

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: July 15, 2013

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 24, 2013

Subject: 2013 LCA-TOD Pre-Development & Site Investigation funding recommendations

District(s), Member(s): 6, Council Member Brimeyer

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute §473.253

Staff Prepared/Presented: Adam Maleitzke, Senior Planner (651) 602-1633

Division/Department: Community Development / Livable Communities

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council: (1) award a \$100,000 Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit Oriented Development Pre-Development grant to the City of Saint Louis Park for its *Saint Louis Park Station Area Zoning Study* project; and (2) authorize its Community Development Division Director to execute the grant agreement on behalf of the Council.

Background

Advancing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along existing and emerging transitways is a priority of the Metropolitan Council. The funds are targeted to support TOD activities in several identified "TOD areas." The Council adopted the Livable Communities Act (LCA) TOD grant category guidelines, criteria, schedule and evaluation process as part of the 2013 Annual Livable Communities Fund Distribution Plan (FDP). Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) TOD Pre-Development and Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) Site Investigation grant applications were due May 1. The Council received two Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) TOD Pre-Development grant applications this funding cycle. No TBRA-TOD Site Investigation grant applications were received.

Rationale

The City of Saint Louis Park submitted an application to fund a "zoning implementation tool," which is an eligible use under the LCDA-TOD Pre-Development grant category. The FDP provides for a Council staff review of this type of grant application, using criteria approved in the FDP. The result of that review was a score of 67.2 points out of a possible 100, which is above the minimum threshold for funding.

Funding

The 2013 FDP allocated \$5,000,000 for LCDA TOD grant awards. Up to \$500,000 of that amount was available for LCDA-TOD Pre-Development projects. If this project is funded, \$4,900,000 will be available to be awarded for LCDA-TOD Development projects later this year. Since no TBRA-TOD Site Investigation applications were submitted, \$3,000,000 will be available to be awarded for TBRA-TOD Cleanup projects later this year.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to the application recommended for funding.

Review Record

On May 1st, two LCDA-TOD Pre-Development applications were submitted to the Council. No TBRA-TOD Site Investigation applications were submitted for consideration.

In its Bassett Creek North application, the City of Minneapolis requested funding for a market study, appraisal, and soil testing in support of an unidentified future development project on two irregularly-shaped parcels along Van White Boulevard. The City could not identify a developer or provide a concept plan and program of uses in its initial application, which is required as part of the future development project criteria outlined in the Fund Distribution Plan. As a result, Council staff determined the application ineligible and did not recommend it for funding.

After an initial evaluation meeting, staff determined that the City of Saint Louis Park's original application needed more detail about (1) the density and design outcomes that the project would help facilitate and (2) the zoning approach that the City would ultimately pursue (performance zoning, form-based code, planned unit development, etc.). Council staff met with staff from Saint Louis Park to help refine the request and identify a single zoning approach that would be eligible for funding and would meet the guidelines of LCA-TOD grants.

The City's revised application requests \$100,000 for the creation of a form-based code that would apply to three future Green Line station areas in Saint Louis Park. A form-based code is an alternative to performance zoning, which emphasizes parking ratios, floor-area ratios, and other metrics. By contrast, a form-based code identifies specific architectural typologies (e.g., a three-story rowhouse, a four-to-six story mixed use project) and landscape standards (e.g., circulation patterns, right-of-way widths, etc.) and identifies districts where these standards apply. If awarded, the grant would fund:

- A "synoptic survey" of previously completed planning studies to establish standards for density, orientation, massing, etc.
- Training for staff and elected officials on the implications of a form-based code and how to administer the code once implemented
- Creation of the details of a form-based code, such as the regulating plan, building type standards, and thoroughfare standards. This phase would also include public outreach, likely through a charrette process.

The City anticipates hiring national consultants who would help develop the code.

If implemented, Saint Louis Park's form-based code for TOD would be the first of its kind in the region and could serve as a model for other cities along the Green Line extension and other transitways. The Form-Based Code Institute, based in Chicago, is not aware of any form-based codes that have been implemented in the state of Minnesota. A form-based code meets the objectives for LCA-TOD as specified in the evaluation criteria by providing certainty about the design, density, circulation, and land use mix permitted in LCA-TOD-eligible areas.

Livable Communities Transit Oriented Development Project Summary

Type: LCA LCDA-TOD Pre-Development
Applicant: City of Saint Louis Park
Project Name: Saint Louis Park Station Area Zoning Study
Project Location: The Beltline, Wooddale and Louisiana Station Areas in Saint Louis Park
Council District: 6 – James Brimeyer

