

Livable Communities Demonstration Account 2008 Application and Review Process

Application Process: Staff held two workshops for applicants on April 22 and 24 to explain the program, application form, evaluation process, and answer questions. A two-page pre-application was required to be submitted by June 16. Twenty-four pre-applications were received. Staff sent written comments to applicants on June 27 on eligibility of items for which funding was requested, comments in some cases that a proposal was not well targeted to the program and therefore unlikely to be competitive, and advice in cases where required information was missing from the project description or not in the required format. As a result of the staff comments or due to internal city decisions, eight pre-applications were not submitted as full applications. Applicants submitted 20 proposals by the application deadline of July 21 requesting eligible items totaling \$17,475,314.

Eligibility Review: Staff reviewed applications for completeness, eligibility of the proposal, eligibility of items requested, and whether the resolution of support contained all of the required language.

Step One Evaluation Process: A staff team from LCA, Local Planning Assistance, Transportation Services and Metro Transit evaluated the 20 proposals received according to seven criteria in the LCDA program criteria: use land efficiently (0-8 points), link land uses with transit (0-8 points), connect housing and centers of employment and other uses (0-8 points), provide a range of housing (0-8 points), conserve and protect natural resources (0-8 points), and include processes and tools to ensure successful outcomes (0-10 points). Seven staff members evaluated proposals in their area of expertise according to specific measurable factors for each criterion. Each project could receive up to 50 points. The Step One evaluation covered the elements of the project that will be completed or substantially completed by the end of 2010, the two-year term of the grant contract. As a result of the Step One evaluation, 14 proposals advanced to the Step Two Evaluation and six did not, having scored less than 20 points.

Step Two Evaluation Process: The Livable Communities Advisory Committee conducted the Step Two evaluation during six meetings from September 11 to November 6. The LCAC conducted a question-and-answer dialogue with representatives of the 14 proposals that advanced to this evaluation step to get clarification or more detail on projects, and to ask why projects could not proceed or what could not be accomplished but for LCDA dollars at this time. Following committee discussion on each project at a later meeting, the committee scored each proposal against the selection criteria.

The Advisory Committee scored proposals on two major evaluation criteria for which proposals could receive up to 50 points: 1) the extent to which the project shows innovative elements, and demonstrates, or shows potential to demonstrate, new development concepts for the community it is located in and/or for the region, and maximizes the potential of its location (0-30 points); and 2) the extent to which the element for which funding is requested will be a catalyst to implement the project (0-20 points). The threshold for further funding consideration is 30 points. Eleven projects scored above the 30 point threshold, three below. The LCDA criteria, in addition to establishing the 30 point threshold, state that if a project scores below the 30 point threshold, the advisory committee may advance the project to the next evaluation step and make it eligible to be considered funding by a two-thirds vote of the committee. A motion was made to move B.5, Boat Works Square, White Bear Lake, which had received 29 points, into the group of projects to be considered for funding. The motion was unanimously approved by the Committee.

Step Three – Readiness Assessment: The Committee agreed that all twelve projects that had scored at or above the 30 point scoring threshold, and Boat Works Square, White Bear Lake, are ready to be implemented.

Checklist to Determine if Funding Request Substantially Demonstrates That Proposed Project is Feasible Only With LCDA Grant: This checklist contains eight questions the Committee is required to answer “yes” or “no.” The Committee answered “yes” to all of the questions, for all twelve projects. (The checklist is a separate attachment; forms signed by LCAC Chair Ruth Grendahl for each project are on file).

Housing Performance Scoring: Following evaluation and scoring of proposals, up to ten additional housing incentives points were assigned to each applicant’s score. The housing incentives points are determined by converting a community’s housing performance score from a 100-point scale to a 10-point scale. If a proposal includes or proposes new affordable housing, or if affordable housing is located in the project site/area, a proposal could either improve its ranking by the score applied to it or not be lowered in the rankings. No project rankings changed significantly as a result of adding the housing incentives points.