Vision 2025 Neighborhood Funds: (0-5 points)

	<u>Amount Requested</u>
5	\$1,000 - \$4,999
4	\$5,000 - \$9,999
3	\$10,000 - \$14,999
2	\$15,000 - \$19,999
1	\$20,000 - \$25,000



What is the application review process?

Step 1

Potential Applicants Contact the Public Works Department and Submit a Simple, Two-Page "Concept Screening Form"

Step 2

Applicants Consult with the Public Works Department to Review Timelines, Application Requirements, and Other Legal and Practical Considerations; If Approved, Public Works Provides an Application Packet

Step 3

Neighborhood Groups Submit Completed Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Applications to the Public Works Department before the Posted Deadline

Step 4

Public Works Department Presents Applications to the Vision 2025 TNFTF, Indicating whether Applications were Timely and Complete, whether Projects Meet Legal Requirements, and whether Cost Estimates are Reasonable

Step 5

Vision 2025 TNFTF Reviews and scores Applications and Makes Funding Recommendations to the Vision 2025 Oversight Committee

Step 6

Mayor Announces Awards, Requests Appropriations, Directs Public Works to Begin Projects, and Makes Funding Requests to Tulsa County Project Manager, as Needed



How should we develop a project?**1. Select a Project with Your Neighbors and Build Support**

Identify a project that will generate as much Neighborhood support as possible and that addresses a known problem or concern. Talk about the project with your neighbors. Their support is crucial to the success of your application and your project.

2. Register Your Organization or Group with the Mayor's Office for Neighborhoods

If your group is not already registered, you **must** register with the Mayor's Office for Neighborhoods and include your neighborhood's physical street designated boundaries. You can register on-line at www.cityoftulsa.org/community+services/mayors+office/mayors+office+for+neighborhoods, or by calling 596-1292. There is no cost to register with the City.

3. Secure Site Control

If your project involves use of, or changes to, property that your group does not own, you must get written permission from the owner. *(In other words, if you are proposing to make improvements to property not owned by the City, your application must clearly articulate a benefit to the public, and the improved area or added equipment must be available for use and/or enjoyment by the general public.)* The owner of the property must agree to give an easement to the City of Tulsa.

4. Develop the Project's Scope

Begin your project outline with simple goals and objectives. List the activities needed to accomplish your goals. Some initial research might be needed at this stage to get a handle on the steps involved. You may be able to consult with another neighborhood group that has done a similar project. Perhaps members of your group have professional experience that could be helpful. Is there someone in a City or County department that knows about this kind of project?

5. Determine Resources Needed

Your project might require expertise, equipment, supplies, or professional services. Many projects require permits, insurance, or design review before proceeding. Contact the Public Works Department (596-9578) to find out what regulations and permits might apply to your project. Your



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list of needed resources will become a first draft of the detailed budget required in the complete Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Application.

6. Develop a Project Budget

After you list needed resources, you will need to obtain cost estimate figures in order to complete a budget. To ensure greater accuracy in your budget, get written cost estimates or quotes for each budget item from more than one reliable source. These should be included in the submitted complete Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Application.

7. Secure Firm Commitments for Neighborhood Participation and Support

Once you develop a project budget, canvass your neighborhood and solicit commitments of support for your group's project. Ask local businesses and neighborhood professionals to help. Cash donations and donated goods and professional services must be documented with signed Letters of Intent.

8. Submit a "Concept Screening Form," to the Public Works Department

Submit the simple, two-page "Concept Screening Form" describing your group and its project idea to the City of Tulsa's Public Works Department for legal and feasibility review before it is passed to the TNFTF for ranking.

9. If your "Concept Screening Form" is approved, please keep in mind these suggestions to help you submit a complete application....

- Review all application requirements before you start.
- Evaluate your neighborhood's support **before** you develop the application. Early consensus for your project might avoid problems later on in the process. Determine if there are other groups in your neighborhood that have similar plans to request funding. You may be able to work together.
- Create an application timeline, starting with the application's submission date and working backward. Allow adequate time to publicize community participation events, contact vendors, enlist participants, develop a project budget, etc.



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- You must use the forms provided in the application or replicate them exactly. You may ask for the application form in a digital format (or download it from www.cityoftulsa.org). However, only printed-out paper copies with attachments, and with an original appropriate signature, will be accepted.
- Do not assume that all reviewers are familiar with your neighborhood. Clearly describe the public benefit and the neighborhood participation process used to develop your proposal. Be sure to include cross street designations and boundaries.
- To have an effective project and a competitive application, neighborhood participation should involve a broad range of citizens, including representatives from many sectors of the neighborhood. Your application should clearly show how your project is encouraging broad-based participation.
- **It is important to account for the ongoing maintenance of your project.** For example, who will water the trees, repair a fountain, or clean a mural if it gets painted with graffiti? How will monthly payments for utilities be paid?

It is the intent of the Vision 2025 Tulsa Neighborhood Fund Task Force to help neighborhoods within the City of Tulsa be the best they can be. Your cooperation in completing the required documentation makes the process easier on those volunteers to the Task Force who review the applications, and enhances the possibility of your project being approved for funding.

