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## News Release

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**Share!** #Durham awards eight neighborhood matching grants to help make communities better places to live  
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## Durham Awards Neighborhood Matching Grants

DURHAM, N.C. – Eight Durham neighborhood groups will soon embark on improvement projects thanks to funds received through a City of Durham matching grant program.

The City's Neighborhood Improvement Services Department has [awarded eight grants](#) through its [Neighborhood Matching Grants Program](#), which provides grants up to \$2,500 to neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, community watch groups, and resident groups for projects that benefit a neighborhood's quality of life. Neighborhoods match City funds through volunteer labor, professional services, material donations, and/or cash.

Of the 17 neighborhood groups that applied during the second application session held earlier this year, eight neighborhoods won grants for the following projects:

- **Burch Avenue Neighborhood Association Garden Beds:** \$2,500 grant to improve the utility and beauty of a neighborhood space. Neighbors will rebuild raised garden beds to create a more fertile space to grow produce. The rejuvenated garden will also be a gathering space for neighborhood events where residents build relationships and foster community.
- **Communities In Partnership Food Co-Op:** \$2,500 grant for this people-of-color led equitable and co-operatively run food access project. This initiative aims to increase the access and affordability of fresh local produce to Northeast Central Durham families living at or below the poverty line. With these grant funds, the co-op will establish office space, and deliver food to area households.

- **Lyon Park Langley Garden Spring Garden and Tool Shed Improvements:** \$1,895 grant to install a water spigot, and resupply the neighborhoods' s tool-sharing program. Residents will also host community workdays to plant a spring garden, which will provide free, fresh produce for the neighborhood.
- **North Street Neighborhood Corner Gardens:** \$1,835 grant to provide a unique, inclusive space for neighbors who use wheelchairs, the elderly, and others who have difficulty bending over. This garden will also provide positive activities during the day for residents for whom traditional employment is unavailable. Additionally, the fruit trees, pollinator plants, rain garden, watering cistern, and wall mural will improve the appearance of a prominent corner in the neighborhood.
- **Parkwood Village Association Woodland Trail:** \$2,500 grant to address a stormwater problem and pedestrian hazard, and provide a safer trail for walkers. The neighborhood will re-route a steep, eroded path to a flatter area, restore part of the old path to forest, and install plants that soak up water and provide food and shelter for wildlife. The neighborhood will also engage residents in workdays and guided walks to develop skills and understanding of environmental stewardship and increase pride in their community.
- **Sandy Creek Park Neighbors Park Enhancements:** \$2,003 grant to install directional signs and a neighborhood access trail. These improvements will benefit park visitors, especially those from nearby neighborhoods including Waterbury/Landsbury/Winfield and Coachman's Way. The workdays and post-work picnics will also bring together members of these neighborhoods.
- **Southwest Central Durham's Quality of Life Tenant & Homeowner Empowerment:** \$2,140 grant to assist residents in Southwest Central Durham's six neighborhoods – West End, Lyon Park, Burch Avenue, Morehead Hills, Lakewood-Tuscaloosa, Lakewood Park – who are experiencing an increase in property taxes, calls from land speculators, and new construction around their homes. Quality-of-life community-based workshops will provide information to help vulnerable residents hold onto their homes, and make smart decisions about their financial futures.
- **Tuscaloosa-Lakewood Neighborhood Association Outdoor Community Space:** \$1,880 grant to add picnic tables on the Lakewood Elementary school playground in partnership with the school and Lakewood Elementary Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The tables will make the space more usable by the neighborhood on the weekend, the PTA will use them during their monthly food truck rodeos, and the school plans to use them for outdoor-learning activities. Overall, this project aims to create an outdoor space that residents of the

Tuscaloosa-Lakewood neighborhood will use to help the community better connect with its neighborhood school.

These winning projects were selected by a committee of City employees from multiple departments including the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Keep Durham Beautiful, Durham Parks and Recreation, Durham Police Department, Durham City-County Planning Department, and the Public Works Department. Projects were evaluated based on need, project planning, neighborhood participation and support, neighborhood benefit, budget, and community partnerships. As part of the application process, neighborhoods pledged to match the City's total investment of \$17,253 with more than \$21,742 in volunteer hours, in-kind donations and services, and cash donations.

Neighborhood groups interested in this program can visit the department's [Web page](#) for more information, including how to apply for the next round of funding to be offered in summer 2017 with a July 31 deadline to apply. For additional information about this grant program, contact a member of the department's Community Engagement team at (919) 560-1647 or by [email](#).

### **About the City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services Department**

The [Neighborhood Improvement Services Department](#) works to preserve and improve quality of life conditions for Durham residents, and to encourage active participation in neighborhood redevelopment and public policy and decision-making dialogue. The department is responsible for enforcement of quality of life ordinances and state statutes including the City's Fair Housing Ordinance; Minimum Housing Code; Nonresidential Code; Weedy Lot, Abandoned & Junk Vehicle ordinances; and the State of North Carolina's Unsafe Building Statute. The department's rapid responders, known as the Impact Team, remediate non-compliant housing properties; abate public nuisances, such as graffiti, illegal dumping, and abandoned shopping carts; and conduct neighborhood service projects. The department's Community Engagement staff provides outreach and education to Durham residents and community organizations. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps ensure that Durham has thriving, livable neighborhoods by providing the highest quality of services to engage and educate the community, eradicating blight, and enhancing neighborhood safety and revitalization.

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