

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM FACTS

Investments in community vitality

Thriving job centers stand on once-polluted land. Workers such as teachers, police officers, and health care aides can find affordable housing in the communities where they work. Residents can shop, get on a bus to go to work, and enjoy a local park all within walking distance of their front door.

These opportunities are supported by the Livable Communities Act (LCA), adopted by the Minnesota Legislature in 1995 and administered by the Metropolitan Council.



Voluntary program, based on incentives



The LCA provides funding for communities to invest in local economic revitalization, affordable housing initiatives, and development or redevelopment that connects different land uses and transportation. The program is a voluntary, incentive-based approach to help communities grow and redevelop, and to address the region's affordable and lifecycle housing needs.

Funding helps achieve community, regional goals

Under the LCA, the Council makes grant and loan awards from three accounts:

- Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) – Cleans up brownfields for redevelopment, job creation and affordable housing.

- Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) – Supports development and redevelopment that links housing, jobs and services while demonstrating efficient and cost-effective use of land and infrastructure.
- Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) – Produces and preserves affordable housing choices for households with low to moderate incomes.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) – Catalyzes development around light rail, commuter rail, and high-frequency bus stations.

To compete for LCA funding, communities must negotiate long-term affordable and lifecycle housing goals with the Council and develop a Housing Action Plan to accomplish these goals. In 2017, 95 participating communities are eligible to compete for funding from all four LCA categories.

The LCA's emphasis is on cooperation and incentives to achieve regional and local goals. Local communities are positioned well to make decisions about how their cities and towns will grow and develop, but the LCA recognizes it often takes partnerships and shared resources to move from community plans to tangible results.

Investments reap impressive results

From 1996 through January 2017, the Council awarded 971 grants totaling about \$347 million in Livable Communities funds. These grants are expected to leverage billions of dollars in private and other public investments. Following is a summary of grants made:

- 433 TBRA pollution cleanup grants (non-TOD) totaling nearly \$118 million were made to 46 cities. The 2016 projects will leverage more than \$746 million in private investment and add \$7.1 million in net tax capacity, and result in more than 3,900 new and retained jobs.
- 258 LCDA grants (non-TOD) totaling more than \$142 million were made to development and redevelopment projects that link housing, jobs and services, and maximize efficient infrastructure in 67 cities. The 2016 LCDA grants are expected to leverage more than \$395 million in other public and private funds.
- 182 LHIA grants to 53 cities, totaling \$35.3 million, provided new or rehabilitated affordable housing opportunities. The 2016 LHIA awards leverage more than \$50 million in public and private funds to assist with 281 new and rehabilitated affordable housing units, 271 of which are affordable at 60% of area median income or less.
- 76 Transit-Oriented Development awards totaling almost \$46.4 million have been made in 17 cities with TBRA and LCDA funds to leverage investment near light rail transit, high-frequency bus routes, and bus rapid transit corridors.

Other benefits of LCA funds are restored natural resources, improved transportation options, new community amenities, and thriving new neighborhoods.

Advisory Committee helps select projects



The Livable Communities Advisory Committee recommends funding awards to the Council for the Livable Communities Demonstration Account. The committee reviews complex development and redevelopment proposals against the program's criteria for connected development patterns that link housing, jobs and services.

The committee's 15 members have expertise in development specialties, including local government planning and economic or community development; public and private finance; new development and redevelopment; transportation; environment; site design; and community-based organizations.

Cooperative efforts reduce “red tape”

Communities in the region applying for public funding to produce affordable multi-family rental housing need fill out only one application through Minnesota Housing. Representatives from the Council, the Family Housing Fund, and Minnesota Housing review the applications and make grants from a variety of public funding sources, including LHIA.

TBRA funding is coordinated with complementary programs at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Hennepin and Ramsey counties.