



# Critical Corridors Informational Webinar

Planning & Commercial Corridor Initiative Programs

2/24/2025



## Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Background
- Critical Corridors Solicitations
  - Planning
  - Commercial Corridor Initiative
- Application Process
- Program Highlights
- Other Solicitations

# Housekeeping

- Introductions
- Webinar
  - Recording will be posted on program webpage: [ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors](https://ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors)
  - Press Q&A button below to ask questions
  - Q&A will be compiled into an FAQ document



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# Background



# Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Levy

- Funding source for:
  - Critical Corridors
  - Housing Development Solicitations
  - Emerging and Diverse Developers (EDD)
  - Site Assessment Grants
  - FirstHome Down Payment Assistance
- First year of HRA levy programs was 2022
- Eligibility for these programs limited to HRA area of operation
- More info available at [ramseycounty.us/HRA](https://ramseycounty.us/HRA)



# Ramsey County Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan

# A Holistic Plan

## County Goals

- 1 Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty
- 2 Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses

## Strategies

### 1 Ensure place-based inclusion, create resilient and equitable communities

- Preserve and increase the supply of rental housing units for lowest-income residents
- Expand affordable homeownership opportunities and improve housing stability for communities that have experienced historic wealth extraction
- Foster inclusive economic development within county transit, economic, and cultural corridors
- Support communities in equitable site development



### 2 Foster economic competitiveness, innovation, and transformation

- Sustain and accelerate workforce recovery programs
- Develop pathways to entrepreneurship and Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous business ownership
- Attract and grow high-wage industry and innovation: technology, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences
- Strengthen business retention and expansion infrastructure to support communities



A photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with arched windows and a prominent brick chimney. The building is partially obscured by large, leafy green trees. In the foreground, there is a sidewalk, a brick wall, and a decorative iron fence. The scene is set in a well-maintained, green environment.

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## **Critical Corridors Solicitations**



# Critical Corridors Overview

## Program Goals

- Support redevelopment projects.
- Boost connectivity between housing, jobs, retail, services and transportation.
- Create more compact, walkable environments.
- Enhance pedestrian access and safety.
- Support vibrant business districts.

## Programs

- **Planning** (*Spring 2025*)
- **Commercial Corridor Initiative** (*Spring 2025*)
- **Development & Infrastructure** (*Fall 2025*)



See map in program  
webpage for what's  
considered a Critical  
Corridor

### Related Resources

→ [Critical Corridors eligible areas-  
interactive map](#)

## What are Critical Corridors?

- Major transportation, economic, and cultural corridors
- Critical Corridors are areas that:
  - Serve as community hubs for housing, jobs, services, and amenities.
  - Provide access to daily activities and destinations.
  - Provide opportunities for wealth creation, economic inclusion, innovation and transformation.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent arched entrance. The building features decorative brickwork and a tall brick chimney. Lush green trees are in the foreground and background, partially obscuring the building. A paved walkway leads from the bottom center towards the building. A dark red horizontal bar is positioned above the page number.

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# Critical Corridors Planning Program

# Critical Corridors Planning

## Program Purpose

- Assists local communities in planning for equitable redevelopment and public realm improvements along transit, economic, and cultural corridors.
- Facilitates pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.
- Connects residents to housing, jobs and destinations while furthering environmental, public health, racial equity and economic prosperity goals.





# Critical Corridors Planning

**Eligible Applicants:** Cities, housing/economic development/port authorities, watershed districts, park districts, other public agencies and community-based nonprofit organizations in Ramsey County.

**Maximum Funding Request:** \$50,000

**Timing:** Funds must be expended by 6/30/2026. Activities completed prior to award date are not eligible for reimbursement.



# Planning Program - Eligible Activities

- Land use plans: small area/corridor/station area plans.
- Redevelopment feasibility studies or concept plans.
- Market analyses, including “Missing Middle” housing analysis.
- Infrastructure planning and conceptual designs including:
  - Pedestrian and bike connections.
  - Public realm improvements.
  - Walking-oriented development.
  - Safe Routes to Transit plans.
  - Sustainable infrastructure plans, such as district energy or stormwater systems.
- Land use and/or zoning studies that align with program priorities, including:
  - Parking studies with the goal of reducing parking minimums.
  - Studies that encourage redevelopment and increased density within transit corridors.
- Equitable development policy or plan development.



