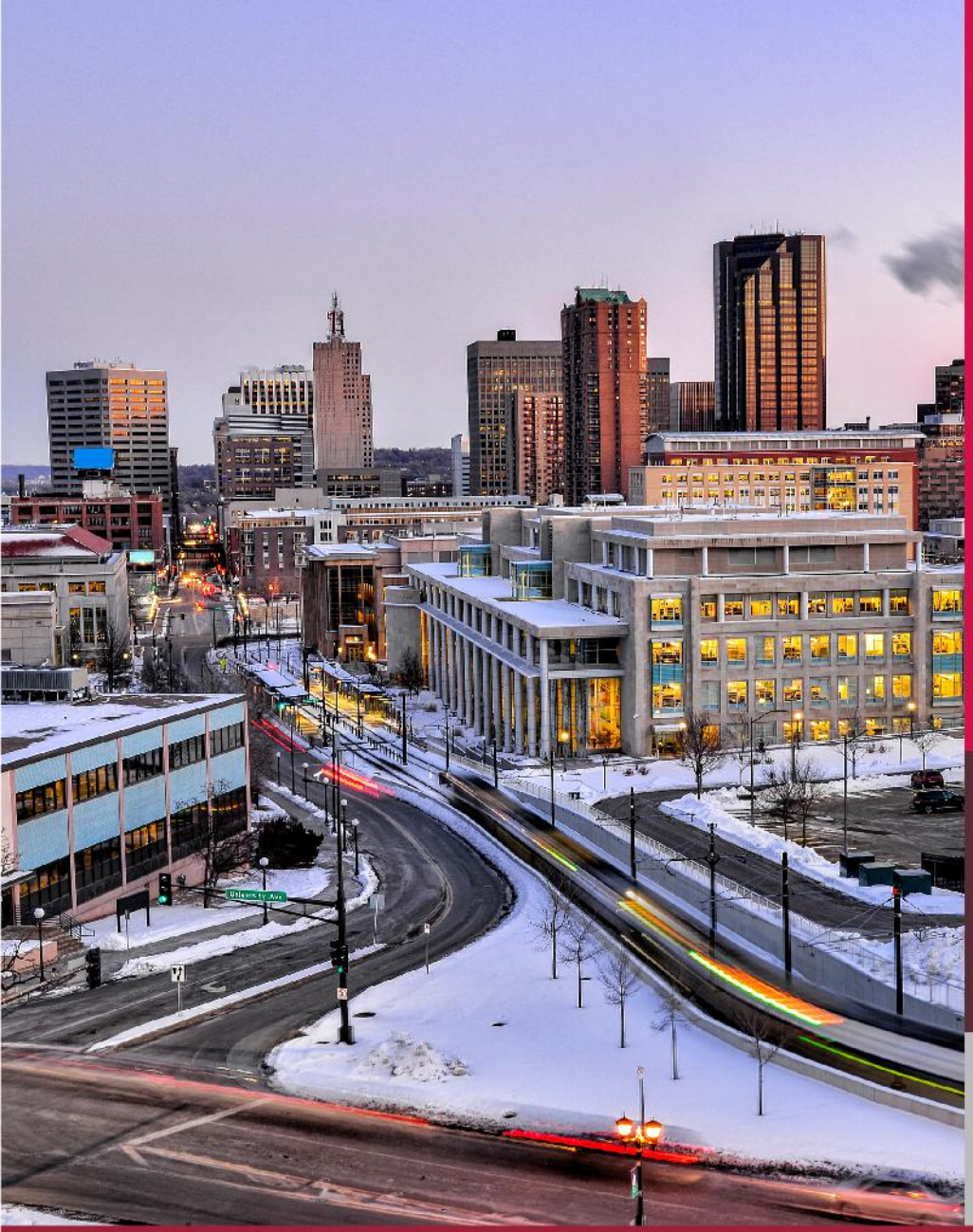


RAMSEY COUNTY

Critical Corridors Informational Webinar

Planning & Commercial Corridor Initiative Programs

7/22/2026

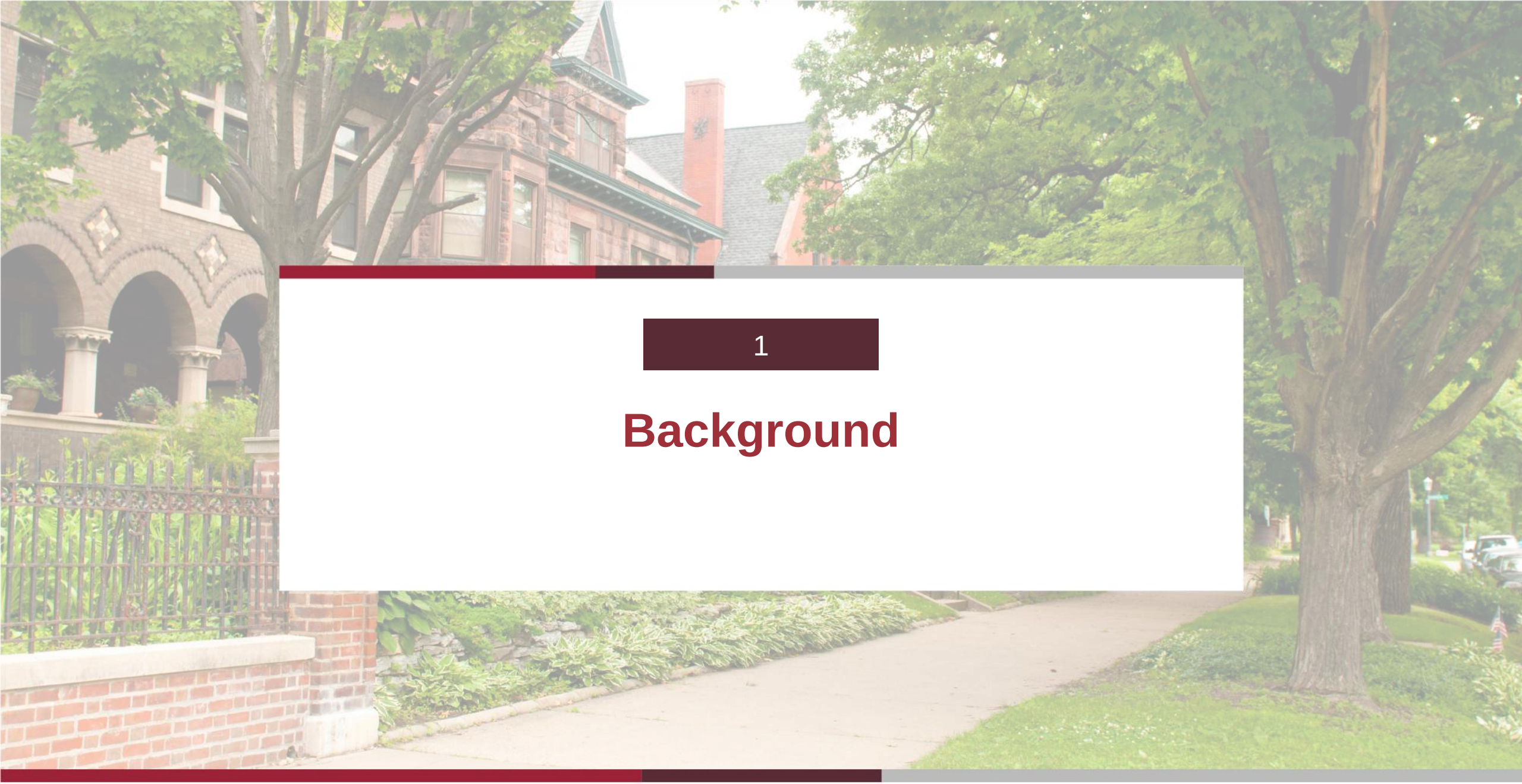


Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Background
- Critical Corridors Solicitations
  - Planning
  - Commercial Corridor Initiative
- Application Process
- Program Highlights
- Other Solicitations

