

# Information Item

Community Development Committee



**Meeting Date:** September 3, 2024

## Topic

Livable Communities Act Program Update

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. § 473.253, Livable Communities Act
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Hannah Gary, Planning Analyst, 651.602.1633 Madeline Schwartz, Associate Planner, 651.602.1463
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development/Regional Planning

## Background

As part of the adoption of the 2024 Fund Distribution Plan (FDP), the Council directed staff to add to the 2024 Committee work plan a Council Member-engaged process for reviewing the LCA program to address the equity scoring criteria, geographic distribution of awards, and barriers to participation in the program. At recent earlier Community Development Committee meetings, committee members worked with staff to plan an approach for considering possible program changes for Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant programs. In July, the Council hired consultants Ellen Watters and Mary Kay Bailey to analyze program data and gain understanding from both participating cities and non-participating cities of their perceptions of Livable Communities grant programs. The consultants' overall focus is to evaluate the impact of the program and identify opportunities for improvement to better meet the two identified goals:

1. Ensuring the alignment of program design with the regional goals identified for the forthcoming [Imagine 2050](#) regional development guide:
  - Our region is equitable and inclusive
  - Our communities are healthy and safe
  - Our region is dynamic and resilient
  - We lead on addressing climate change
  - We protect and restore natural systems
2. Encouraging broad participation from communities in the region and reducing barriers to entry to the grant program

## Project Updates

On [July 17, 2024](#), Livable Communities Senior Manager Sarah Berke presented the workplan and timeline for the consultant work to the Committee. Since that presentation, the consultant team has completed the following:

- participated in two workshops with cities hosted by Metro Cities
- interviewed Council Members about their experiences with the Livable Communities programs
- discussed the results of the Metro Cities workshops with the Housing Work Group

1. analyzed and synthesized LCA program data

Key themes emerging from the Metro Cities workshops were the importance of rehabilitation and preservation support for both commercial and residential properties, funding for affordable homeownership, and challenges associated with application timing. These themes were discussed with the Housing Work Group on August 8.

Data on submitted applications, awarded applications, awarded amounts, participation levels, program impacts, and results from the Metro Cities conversations are included in additional links posted with this agenda.

At the September 3, 2024, meeting, Committee members will hear an update from the consultant team and engage in an interactive discussion about emerging themes in this evaluation.

