

## **Critical Corridors Funding Recommendations Spring 2025**

The Critical Corridors programs are Community & Economic Development (CED) department programs funded by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy. There are three programs under the umbrella of Critical Corridors. The spring solicitations are for two programs, Planning and Commercial Corridor Initiative, and the fall solicitation is for one program, Development & Infrastructure.

In the spring Critical Corridors solicitations, eight eligible applications for funding assistance were received, totaling \$351,323 in requests. A team of reviewers evaluated applications and made funding recommendations. Reviewers included representatives from Community & Economic Development, Public Works, Workforce Solutions, Food Security, Public Health (Environmental Health division) and an external reviewer from the Metropolitan Council.

Approximately \$300,000 in funding is available through these Critical Corridors solicitations, and there are six projects recommended for funding.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Funding Recommendations</b>
Planning	\$200,000
Commercial Corridor Initiative	\$100,000
<b>Critical Corridors Total</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

### **Planning**

#### **African American Cultural Corridor**

Applicant: Rondo Community Land Trust

Location: 644-672 Selby Avenue

City: Saint Paul

County Commissioner District: 4

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

Rondo Community Land Trust is in the process of planning to redevelop five parcels on the 600 block of Selby Avenue which may feature affordable multifamily housing, a boutique hotel celebrating the African American experience and accessible commercial spaces, all held permanently affordable through the land trust model. These developments will revitalize environmentally contaminated sites to generate jobs, create affordable housing and support small businesses contributing to the local economy. Critical Corridors funds will be used to produce market/financial feasibility studies and a final concept plan for the block, which is a key step in establishing and anchoring the African American Cultural Corridor along Selby Avenue.

#### **Snelling & University Cohesive Vision Plan**

Applicant: Union Park District Council

Location: Snelling Avenue & University Avenue intersection and its surrounding area

City: Saint Paul

County Commissioner District: 3 & 4

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

Union Park District Council (on behalf of the Snelling & University Alliance) will develop a cohesive vision plan for the neighborhoods surrounding the intersection of Snelling & University Avenues in Saint

Paul to guide its' growth and development. This area is covered by several individual plans that need to be updated and brought into alignment, and none of which encompass the larger surrounding neighborhood of the intersection as a whole due to the area's unique geography of bordering multiple jurisdictions. One of its main priorities is to preserve the existing diversity of small businesses owned by and/or serving Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and more (LGBTQ+) communities. Extensive community engagement will be facilitated by the Snelling & University Alliance's founding partners: African Economic Development Solutions, Midway Chamber of Commerce, Union Park District Council and Hamline Midway Coalition.

### **Como/Front/Dale Urban Design Framework and Action Plan**

Applicant: North End Neighborhood Organization

Location: Como Avenue, Front Avenue and Dale Street intersection and its surrounding area

City: Saint Paul

County Commissioner District: 3

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

Saint Paul's North End Neighborhood Organization and Como Community Council District 10 will develop an Urban Design Framework and Action Plan for the Como, Front and Dale intersection and its surrounding area. The framework aims to provide clarity on local objectives and plans around future redevelopment opportunities for underutilized properties in this majority-minority district that has approximately 70 percent people of color. It will provide actionable strategies to strengthen small business activity in the area which are largely owned and operated by BIPOC communities. It also aims to increase livability in the area by identifying short- and long-term solutions for pedestrian and bicycle safety to build momentum towards future permanent infrastructure improvements.

### **Envisioning New Brighton Town Center**

Applicant: City of New Brighton

Location: Downtown New Brighton

City: New Brighton

County Commissioner District: 2

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

The City of New Brighton will create a small area plan for the city's downtown area which spans 170-acres along multiple critical corridors. The plan aims to establish a long-term vision for this area of the city to determine redevelopment and public infrastructure improvement opportunities, and it aims to ensure the city is maximizing its redevelopment opportunities. The plan also aims to rebrand and create a stronger sense of identity for the area and to integrate this small area plan into the city's next comprehensive plan.

## **Commercial Corridor Initiative**

### **Rice Street Corridor Business and Community Investment Fund**

Applicant: Rice & Larpenteur Alliance

Location: Rice Street from Larpenteur Avenue to County Road B

City: Maplewood & Roseville

County Commissioner District: 2, 3 & 7

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

The Rice & Larpenteur Alliance will expand their business façade improvement grant program to support small businesses who want to make improvements to their storefronts to increase visibility and attract more visitors. Critical Corridors funds will be used to fund projects like mural or public art

installation, signage upgrades or repairs, exterior maintenance or outdoor seating. Many local businesses along the corridor are BIPOC-owned and immigrant-owned, and these façade improvements will have the potential to catalyze further capital investments that result in an increased customer base, employee retention and new job opportunities for this corridor.

**Sustaining and Enhancing Downtown White Bear Lake's Economic Vibrancy**

Applicant: City of White Bear Lake

Location: Downtown White Bear Lake (East of Highway 61 to Cook Avenue from 5th Street to 2nd Street)

City: White Bear Lake

County Commissioner District: 7

Funding Recommendation: \$50,000

The City of White Bear Lake will enhance its downtown area by supporting placemaking efforts to support its small businesses like design and implementation of wayfinding signage, street furniture and enhanced lighting. It also aims to strengthen the area's identity by implementing branding elements that are aligned with the advertising efforts to promote downtown as open to business during construction to mitigate the disruption caused by the street reconstruction projects around the area.