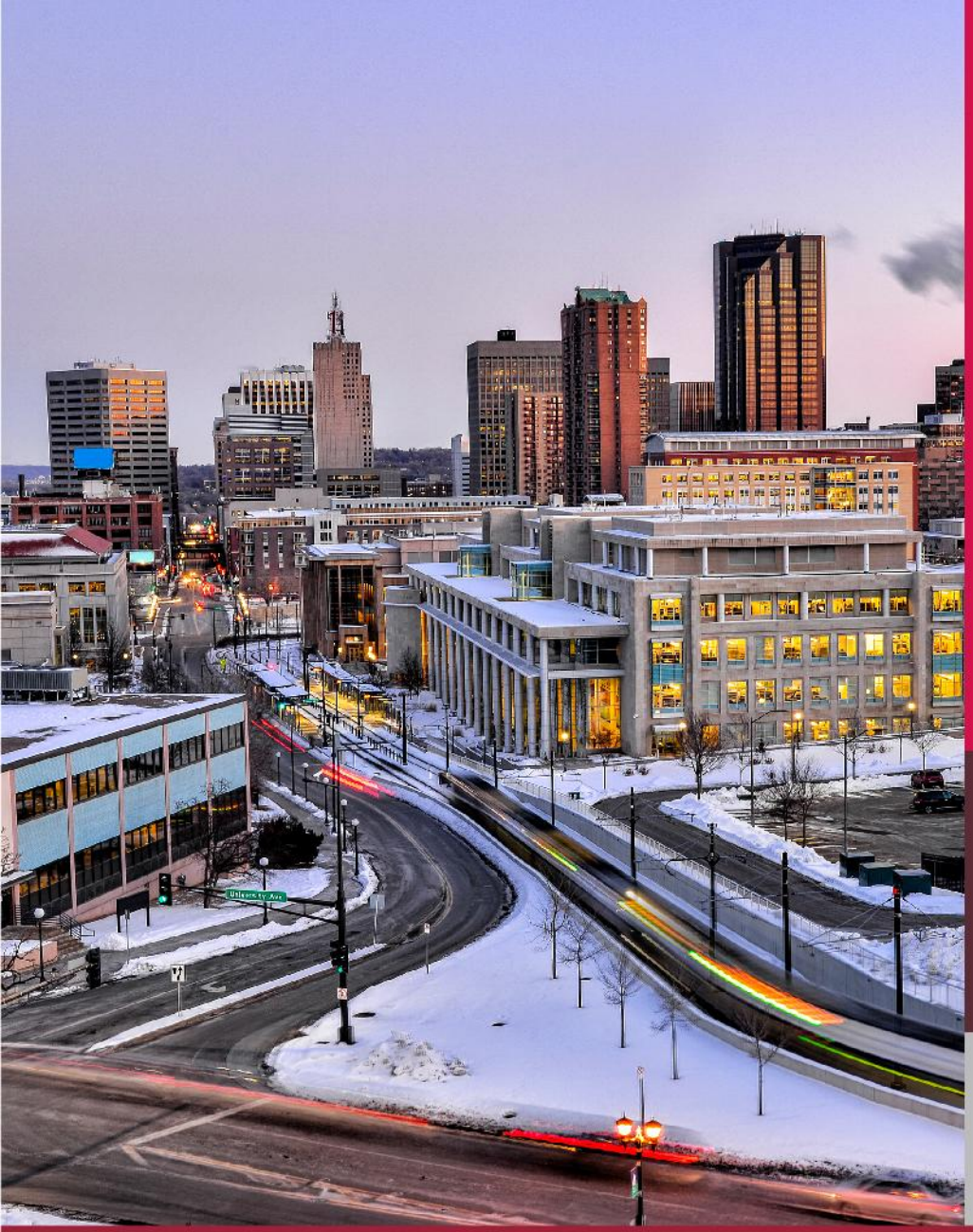
Housekeeping

- Introductions
- Webinar
  - Press Q&A button below to ask questions
- Materials will be posted on program webpage: RamseyCountyMN.gov/CriticalCorridors
  - Webinar recording
  - Q&A will be compiled into an FAQ document