# Planning Program - Ineligible Activities

- Administrative staff time.
- Capital costs and equipment.
- Road-centric planning activities.
- General/routine infrastructure planning.
- Traffic or parking studies without parking reduction goals.
- Site plans.
- Other soft costs not listed in eligible activities.

A background image showing a brick building with arched windows and a sidewalk leading towards it, surrounded by lush green trees and a brick wall in the foreground.

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# **Critical Corridors Commercial Corridor Initiative**



# Critical Corridors

## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Program Purpose

Strengthens suburban small business districts by supporting thriving main streets and investing in pathways to entrepreneurship for racially and ethnically diverse communities



# Critical Corridors

## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Eligible Applicants:

Suburban Ramsey County entities

Including cities, associated development authorities, business coalitions, chambers of commerce and nonprofits.

**Maximum Grant Request: \$50,000**

**Timing:** Funds must be expended by 6/30/2026. Activities completed prior to award date are not eligible for reimbursement.





# Commercial Corridor Initiative - Eligible Activities

*\*Initiatives need to be located in Suburban Ramsey County*

- Business recruitment activities.
- Establishment of small-business incubators.
- District-wide planning and design.
- District-wide marketing, branding, and promotion initiatives.
- Design and implementation of wayfinding, signage, street furniture or other public realm enhancements.
- Technical assistance related to business activities, including:
  - Special service district or business association establishment.
  - Design and implementation of wayfinding, signage, street furniture or other public realm enhancements
  - Building facade improvements.

For other projects not mentioned but also support business districts, please reach out to staff to see if it meets program objectives.

# Commercial Corridor Initiative - Ineligible Activities



- Activities located in the City of St. Paul.
- Administrative staff time.
- Parking lot improvements.
- Activities for sites without public frontage.
- Activities that benefit a single business.
- Administration, overhead, and business operations support.
- Events.

## Scoring & Evaluation

1. Project Outcomes & Opportunity
2. Placemaking & Transit-Oriented Development/Public Realm
3. Community Engagement & Racial Equity
4. Capacity & Readiness
5. Overall Application

See program guidelines documents for Planning and Commercial Corridor Initiative on program website for more details.

Parity in overall Housing Redevelopment Authority levy funding between Saint Paul and suburban cities is also considered.

A background image showing a brick building with arched windows and a red brick chimney, partially obscured by large green trees. A paved walkway leads from the foreground towards the building. A dark red horizontal bar is positioned above the text.

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# Application Process

# Application Process

- Applications accepted through ZoomGrants
  - **Planning**  
<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/CCPlanning2025>
  - **Commercial Corridor Initiative**  
<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/CCCommercialCorridorInitiative2025>
- Pre-application meetings: highly encouraged
  - Email [carmel.sanjuan@ramseycounty.us](mailto:carmel.sanjuan@ramseycounty.us) to schedule a time
- Key dates
  - Solicitations open: Tuesday, March 4, 2025
  - Solicitations close: Tuesday, April 1, 2025
  - Award decisions: May 2025

# Application Questions

See  
“Application Questions”  
Tab on  
ZoomGrants

Application Form -PREVIEW

zoomgrants.com/gprop2.asp?donorid=2318&rftid=5610&limited=5610&preview=y

**Ramsey County**  
Community and Economic Development  
Critical Corridors - Commercial Corridor Initiative 2025

SHOW DESCRIPTION SHOW ELIGIBILITY SHOW RESTRICTIONS

Applicant View Application Status: Not Submitted

Summary Eligibility Determination **Application Questions** Attachments

**Application Questions**

Instructions [Show/Hide](#)

1. Project Location/Address

Maximum characters: 500. You have 500 characters left.



