

TWIN CITIES — Living Cities Integration Initiative

On October 28, Living Cities, a collaborative of 22 of the world’s largest foundations and financial institutions, named the Twin Cities as one of five winners in its new **Integration Initiative** to:

- Improve the lives of low-income people in significant, measurable ways
- Create new “whole system” models of national significance
- Alter regional dynamics
- Attract and blend capital to scale change
- Sustain change through “new normals” to drive integration and accountability.

The Twin Cities will receive up to \$16M total in grants (\$2.75M); loans (\$10M); and Program Related Investments (\$3M), flexible, low-cost loans to support charitable activity.

Investment in transit, coupled with appropriate development strategies, can play a transformative role in improving the lives of people, the health of neighborhoods and the economic strength of the region. With that in mind, a regional **“Corridors of Opportunity”** initiative will broadly embrace efforts supported by Living Cities as well as a federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities planning grant. The cross-sector, public-private collaboration aims to develop regional transit that expands opportunities and unlocks private capital to address the needs of low-income people.

Supported work will include a mix of project-specific, implementation activities, and policy and planning reforms to more effectively align investments in housing, economic and community development, and workforce training along the region’s transit corridors.

Planned Grants, Loans, PRIs

- ⇒ **Family Housing Fund, Twin Cities Community Land Bank, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)** will preserve and create affordable housing in transit corridors and provide gap funds for mixed-income, mixed use projects.
- ⇒ **Neighborhood Development Center and Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers** will provide small business assistance and loan products such as a business growth fund, building ownership fund, and site control loan fund to create anchors and showcase the potential for ethnic and minority-owned businesses along transit corridors.
- ⇒ **Urban Land Institute-Minnesota, Hennepin County,** and others will guide and implement the Southwest LRT corridor investment framework and demonstrate replicable best practices of a cross-jurisdictional public-private partnership model.
- ⇒ **The Saint Paul Foundation** will manage the initiative locally, supporting policy change work and program evaluation.

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ 400–600 units of transit-accessible affordable housing (rental and owner-occupied) created or preserved.
- ✓ 100 small businesses along transit corridors receive some combination of technical assistance, façade improvement grants or new loans to support business growth.
- ✓ Public sector resources and strategies for housing, economic development, workforce training and community-building strategies are better aligned and leveraged along transit corridors.
- ✓ New inter-jurisdictional and cross-sector investment frameworks will identify and secure financing for community-supported improvements while leveraging private sector investment.
- ✓ Identify, understand and institutionalize best practices in transit development to create a “new normal” for the region.

Partners

The McKnight Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation are coordinating the initiative. Other partners include: Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; The Metropolitan Council; Hennepin and Ramsey Counties; The Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul; Family Housing Fund; The Twin Cities Community Land Bank; Twin Cities LISC; Neighborhood Development Center; Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers; Urban Land Institute-Minnesota; The Itasca Project; Central Corridor Funders Collaborative

For more information:
Mary Kay Bailey, Project Manager, 651.315.1478

Tim Hanrahan, McKnight Foundation, 612.333.4220

Naomi Pesky, The Saint Paul Foundation, 651.325.4239