

# Livable Communities Program

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## Investments in community vitality

Thriving job centers stand on once-polluted land. Workers like teachers, police officers and health care aides can find affordable housing in the communities where they work. Residents can shop, get on a bus to go to work, and enjoy a local park all within walking distance of their front door.

These opportunities are supported by the Livable Communities Act (LCA), adopted by the Minnesota Legislature in 1995 and administered by the Metropolitan Council.

The LCA provides funding for communities to invest in local economic revitalization, affordable housing initiatives, and development or redevelopment that connects different land uses and has good access to transportation.

## Voluntary program, based on incentives

The LCA reflects the Legislature's preference for a voluntary, incentive-based approach to help communities grow and to address the region's affordable and lifecycle housing needs.

## Grants from three funding accounts

The Council establishes criteria for evaluating proposals and makes grant awards from three separate accounts:

- **Tax Base Revitalization (TBRA)** - Clean up brown-fields for redevelopment, job creation and affordable housing in areas already served by transit.
- **Livable Communities Demonstration (LCDA)** - Support development and redevelopment that demonstrates efficient and cost-effective use of land and infrastructure, and achieves connected development patterns linking housing, jobs and services.
- **Local Housing Incentives (LHIA)** - Produce and preserve affordable housing choices for households with low to moderate incomes.

To compete for LCA funding, communities must negotiate long-term affordable and life-cycle housing goals with the Council, and develop an action plan to accomplish these goals. Participating communities (105 communities in 2009) are then eligible to compete for funding from all three LCA accounts.

The LCA's emphasis is on cooperation and incentives to achieve regional and local goals. Local communities are well positioned to make decisions about how their cities and towns will grow and develop, but the LCA recognizes it will take partnerships and shared resources to move from community plans to "on-the-ground" results.

## Investments reap impressive results

From 1996 through 2008, the Council awarded 557 grants totaling more than \$189 million in Livable Communities funds. The grants are expected to leverage billions of dollars in private and other public investments. Following is a summary of grants made and expected results:

- 263 TBRA grants totaling over \$77.5 million were made to 36 communities. The projects will produce an almost \$80 million increase in net tax capacity, and more than 34,000 new and retained jobs.
- 162 LCDA grants totaling over \$87.4 million were made to development and redevelopment projects that link housing, jobs, and

services, and maximize efficient infrastructure in 50 older and developing cities.

- 119 grants to 57 cities were to provide affordable housing opportunities, including more than 2,100 affordable new rental units; more than 720 rehabilitated affordable rental units; and more than 950 affordable new and rehabilitated ownership units.

Other benefits are restored natural resources, improved transportation options, new community amenities and thriving new neighborhoods.

### **Advisory Committee helps select projects**

The Livable Communities Advisory Committee reviews and recommends funding awards to the Council for the Livable Communities Demonstration Account. The

committee reviews complex development and redevelopment proposals against the program's criteria for connected development patterns that link housing, jobs and services.

The committee's 13 members represent and have expertise in development as it relates to local government planning, economic or community development; public and private finance; new development and redevelopment; transportation; environment; and site design.

### **Cooperative efforts reduce 'red tape'**

Communities applying for LHIA funding to produce affordable multi-family rental housing, as well as other public affordable housing funds in the region, need only fill out one application through Minnesota

Housing. A group of representatives from the Council, the Family Housing Fund and Minnesota Housing reviews the applications and make grants from a variety of public funding sources.

TBRA funding is coordinated with complementary programs at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Hennepin County and Ramsey County.

### **For more information**

- Visit the [Council's website page on the Livable Communities program](#).
- [Frequently asked questions about LCA](#).
- Related Fact Sheet: [- Affordable Housing](#)

Pub. 14-09-035    March 2009