1

Background



Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Levy

- Funding source for:
  - Critical Corridors
  - Housing Development Solicitations
  - Emerging and Diverse Developers (EDD)
  - Site Assessment Grants (SAG)
  - FirstHome Down Payment Assistance
- Eligibility for these programs limited to HRA area of operation
- More info available at RamseyCountyMN.gov/HRA


Ramsey County Economic
Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan

A Holistic Plan

County Goals

- Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty
- Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses

Strategies

Ensure place-based inclusion, create resilient and equitable communities

- Preserve and increase the supply of rental housing units for lowest-income residents
- Expand affordable homeownership opportunities and improve housing stability for communities that have experienced historic wealth extraction
- Foster inclusive economic development within county transit, economic, and cultural corridors
- Support communities in equitable site development

Foster economic competitiveness, innovation, and transformation

- Sustain and accelerate workforce recovery programs
- Develop pathways to entrepreneurship and Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous business ownership
- Attract and grow high-wage industry and innovation: technology, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences
- Strengthen business retention and expansion infrastructure to support communities



Critical Corridors Solicitations

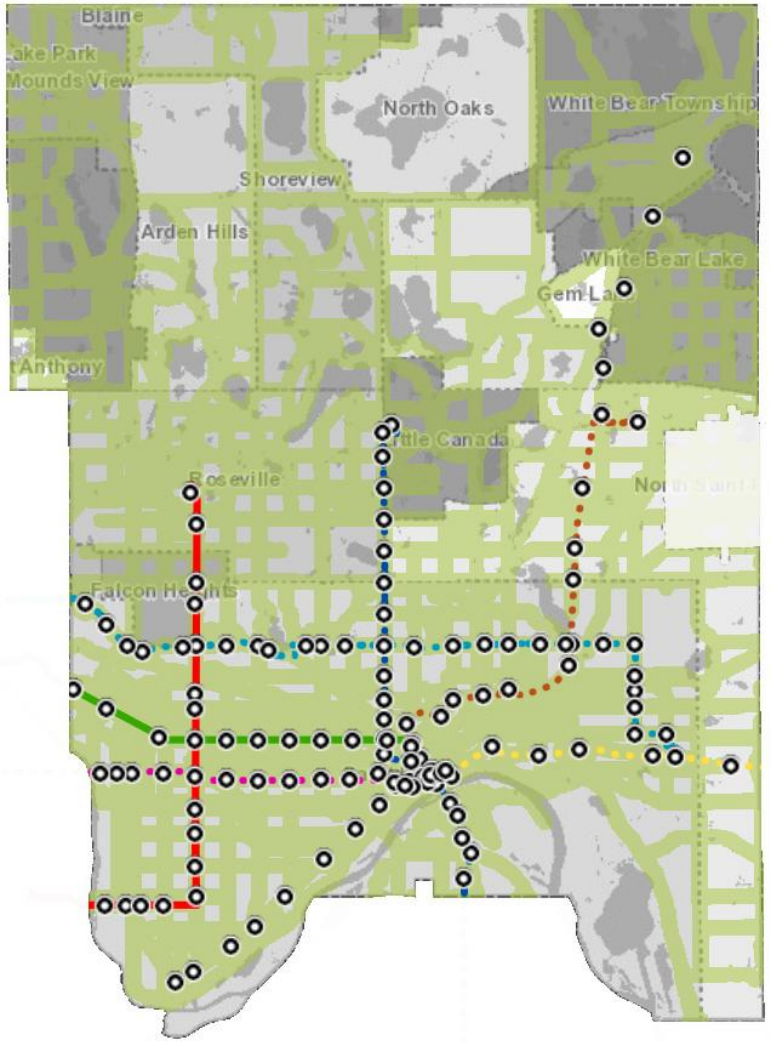
Critical Corridors Overview

Program Goals

- Support redevelopment projects.
- Boost connectivity between housing, jobs, retail, services and transportation.
- Create more compact, walkable environments.
- Enhance pedestrian access and safety.
- Support vibrant business districts.

