




Interoffice Memorandum

January 25, 2023

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
-AND-
County Commissioners

FROM: Timothy L. Boldig, Interim Director 
Planning, Environmental, and Development Services Department

**CONTACT PERSON: Jason Reynolds, AICP, Manager
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SUBJECT: February 21, 2023 – Consent Item
Modifications to the Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program

The Neighborhood Services Division administers the Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program which provides funds for neighborhood organizations to enhance the quality of their communities. These grants are available countywide for up to \$10,000 for physical improvements to communities. Scope of projects range from signage, landscaping, pressure washing, walls and wall repairs.

Current program guidelines are generally:

- Mandatory homeowners' associations must pay a 50% match for projects;
- Voluntary neighborhood organizations do not have a match;
- Maintenance of the improvements is the responsibility of the association;
- Organizations are eligible for one grant per fiscal year and cannot receive a grant the following year; and,
- Landscaping projects are capped at \$3,500.

In the summer of 2022, staff conducted an analysis of the program which yielded recommendations to further ensure the program's success. The recommendations are as follows:

- 1) **Increase the maximum award for landscaping projects for mandatory homeowners' associations from \$3,500 to \$5,000.**

The cap was established because the success of landscaping is based on uncontrollable factors, e.g., weather and vandalism and controllable factors.

However, mandatory neighborhood associations have the resources (funding, paid staff, etc.) to properly maintain landscaping. Since mandatory associations have the resources to nourish and maintain landscaping, staff's recommendation is to allow mandatory associations to do more landscaping projects.

2) Limit landscaping projects to voluntary associations only with irrigation.

Unfortunately, staff has found landscaping projects done by voluntary associations to have a very low survival rate. For voluntary associations to install landscaping, staff recommends allowing these eligible groups to purchase \$1,000 worth of landscaping and plant themselves.

3) Increase the limit of the grant from \$10,000 to \$15,000

The grant limit was set in 2019, and at that time, \$10,000 was enough to do a complete project (sign, landscaping, and wall repair). Based on costs of materials and inflation, \$10,000 will no longer fully fund a complete project, thus minimizing the impact of the grant. Increasing the limit to \$15,000 will allow neighborhoods to do more complete and meaningful projects.

4) Allow flexibility to deviate from the guidelines to consider walls damaged by a car accident.

Organizations are eligible for one grant per fiscal year and cannot receive a grant the following year. Should a wall that was repaired using the grant program be damaged by a car accident, this gives staff the flexibility to determine if the grant program provides the best avenue to address the damage.

The recommendations were discussed with the Neighborhood Grants Advisory Board and they unanimously agreed with advancing the recommended changes to the Board for approval.

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of the following changes to the Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program: Increase the cap for landscaping projects for mandatory homeowners' associations from \$3,500 to \$5,000, limit landscaping projects to voluntary associations with irrigation, increase the limit of the grant from \$10,000 to \$15,000, and allow deviations from the grant guidelines for walls damaged by car accidents. All Districts.