

# Information Item

Community Development Committee



**Meeting Date:** November 18, 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

As part of the LCA review process consultants Ellen Watters and Mary Kay Bailey presented at the Community Development Committee meeting on September 3 and October 7, 2024. At the September 3 meeting, the consultant team presented the scope of the LCA program review and update process, project goals, overview of data on LCA outcomes, and led a workshop with Community Development Committee members to gain feedback on tensions identified in the program. At the October 7 Community Development Committee meeting, the consultants further explored the tensions identified at the September 3 meeting and presented potential changes to LCA programs in upcoming years for Community Development Committee member discussion.

## Project Updates

At the November 18, 2024, Community Development Committee meeting, the consultant team will present highlights from the LCA review process final report and hold space for committee member reactions and next steps. The final report will highlight program trends and outcomes, an engagement analysis, program alignment with Council policies, existing program tensions, and potential changes identified by the consultant team. A review of a feasible timeline for potential program changes was also considered and is outlined in the final report.

