

Critical Corridors Planning

2024 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. 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:

- Intensify land use 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.

Eligible Activities

Projects need to be located in a Critical Corridor. Refer to the [Critical Corridors Map](#) for definitions and information on transit and activity centers.

- 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:
 - o Pedestrian and bike connections.
 - o Public realm improvements.
 - o Walking-oriented development.
 - o Safe Routes to Transit plans.
 - o Sustainable infrastructure plans, such as district energy or stormwater systems.
- Land use and/or zoning studies that align with program priorities, including:
 - o Parking studies with the goal of reducing parking minimums.
 - o Studies that encourage land use intensification within transit corridors.
- Equitable development policy or plan development.

Eligible Applicants

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

Ineligible Activities

- Organization 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.

Funding

- Total funding available: approximately \$100,000.
- Maximum anticipated award: \$50,000 per project.
- Activities funded by this program must be completed by June 30, 2025.
- Funds are available on a reimbursement basis.
- Activities completed prior to award are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Match is not required but may be considered.

Application Details

Application opens: Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

Application closes: Wednesday, April 3, 2024.

Award decisions: June 2024.

Program webpage:

ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors

Pre-application: A pre-application meeting with staff is optional, but highly recommended, to ensure project eligibility and program fit. Please email staff to schedule a call prior to March 6, 2024.

Webinar: Applicants are encouraged to attend via Zoom March 4, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. to learn more about funding availability and program application requirements. The Zoom link is available on the program webpage. A video recording will be posted to the program webpage following the webinar.

Applications will be accepted via ZoomGrants.

Application attachments include:

- Application form.
- Map of proposed project area.
- Letters indicating community and city support.

Scoring and Evaluation

1. Project Outcomes & Opportunity

- Leads to greater intensity of land use.
- Propels development in the area.
- Encourages multifamily zoning/development, particularly affordable housing.

2. Placemaking & Transit-Oriented Development

- Increases connectivity in the area.
- Addresses existing gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian transportation system.
- Increases the public realm and increase sense of place.

3. Community Engagement & Racial Equity

- Community-led or driven.
- Includes community engagement and outreach.
- Provides low-income and racially and ethnically diverse communities decision making power.

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4. Capacity & Readiness

- Feasibly be completed by the program deadline of June 30, 2025.
- Financially feasible and has reasonable costs.
- Demonstrates need for Ramsey County funding.

5. Overall Application

Projects will be evaluated based on overall alignment with Critical Corridors program goals and priorities, as well as alignment with relevant Ramsey County plans:

- [Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan](#).
- [Equitable Development Framework](#).
- [Ramsey County Strategic Plan](#).
- [Ramsey County Bike and Pedestrian Plan and All Abilities 2050 Transportation Plan](#).

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

Application review

Applications will be reviewed by a review panel consisting of Ramsey County staff and outside reviewers as deemed necessary.

Contracting and Reporting

Ramsey County will contract directly with grantees for the portion of work covered by the program award. All grantees are required to submit a final report summarizing the project process, outcomes and impacts of completed work. Award of funds through this program does not guarantee future funding.

Staff Contacts

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