Programs

- **Planning** *(Summer 2026)*
- **Commercial Corridor Initiative** *(Summer 2026)*
- Development & Infrastructure*
  - **Combined with Spring 2026 Housing Development Solicitation, not planned for fall 2026*



See map in program webpage for what's considered a Critical Corridor

Related Resources

- Critical Corridors interactive map

What are Critical Corridors?

- Major transportation, economic, and cultural corridors
- Critical Corridors are areas that:
  - Serve as community hubs for housing, jobs, services, and amenities.
  - Provide access to daily activities and destinations.
  - Provide opportunities for wealth creation, economic inclusion, innovation and transformation.

Eligibility: project must be located in the green shaded areas of map

***New in 2026**: Downtown St. Paul is now eligible for funding*



Critical Corridors Planning Program

Critical Corridors: Planning



Program Purpose

- Assists local communities in planning for district-wide equitable redevelopment and public realm improvements along transit, economic, and cultural corridors.
- Facilitates pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access in connection with redevelopment.
- Connects residents to housing, jobs and destinations while furthering environmental, public health, racial equity and economic prosperity goals.

Critical Corridors: Planning



Eligible Applicants: Cities, housing/economic development/port authorities, watershed districts, park districts, other public agencies and community-based nonprofit organizations in Ramsey County.

Maximum Funding Request: $50,000

Timing: Funds must be expended by 9/30/2027. Activities completed prior to award date are not eligible for reimbursement.

Planning Program - Eligible Activities



- Land use plans: small area/corridor/station area plans.
- Redevelopment feasibility studies or concept plans.
- Market analyses, including “Missing Middle” housing analysis.
- Infrastructure planning and conceptual designs including:
  - Pedestrian and bike connections.
  - Public realm improvements.
  - Walking-oriented development.
  - Safe Routes to Transit plans.
  - Sustainable infrastructure plans, such as district energy or stormwater systems.
- Land use and/or zoning studies that align with program priorities, including:
  - Parking studies with the goal of reducing parking minimums.
  - Studies that encourage redevelopment and increased density within transit corridors.
- Equitable development policy or plan development.
- *For Nonprofits Only:* Up to 5% of grant award for administrative staff time



Planning Program - Ineligible Activities

- Administrative staff time over 5% for nonprofits.
- Administrative staff time for all other entities who are not nonprofits.
- Capital costs and equipment.
- Road-centric planning activities.
- General/routine infrastructure planning.
- Traffic or parking studies without parking reduction goals.
- Site plans.
- Other soft costs not listed in eligible activities.



Critical Corridors
Commercial Corridor Initiative



Critical Corridors

Commercial Corridor Initiative

Program Purpose

Strengthens small business districts by supporting thriving main streets and investing in pathways to entrepreneurship for racially and ethnically diverse communities



Critical Corridors

Commercial Corridor Initiative

Eligible Applicants:

Suburban Ramsey County & *downtown* St. Paul entities

Including cities, associated development authorities, business coalitions, chambers of commerce and nonprofits.

Maximum Grant Request: $50,000

Timing: Funds must be expended by 9/30/2027. Activities completed prior to award date are not eligible for reimbursement.

Commercial Corridor Initiative - Eligible Activities



**Initiatives need to be located in Suburban Ramsey County or Downtown St. Paul*

- Business recruitment activities.
- Establishment of small-business incubators.
- District-wide planning and design.
- District-wide marketing, branding and promotion initiatives.
- Design and implementation of wayfinding, signage, street furniture or other public realm enhancements.
- Technical assistance related to business activities, including:
  - Special service district or business association establishment.
  - Building facade improvements.
- *For Nonprofits Only:* Up to 5% of grant award for administrative staff time

*For other initiatives that support business districts but aren't listed above, please reach out to staff to discuss eligibility.



Commercial Corridor Initiative - Ineligible Activities

- Activities located in the City of St. Paul (unless it is in Downtown).
- Administrative staff time.
- Parking lot improvements.
- Activities for sites without public frontage.
- Activities that benefit a single business.
- Administration, overhead, and business operations support.
- Events.

