Saint Paul Commercial Corridors

Program Guidelines

Updated February 2026

Introduction

In December 2024, the Saint Paul City Council approved funding to create the Commercial Corridors Program. The purpose of the program is to assist geographically focused organizations in furthering economic development outcomes in identified commercial corridors in the city. This program provides select business and community support organizations with funding to design and implement programming and activities that drive positive economic development outcomes along the defined corridors.

Eligible Organizations

This program is open to pre-selected organizations identified by the City. The identified organizations include District Councils and business support organizations with a history of executing community development, economic development, and business support programming along the defined geographies listed below.

Eligible Corridors

The following table lists the targeted corridors and selected organizations. The amount disbursed to the selected organization for each corridor will vary based on an index that considers business density, land use, and vacancies. In addition, award size will differ for corridors that are in or adjacent to LIHTC Qualified Census Tracts (QCT). Selected organizations are encouraged to collaborate and work in partnerships with other organizations that serve the corridor geography to implement the scope of work.

Selected organizations are urged to propose programs and projects along the corridors. Corridor boundaries are provided in the current program year Commercial Corridor Program table.

Corridor Name	Boundaries	Selected Organization
Arcade St, Maryland, and 7th St E	7th St E: Payne St to Forest St. Arcade St: Maryland Ave to 7th St E, Maryland Ave: Wiede St to Forest St N	East Side Area Business Association (ESABA)
Como, Maryland, Dale	Dale Street: Maryland Ave to Topping St, Como Ave: Grotto to Mackubin, Maryland Ave: Dale to Arundel St, Front St: Grotto to Mackubin	District 10 Como Community Council
Downtown	North: The Mississippi River, South: Interstate 94/35E, East: Lafayette Road/Highway 52, West: Rice Street/Interstate 35E	Downtown Alliance
Grand (east end)	Grand: Ayd Mill to Dale St	Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA)
Payne Ave, Maryland, and 7th St E	Payne: Maryland to 7th, 7th Street: Payne to 94, Maryland from Edgerton to Wiede St	East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC)
Rice Street	University Avenue to Larpenteur Avenue	Rice Larpenteur Alliance (RLA)
Selby (east end)	Selby: Lexington to Western	Rondo Community Land Trust (RCLT)
Snelling and Grand	Snelling: Summit to Randolph, Grand: Fairview to Ayd Mill	Macalester Groveland Community Council

Snelling and Selby	Snelling: University to Summit, Selby: Fairview to Lexington	Union Park District Council
Snelling, Ford, Cleveland	Snelling: Randolph to Ford, Ford: Snelling to Mississippi Blvd, Cleveland: Ford to Bayard	Highland District Council
Suburban Ave/ Old Hudson Road and White Bear Ave	Suburban Ave and Old Hudson Rd: White Bear Avenue to McKnight Road, White Bear: Suburban Ave to Minnehaha Ave	Southeast Community Organization (SECO)
University (east end)	University: Lexington to Rice	Neighborhood Development Center (NDC)
University and Snelling	University: Prior to Lexington Snelling: Englewood to University	Hamline Midway Coalition
W 7th St (east end)	Kellogg Boulevard to Homer St	West 7th Fort Road Federation
W 7th St (west end)	Homer St to Wheeler St	Highland District Council
West Side	Cesar Chavez: Wabasha St to Ada St, Robert St: Wood to Cesar Chavez St	West Side Community Organization (WSCO)
White Bear Avenue	Minnehaha Avenue to Larpenteur Avenue	Greater East Side Community Council

Eligible activities

This program is funded by Economic Development Sales Tax Revitalization funds which must be used for economic development purposes, including a variety of activities that result in positive economic development and have corridor-wide benefits that can be tracked and reported. Selected organizations must list the key economic development indicators that will be tracked and describe how they will show that the work resulted in positive economic development outcomes on the corridor. Key economic development indicators include: business retention, business growth, new business starts, generate private investment, support vitality of corridor, and increase/maintain tax base.

If the Selected organization currently administers a City funded program within the identified commercial corridor, Commercial Corridor funds must have a different use. For example, Commercial Corridor funds cannot be used to build on an existing STAR funded façade improvement subgrant program.

