

# Information Item

Community Development Committee



**Meeting Date:** October 7, 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>	Madeline Schwartz, Associate Planner, (651) 602-1463 Sarah Berke, Senior Manager, Housing & Livable Communities, (651) 602-1198
<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. 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

At the Community Development Committee meeting on September 3, 2024, the consultant team presented the scope of the LCA program review and update process, project goals, and future deliverables. Based on their ongoing review of programs, they presented data on LCA impacts, participation, awards, and qualitative data from engagement. They reviewed the statutory and regional plan guidance for the LCA program. During the meeting they also led a workshop activity to gain feedback from Community Development Committee members on identified tensions between current LCA programs priorities and Council Member interests for the focus of the programs.

Following the September 3 meeting, the consultants followed up with Community Development Committee members to gather any final feedback members wanted to share.

At the October 7, 2024, Community Development Committee meeting, the consultants will share insights from exploring the tensions identified at the September 3 meeting, present information on recent engagement that staff have done in regard to LCA programs, future plans for staff outreach, and explore some potential changes to LCA programs in upcoming years to encourage program participation and reduce barriers for participants. In the preparation of these materials, reviewing the feasible timeline for potential program changes was also considered.

Following the October 7, meeting, the consultants will take all reviewed data and Council Member feedback to provide a comprehensive report to improve programs, reduce barriers, enhance participation and align with statutory and Imagine 2050 goals and objectives.