Scoring & Evaluation

1. Project Outcomes & Opportunity
2. Placemaking, Public Realm & Transit-Oriented Development
3. Community Engagement & Racial Equity
4. Capacity & Readiness
5. Overall Application

See program guidelines documents for Planning and Commercial Corridor Initiative on program website for more details.

Parity in overall Housing Redevelopment Authority levy funding between Saint Paul and suburban cities is also considered.



Application Process

Application Process

- Applications accepted through Neighborly (new application portal)
  - Application walk-through
- Pre-application meetings: highly encouraged
  - Email bradley.mahr@ramseycountymn.gov to schedule a time
- Key dates
  - Solicitations open: Monday, July 27, 2026
  - Solicitations close: Monday, August 24, 2026
  - Award decisions: October 2026

Application Attachments

1. Map of proposed project site or area.
2. Letters of community support.
3. Property owner letters of support
    1. **Required only for Commercial Corridor program applicants proposing direct physical structural updates to private real estate.*
4. Local unit of government/board resolution of support
5. Additional supporting documentation.

Staff may request additional information as needed during the evaluation process.

Application Timeline



Resources

- Program webpage: RamseyCountyMN.gov/CriticalCorridors
- Program guidelines
- Examples of funded projects
- Sample application forms
- Link to Neighborly Application Portal
- FAQs



Ramsey County Community & Economic Development

Critical Corridors Planning

2026 Program Guidelines

Ramsey County's Critical Corridors Planning program, funded through the Housing Redevelopment Authority Levy, assists local communities in planning for district-wide equitable redevelopment and public realm improvements along transit, economic, and cultural corridors. The county worked with community partners to define Critical Corridors, as shown in green on the eligibility map. This program aims to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to connect residents to housing, jobs and destinations while furthering environmental, public health, racial equity and economic prosperity goals.

Selection Priorities

Redevelopment projects and initiatives that:

- Increase density along key corridors, especially those that reduce space used for parking and improve access to transit.
- Facilitate the development of multifamily housing, such as zoning changes.
- Promote development activity in disinvested areas.
- Improve pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure.
- Propel nearby development without displacing current residents or small businesses.

Ramsey County Community & Economic Development

Critical Corridors

Commercial Corridor Initiative

2026 Program Guidelines

Ramsey County's Commercial Corridor Initiative program, funded through the Housing Redevelopment Authority Levy, strengthens small business districts by supporting thriving main streets and investing in pathways to entrepreneurship for racially and ethnically diverse communities. The county worked with community partners to define Critical Corridors, as shown in green on the eligibility map.

Selection Priorities

Redevelopment projects and initiatives that:

- Increase density along key corridors, especially those that reduce space used for parking and improve access to transit.
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Program Highlights

Previous Awards – Planning



City of Falcon Heights: **Corridor study to identify potential redevelopment sites** along Larpenteur and Snelling

City of New Brighton: **Parking study** that resulted in **reduced parking requirements** and best practices handout

Creative Enterprise Zone: **Redevelopment feasibility analysis** and **creation of cooperative ownership model** for small businesses

Previous Awards – Commercial Corridor Initiative



Rice & Larpenteur Alliance: **business façade improvement subgrants to 8 businesses** and installation of wayfinding/signage

Cities of White Bear Lake, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake: County Road E business district placemaking strategy



Other Solicitations

Upcoming CED Solicitations

Site Assessment Grant (SAG)

- Rolling applications
- RamseyCountyMN.gov/SAG

CDBG Public Services, Programs & Facilities

- Solicitation opens: September
- Solicitation closes: October
- RamseyCountyMN.gov/CDBG

Emerging and Diverse Developers

- Solicitation opens: September
- Solicitation closes: October
- RamseyCountyMN.gov/EDD

RAMSEY COUNTY

Questions?

RamseyCountyMN.gov/CriticalCorridors

Ella Mitchell
ella.mitchell@ramseycountymn.gov

Brad Mahr
bradley.mahr@ramseycountymn.gov