

# Critical Corridors Information Session

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March 2023

## Agenda

- Housekeeping
  - Background
    - Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan
    - HRA Levy
    - Critical Corridors Overview
  - Critical Corridors Solicitations
    - Pre-Development Planning
    - Commercial Corridors Initiative
  - Q&A
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## Housekeeping

- Introductions
  - Program webpage: [ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors](https://ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors)
  - Webinar recording
  - Type questions in the Zoom Q&A box
  - Q&A will be compiled into an FAQ document and posted on webpage
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# Background



# 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 Holistic Plan

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## Strategies

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## Community & Economic Development Program Areas





## **Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Levy**

- Funding source for Critical Corridors as well as some other CED programs
  - First year of HRA levy programs was 2022
  - More info available at [ramseycounty.us/HRA](https://ramseycounty.us/HRA)
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## Other CED Solicitations

- Currently open
    - Housing Development
    - CDBG Public Services, Programs and Facilities
    - Technical Assistance for Emerging Developers RFP
  - Opening soon
    - Environmental Response Fund (ERF)
    - Emerging Developer program
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# Critical Corridors Overview

## Critical Corridors

### Program Goals

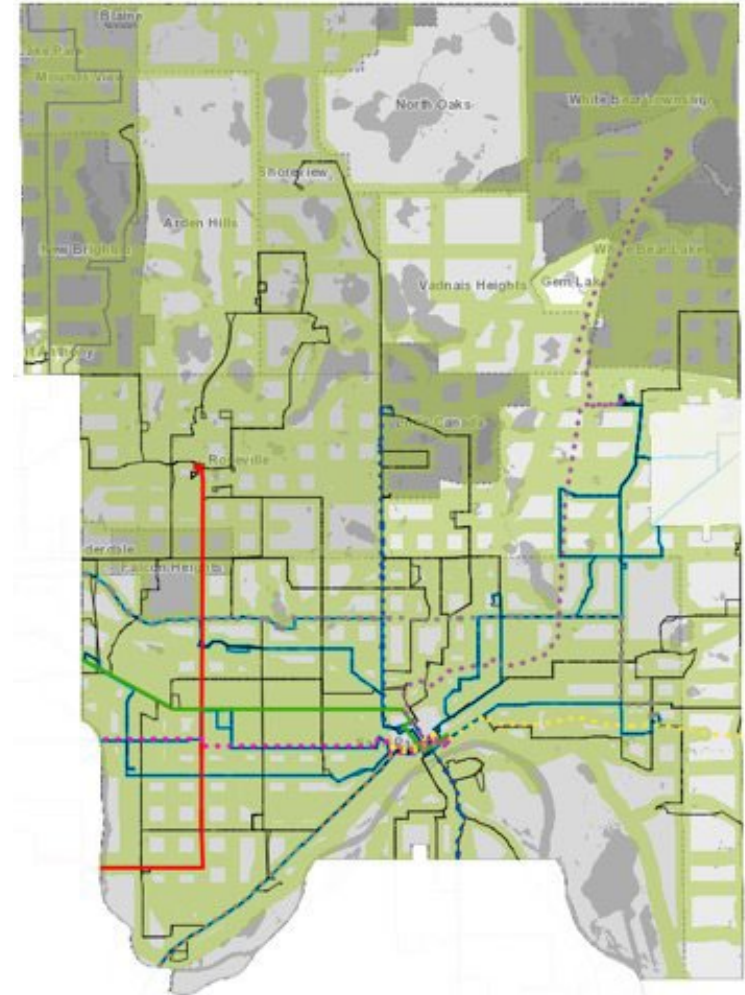
- Boost connectivity between transportation, housing and jobs
- Create more compact, walkable environments
- Enhance pedestrian access and safety
- Support vibrant business districts

### Programs

- Pre-Development Planning
  - Development & Infrastructure
  - Commercial Corridor Initiatives
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## What are Critical Corridors?

- Major transportation, economic, and cultural corridors
- Ramsey County cities gave feedback on which corridors to include
- Corridors that:
  - Create and enhance access to jobs, housing, daily activities and destinations for all residents and businesses
  - Foster and catalyze equitable and sustainable development, wealth creation, economic inclusion, innovation and transformation
  - Strengthen and connect places by enhancing transit, active transportation and public spaces



## Schedule Overview

- Spring 2023: Pre-Development Planning and Commercial Corridor Initiative
    - Solicitations open: March 7 – April 4
    - Award decisions: May
  - Fall 2023: Development & Infrastructure
    - Solicitation opens: September
    - Award decisions: November
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# Pre-Development Planning



## Pre-Development Planning

### Program Purpose:

- Assist local communities in preparing for equitable redevelopment and public improvements within critical corridors
- 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



## Pre-Development Planning

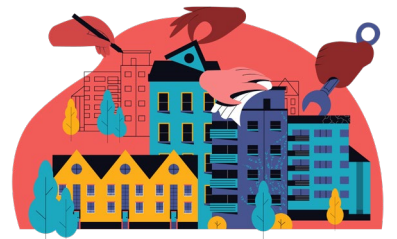
**Eligible Applicants:** cities, housing authorities, economic development authorities, port authorities, watershed districts, community-based nonprofits

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

**Total Funding Available:** ~\$100,000

**Timing:** Activities funded by this program must be completed by 7/1/2024. Activities completed prior to award are not eligible for reimbursement.