# Critical Corridors Project Information

Download Excel spreadsheet in “Attachments” Tab on ZoomGrants

Application Form -PREVIEW

zoomgrants.com/gprop2.asp?donorid=2318&rpid=5610&limited=5610&preview=y

Ramsey County  
Community and Economic Development  
Critical Corridors - Commercial Corridor Initiative 2025

SHOW DESCRIPTION SHOW ELIGIBILITY SHOW RESTRICTIONS

Applicant View Application Status: Not Submitted

Summary Eligibility Determination Application Questions **Attachments**

### Attachments

Instructions [Show/Hide](#)

Documents Requested *	Required?	Uploaded Documents *
Critical Corridors Project Information <a href="#">Download template: Critical Corridors Project Info Template 2025</a>	Required	-none-
Letter of support from property owner(s) (*Required if requesting funding to do building façade improvement)		-none-
Map of proposed project site or area		-none-
Letters of support from community and affected business owners		-none-
Local government/Board resolution of support		-none-

## Application Attachments – Additional Materials


1. Map of proposed project site or area.
2. Letters of community support.
3. Local government resolution of support.
4. Other relevant supporting documentation.

Staff may request additional information as needed during the evaluation process.

# Application Timeline



# Resources

- Program webpage: [ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors](https://ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors)
- Program guidelines 
- Examples of funded projects
- Sample application forms
- Link to ZoomGrants
- FAQs

## Critical Corridors Planning 2025 Program Guidelines



Ramsey County's Critical Corridors Planning program, funded through the [Housing Redevelopment Authority Levy](#), assists local communities in planning for equitable redevelopment and public realm improvements along transit, economic, and cultural corridors. The county worked with community partners to define Critical Corridors, as shown in green on the [eligibility map](#). This program aims to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to connect residents to housing, jobs and destinations while furthering environmental, public health, racial equity and economic prosperity goals.

### Selection Priorities

Redevelopment projects that:

- Increase density along key corridors, especially those that reduce space used for parking and improve access to transit.
- Facilitate the development of multifamily housing, such as zoning changes.
- Promote development activity in disinvested areas.
- Improve pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure.
- Propel nearby development without displacing current residents or small businesses.

## Critical Corridors Commercial Corridor Initiative 2025 Program Guidelines



Ramsey County's Commercial Corridor Initiative program, funded through the [Housing Redevelopment Authority Levy](#), strengthens suburban small business districts by supporting thriving main streets and investing in pathways to entrepreneurship for racially and ethnically diverse communities. The county worked with community partners to define Critical Corridors, as shown in green on the [eligibility map](#).

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## Program Highlights



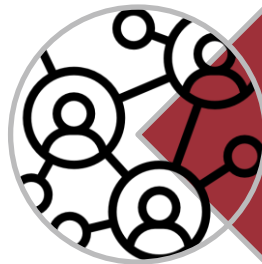
## Previous Awards – Planning



City of Falcon Heights: **Corridor study to identify potential redevelopment sites** along Larpenteur and Snelling



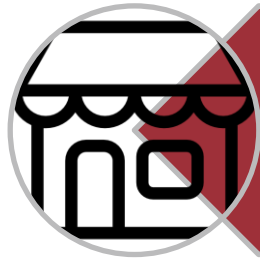
City of New Brighton: **Parking study** that resulted in **reduced parking requirements** and best practices handout



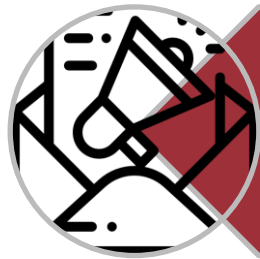
Creative Enterprise Zone: **Redevelopment feasibility analysis** and **creation of cooperative ownership model** for small businesses



## Previous Awards – Commercial Corridor Initiative



Rice & Larpenteur Alliance: **business façade improvement subgrants to 7 businesses** and installation of wayfinding/signage



Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce: Welcome Back to Lexington Avenue **business promotion campaign**

A photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with arched windows and a prominent red brick chimney. The building is partially obscured by large, leafy green trees. In the foreground, there is a paved sidewalk, a brick wall, and a decorative iron fence. The scene is set in a well-maintained outdoor area.

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## Other Solicitations



# Upcoming CED Solicitations

## Environmental Response Fund (ERF)

- Application period: March 15-May 1, 2024
- [ramseycounty.us/ERF](https://ramseycounty.us/ERF)

## Site Assessment Grant (SAG)

- Rolling applications
- [ramseycounty.us/SAG](https://ramseycounty.us/SAG)



## Questions?

[Ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors](https://ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors)

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