

Critical Corridors Funding Recommendations Fall 2023

The Community & Economic Development (CED) department launched the Critical Corridors programs in the fall of 2022 as part of the first year of Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy funding availability. In this second year of the programs, Critical Corridors have been split into a spring and a fall round of solicitations. The spring solicitations were for two programs, Pre-Development Planning and Commercial Corridor Initiative, and the fall solicitation is for one program, Development & Infrastructure.

In the fall Development & Infrastructure solicitation, eleven eligible applications for funding assistance were received totaling \$4,342,158 in requests. A team of reviewers evaluated applications and made funding recommendations. Reviewers included representatives from Community & Economic Development, Public Works & Multi-Modal Planning, and external reviewers from the Metropolitan Council and Baker Tilly.

Recommendations through this solicitation comprise a total of \$1,892,158 (including a \$500,000 reallocation from 2022 Critical Corridors) in Critical Corridors awards to five projects.

Development & Infrastructure

Plaza del Sol - El Patio de la Plaza Expansion

Applicant: Latino Economic Development Center

Location: Saint Paul

Funding Recommendation: \$92,158

The Latino Economic Development Center is planning to expand their outdoor plaza in conjunction with the Plaza del Sol rehabilitation project in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood of St. Paul. Plaza del Sol will house food and retail businesses, a commissary kitchen, office space, and event space. The building is near a proposed Purple Line BRT stop on Payne Avenue and close to several high-quality bicycle paths, including the Bruce Vento Trail. They received \$90,500 in Critical Corridors funding last year for the patio, but since then, they decided to extend the sidewalk bump-out by 84 feet to support additional dining space and to improve pedestrian safety.

Marshall Avenue Flats

Applicant: PAK Properties

Location: Saint Paul

Funding Recommendation: \$300,000

PAK Properties is redeveloping a surface parking lot into 98 units of affordable housing serving households from 30% to 60% area median income (AMI) in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood of St. Paul. This project is an infill site that will increase density and increase the pedestrian orientation of the site along the Selby, Marshall and Snelling commercial hub. The building will include first-floor amenities of a community room and fitness center to help activate the street environment along Marshall Avenue. The project is near the A Line BRT stop at Dayton and Snelling and includes a creative shared parking agreement with the adjacent office building to reduce the overall number of parking stalls on the site. This award will help fund site preparation, stormwater management, utility connections, and public infrastructure.

Serenity Townhomes

Applicant: Amani Construction & Development

Location: St. Paul

Funding Recommendation: \$500,000

Amani Construction & Development is redeveloping a parking lot into affordable townhouses in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood of St. Paul in collaboration with Rondo Community Land Trust. The land trust model will ensure long-term affordability of the 17 ownership units, which range from two to four bedrooms to intended for families who make between 60% and 80% of area median income. The project is near a Route 74 bus stop. This award will help fund the demolition of the existing parking lot and establish and improve utilities on the project site.

Gladstone Village

Applicant: JB Vang Partners, Inc.

Location: Maplewood

Funding Recommendation: \$500,000

JB Vang Partners, Inc. is developing a 65-unit new construction mixed-income affordable rental housing project in Maplewood. The project will transform an underutilized site that current contains a funeral home into a four-story development that is adjacent to an existing stop for the Route 64 high-frequency bus and near the Bruce Vento Trail. The development will include a community gathering space with areas for co-working and space for children, outdoor grilling and seating amenities, and a fitness room. This award will help fund the site preparation and stormwater management required for the development of the site.

Rice Street Crossing

Applicant: Enclave Companies

Location: Shoreview

Funding Recommendation: \$500,000

Enclave Companies is developing a mixed-use community located in Shoreview on a site previously owned by Ramsey County Public Works. Enclave was selected by the City of Shoreview to develop the site through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process. It is composed of a 253-unit apartment building; a multi-tenant commercial building that has live-work units; and a quasi-public area that will contain a small plaza, shelter and pedestrian connections into the surrounding neighborhood and the Highway 96 Regional Trail System. The project is near a Route 62 bus stop. This grant will help fund the site preparation, soil corrections, stormwater management and public realm improvements required for the development of this site.