Funding

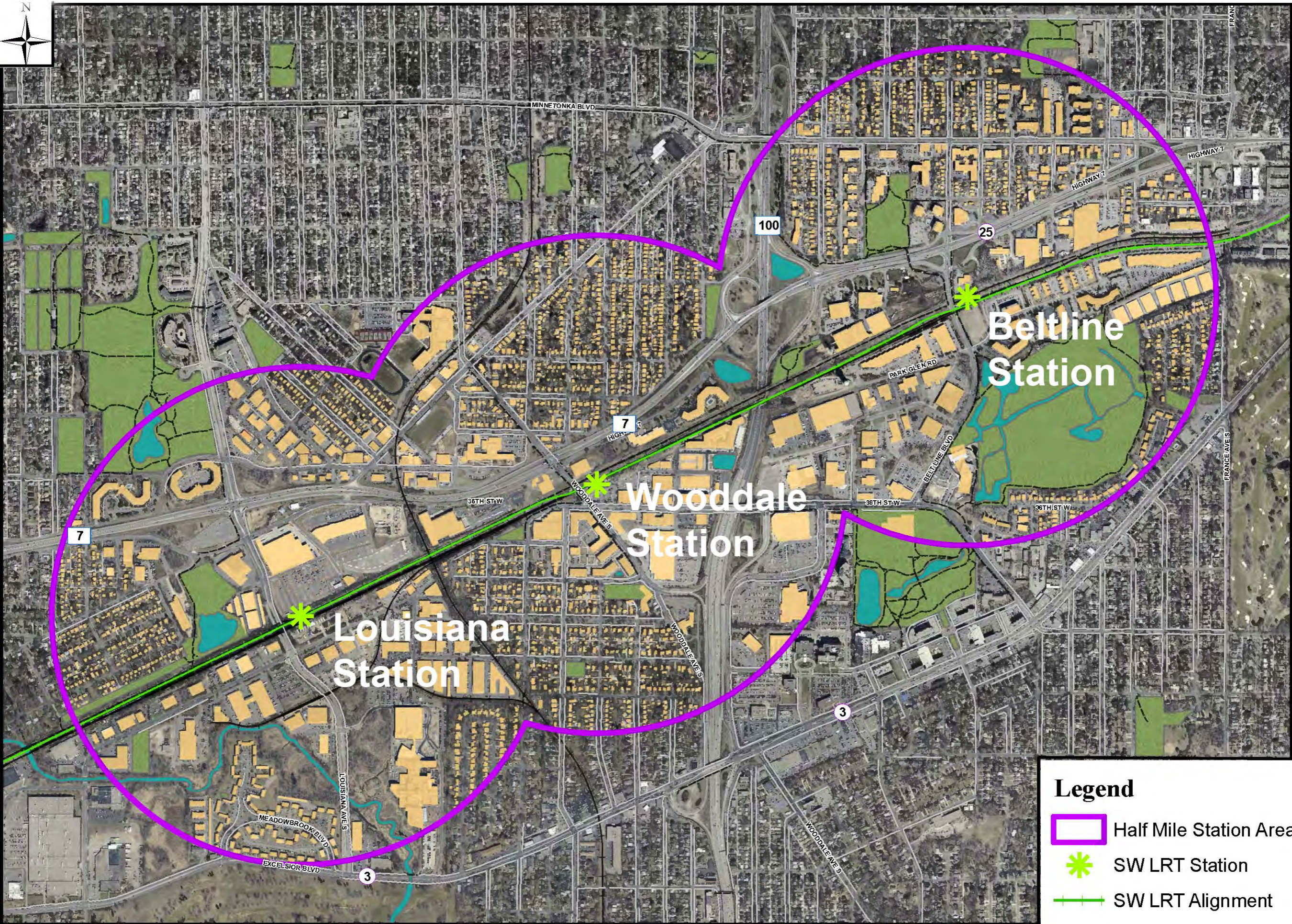
Requested amount	\$100,000.00	Recommended amount	\$100,000.00
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Project Detail:

Project summary	Funding will support the creation of a form-based code for the Louisiana, Beltline, and Wooddale station areas in Saint Louis Park. Form-based codes guide development by enforcing architectural and landscape standards, as opposed to traditional or performance zoning, which prescribes metrics such as floor-area ratio, dwelling units per acre, etc. The project will include a synoptic survey of the station areas to identify existing development patterns and build off of the density and design standards recommended by previously-completed planning studies. Since the form-based code represents a new approach to zoning, consultants will facilitate training across City departments and with elected officials to ensure that the process for enforcing architectural and landscape/thoroughfare standards is coordinated. Once adopted, the form-based code will provide developers with more certainty about the City's expectations for higher density, well-connected, and pedestrian-friendly development near three future Green Line stations.
Other public investment	City contribution of \$25,000
Comments/ Demonstration value	The form-based code will be the first of its kind adopted in the State of Minnesota. The project will demonstrate the potential to guide transit-oriented development through an innovative zoning approach.

Use of Funds

Amount	Match	Uses to be completed by 7/31/2015
\$10,000	\$5,000	Consultant study of existing plans and synoptic survey of station areas; project scoping
25,000	5,000	Public outreach, training for staff, elected officials, and general public about the use of a form-based code
65,000	15,000	Creation of form-based code elements, including: regulating plan, building type standards, thoroughfare/landscape standards. Public outreach.




Beltline Station

Wooddale Station

Louisiana Station

Legend

-  Half Mile Station Area
-  SW LRT Station
-  SW LRT Alignment

0 330 660 1,320 1,980 2,640 Feet