**Match:** not required but may be considered during evaluation



## Pre-Development Planning

### Eligible Activities

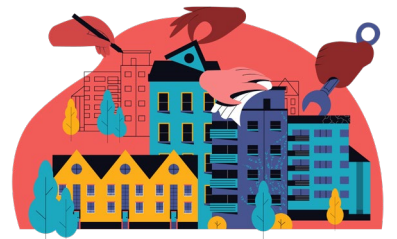
- Land use plans: small area plans, corridor plans, station area plans
- Redevelopment feasibility or concept plans
- Market analyses, including “missing middle” housing analysis
- Infrastructure planning and conceptual designs including:
  - Pedestrian and bike connections
  - Public realm improvements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



## Pre-Development Planning

### Ineligible Activities

- Capital costs and equipment
- Road-centric planning activities
- General/routine infrastructure planning
- Traffic or parking studies not corresponding to parking reduction goals
- Site plans
- Soft costs



## Pre-Development Planning

### Strategic & Selection Priorities

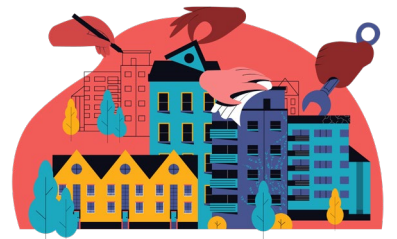
- Alignment with Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan
- Intensification of land use, emphasizing pedestrian environment and access to transit
- Facilitation of multifamily development, including supportive infrastructure or upzoning
- Prevention, reduction, removal, or redevelopment of blighted areas
- Improvement of pedestrian or bicycle safety and access
- Potential to catalyze development without displacing current residents or businesses
- Project readiness and organizational capacity
- Parity in overall HRA levy funding between Saint Paul and suburban cities



## Pre-Development Planning

### Previous Awards

- City of Mounds View: redevelopment concept plan for shopping center
- Creative Enterprise Zone: redevelopment feasibility analysis and creation of cooperative ownership model for building with many small businesses
- City of New Brighton: parking reduction study
- City of Roseville: pedestrian improvement study at County Road B-Snelling Ave
- Indigenous Roots: East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Cultural Corridor Plan



# Commercial Corridor Initiative



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Program Purpose:

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



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

**Eligible Applicants:** Suburban Ramsey County entities, including cities, associated development authorities, business coalitions, and chambers of commerce

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

**Total Funding Available:** ~\$100,000

**Timing:** Activities funded by this program must be completed by 7/1/2024. Activities completed prior to award are not eligible for reimbursement.

**Match:** not required but may be considered during evaluation



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Eligible Activities

- Business recruitment activities
- Establishment of small-business incubators
- District-wide marketing, branding, and promotion initiatives
- District-wide planning and design
- Design and implementation of wayfinding, street furniture or other public realm enhancements
- Building façade improvements
- Technical assistance for small businesses, including:
  - Special service district or business association establishment
  - Financial, legal, or tax-related services
  - Merchandising, marketing, and social media assistance



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Ineligible Activities

- Parking lot improvements
- Activities for sites without public frontage
- Activities that benefit a single business
- Administration, overhead, business operations support
- Events



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Strategic & Selection Priorities

- Alignment with Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan
- Improvement of conditions for job creation and entrepreneurship
- Improvement of coordination among businesses
- Placemaking and improved pedestrian and bicycle access
- Demonstrated need for financial assistance
- Project readiness and organizational capacity
- Support from businesses and property owners
- Alignment with city priorities and plans



## Commercial Corridor Initiative

### Previous Awards

- Rice & Larpenteur Alliance: business façade improvement grants and installation of wayfinding/signage
- City of New Brighton: installation of signage along Old Highway 8
- Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce: Welcome Back to Lexington Avenue business promotion campaign



# Application Process



## **Application Process**

Program website: [ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors](https://ramseycounty.us/CriticalCorridors)

- Applications accepted through ZoomGrants
  - Pre-application meetings: highly encouraged but not required
  - Key dates
    - Solicitations open: March 7, 2023
    - Solicitations close: April 4, 2023
    - Award decisions: May 2023
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Q&A

# Thank you!

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