Eligible activities include:

- Corridor-wide beautification efforts, such as signage, flower baskets, and planters.
- Public art installations
- Development of plans for implementation of corridor-wide efforts
    - NOTE: If Applicants propose an activity that will assist the development of plans for future work, an estimated timeline for implementation of plans that are developed as a result of Commercial Corridor funding must be provided. Plans must be capable of beginning implementation within three years of receiving Commercial Corridor dollars.
- Corridor marketing campaigns

- Acquisition of vacant or underutilized buildings and land and related soft costs
    - NOTE: Applicants proposing to use Commercial Corridor Program dollars for acquisition of land or buildings must have a plan in place to acquire and begin development of the land within two years of receiving Commercial Corridor Program dollars
- Execution of community events meant to celebrate and showcase the corridor
- Business sub-grants may be awarded for the following activities:
    - Business interior or exterior capital improvements, marketing and promotions, and beautification efforts such as installing murals or decorative signage.
    - Corridor wide technical assistance programs with the purpose to help businesses contribute to a stable, growing, and competitive corridor. Technical assistance is a business support service offering in-depth one-on-one and group guidance to small businesses, designed to address specific business needs and expand capacity.
    - Operating expenses may be considered for business stabilization and retention along the corridor when substantial and documented business disruption impacts the corridor as a whole. Documentation must show a unique and substantial impact on the corridor. Documentation may include: number of businesses impacted, photographs of the disruption, business bank statements or other financial documentation showing substantial revenue or sales decline and direct correlation to the disruption. The recipient must provide documentation showing how key economic development indicators will be met and tracked.
- Up to 10% of an award can be used for administrative or indirect costs associated with executing the eligible activities.

Selected organizations will have one year to spend all funds from the date of contract execution. Any funds that are not spent and disbursed within one year of receipt will be returned to the program. Selected organizations may designate another entity to be the fiscal agent to receive funding. In the case a fiscal agent is designated, all involved organizations must sign the executed grant contract.

All projects must comply with relevant codes, regulations, and laws of the City of Saint Paul.

City staff will have the authority and may consider minor guideline modifications or waivers when requested by a Selected organization if the requested modification or waiver will demonstrably better serve an economic development purpose and a public purpose is demonstrated. Requests must obtain necessary approvals and follow the Amendment process.

Submission Materials and Process

Selected organizations must send the following required submission materials by the current program year deadline in an email with the title Commercial Corridor Proposal to CommercialCorridors@stpaul.gov.

- Completed Statement of Work and Workplan, detailing how funds will be used and the role of any partner organizations
- Budget form
- Budget justification
- Selected organizations that do not have a current Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) will need to submit an updated or new AAP. Staff will follow-up if this is needed from the Selected organization

Contracting will happen on a rolling basis as proposals are received.

Funding and Contracting Process

The City will work with Selected organizations to refine the scope of their proposed program(s) and projects based on their submitted program Statement of Work and budget. The City does not guarantee that all proposed programs will be awarded funding. The City reserves the right to deny funding for any and all proposals in its sole discretion.

Selected organizations with approved proposals will enter into an Agreement with the City that outlines the funding obligations, scope of work, disbursement, and reporting requirements.

All Selected organizations receiving $50,000 or more will be required to comply with the City's Vendor Outreach Program (VOP) and Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (AAEEO) programs.

- Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (AAEEO) requirements: new or updated Affirmative Action Plan if the organization has not registered with the City in the last two years
- Vendor Outreach Program (VOP): listing of all contractors and suppliers on the attached Prime ID form to highlight opportunities to utilize the City's CERT vendor list
- Sub-grantees that receive $50,000 or more from any City funded programs must also comply with VOP and AAEEO requirements

Construction Projects that have a total project cost of $25,000 or more and include any City dollars must also comply with the City's prevailing wage requirements

- Example 1: A facade improvement project that is $30,000 total and receives $10,000 in Commercial Corridor Program funds must comply with prevailing wage requirements
- Example 2: A facade improvement project that is $20,000 total and is fully funded by the Commercial Corridor Program would not need to comply prevailing wage requirements

Any project that receives more than $20,000 in City funds must provide evidence of securing at least two bids from qualified contractors.

Before contracts are finalized, the City will hold a compliance meeting with each Selected organization to review the applicable compliance requirements and the process for complying with the City's regulations. Additional information on each of the compliance areas can be viewed on the City of Saint Paul's website at **stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=3710**

Disbursements

No funds that will be disbursed through this program may be spent before the program is approved by the City Council. Selected organizations will have one year to spend all funds from the date of contract execution.

Projects that do not require construction may request up to 80% of the funds awarded be disbursed to the Selected organization up front once compliance or reporting requirements are met. Programs that include sub-granting to a business or organization must list the projects they are funding on "Subgrant Attachment A". Prior to receiving any funds, sub-grantees will be required to submit a current Affirmative Action Plan and ID Sheet showing VOP goals are met.

Construction projects exceeding $25,000 in total project cost will not be eligible for disbursement until required reporting on wages is approved.

In order to receive the last 20% of funds, Selected organizations must provide proof of payment or disbursement of funds as it relates to their original disbursement request. The type of proof of payment is dependent upon on the funded activity and may include:

- Receipts
- Invoices indicating a contractor has been paid in full
- Copies of checks paid out using Commercial Corridor Program dollars

A pre-contracting meeting will be held with the Selected organization and City staff to provide all relevant details about disbursements depending on the size and scope of the program.

Reporting

All Selected organizations will meet with City staff on a quarterly basis to report on program progress. Selected organizations are required to submit the check-in reporting form prior to the check-in with designated City staff.