

HCID Case Studies

Twin Cities: Corridors of Opportunity



Overview

Corridors of Opportunity is a three-year, \$21M initiative that promotes economic and equitable development along seven targeted transit corridors in the Twin Cities. The goal of the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative is to develop a world-class regional transit system that advances economic vitality and benefits people of all incomes and backgrounds. A 20-member policy board consisting of government, philanthropic, nonprofit and private sector representatives lead the initiative towards achieving six key outcomes:

1. Create and/or preserve 400-500 units of transit-accessible affordable housing
2. Provide technical assistance, façade improvement grants and loans to support small businesses
3. Build capacity among community organization in order to develop leaders and find new ways to engage underrepresented populations
4. Develop robust strategies for TOD within five existing and planned regional transitways
5. Complete four demonstration projects that will inform future development at other transitways
6. Study policy tools and programs to advance sustainability and livability

Use of Funds

In 2010, the Twin Cities received a \$5 million HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant and nearly \$16 million in grants and loans from the Living Cities Integration Initiative. The programs were combined into Corridors of Opportunity in 2011 in order to increase the scale of potential impact. The **McKnight Foundation** and **The Saint Paul Foundation** are the co-lead agencies for the Living Cities Integration Initiative while the **Metropolitan Council** administers the Sustainable Community grant.

Sustainable Communities

Funding supports metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts to integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation and infrastructure investments. Corridors of Opportunity activity focuses on four project areas:

- Capacity building for stakeholders to contribute to an integrated planning approach
- TOD strategies specific to each corridor
- Replicable pilot projects (physical improvements) on Central Corridor
- Affordable housing and fair housing studies

Integration Initiative

Through Living Cities, the Corridors of Opportunity received \$2.75M for grants to partnering organizations that will be put towards four priority areas:

- Affordable Housing Preservation and Mixed Use/Income TOD: \$1.125M
 - Family Housing Fund, Twin Cities Community Land Bank and LISC
 - Preserve/create affordable housing and fill funding gaps for mixed-income, mixed-use projects
- Small Business Assistance: \$450K
 - Neighborhood Development Center and Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
 - Technical assistance, façade grants, and loan products to expand or purchase a building
- Southwest LRT Investment Framework & Integrated Planning: \$255K
 - Urban Land Institute of Minnesota, Hennepin County, corridor cities and other partners
 - Implement the Southwest LRT corridor investment framework and demonstrate replicable best practices of a cross-jurisdictional public-private partnership model
- Project Management, Evaluation and Policy Change: \$940K
 - The Saint Paul Foundation
 - Manage the initiative, support policy and system change work and program evaluation

An additional \$14.3M in loans is available for acquisition, rehabilitation, construction, and preservation of single family and small multifamily affordable housing and large multifamily housing or mixed-use transit oriented developments.

Long-Term Coordination

The plans and strategies developed through the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative will be integrated into the Metropolitan Council's next Regional Development Framework, Thrive MSP. Thrive MSP is the Twin Cities region's long-range planning effort led by the Metropolitan Council. This plan is scheduled to be

released in 2014 and will provide a regional vision for the 7-county metro area for the next 30 years.

Stakeholder Engagement

Community Engagement and outreach is a fundamental element of Corridors of Opportunity. A core goal identified early in the initiative was to ensure underrepresented communities were engaged and that

resources were dedicated to building leadership from these communities. The result of such engagement, it was hoped, would lead to systematic change in the decision-making process beyond the three-year time period of the grant. To accomplish this task, the consortium established a Community Engagement Team (CE Team) to advise the consortium's Policy Board on matters of community engagement and use of funds.

Additional Resources

Corridors of Opportunity

<http://www.corridorsofopportunity.org/partners/community-engagement-team>

Engage Twin Cities

<http://engagetc.org>