

# LIVABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM

2026 Notice of Funding Availability for Small Area Planning Projects

February 2026



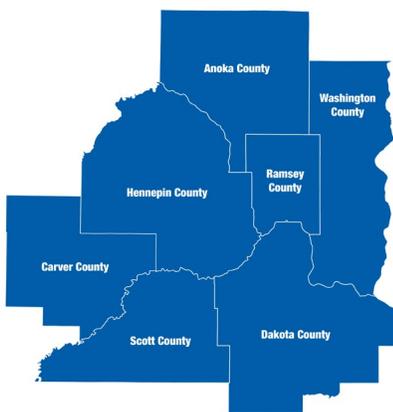
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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Met Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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## 2026 Notice of Funding Availability

This 2026 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) describes the Metropolitan Council's intentions to fund small area planning projects through the Livable Communities grant program in 2026. Specifically, this notice:

- Establishes the amount and type of funding available for the 2026 award year and the limits that apply to individual awards.
- Defines who is eligible to apply.
- Sets the schedule for application submittal, review, and award.
- Describes the criteria the Metropolitan Council will use in project selection.

See also the NOFA for [Policy and Affordable Housing Program Development and Development Projects](#).

### Background and Purpose

In the 1995 session, the Minnesota Legislature enabled the Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Fund ([Minn. Stat. §473.251](#)). As a result, the Livable Communities grant program advances the [regional development guide](#) by increasing housing choice, improving safety, and helping ensure that residents can meet their needs in their community. The Livable Communities program helps local governments:

- Set the conditions for development through policy development and small area planning.
- Support development projects that add affordable housing, create community-centered commercial spaces, or clean up contaminated land.

### Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be a city, township, county, or development authority (Minn. Stat. § 473.252, subd. 1) within the 7-county metropolitan area (Minn. Stat. § 473.121, subd. 2) that has enrolled in the Livable Communities program and is in good standing (Minn. Stat. § 473.254, subd. 1-4). Individuals or private and nonprofit organizations are not eligible applicants but are welcome to partner with an eligible applicant on projects.

## Project Eligibility

To be eligible for a Livable Communities grant, the small area planning project must:

- Be located in a [Livable Communities participating city](#) and the city must be consistent with all comprehensive plan requirements.<sup>1</sup>
- Have a Livable Communities participating city, township, county, or development authority partner to sponsor the project, submit the application, and accept funds on behalf of the project.
- Meet at least one of the defined Outcomes in the Outcomes Score (see [Evaluation Criteria](#) below).
- The plan area must be a defined geography that is multiple parcels, a portion of the city, and not exceeding one-quarter of the city's area. Examples include, but are not limited to, former corporate campuses, cultural districts, commercial corridors, and transit station areas.
- Small area planning projects must result in a small area plan that is presented for adoption by the city council and, if approved, included as part of or submitted as an amendment or attachment to the city's comprehensive plan, or, if the grantee is a county or development authority, an equivalent process.
- Have a funding gap.

## Available Funds

The Metropolitan Council has authorized \$400,000 to be awarded for small area planning projects through the Livable Communities program in 2026.

## Application Due Dates

One-half of the available funding will be allocated to the first-round funding opportunity, with applications due by **April 15, 2026**.

The second half of the funding, plus any unawarded funds from the previous round, will be available for awards through the second-round funding opportunity, with applications due by **October 15, 2026**.

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<sup>1</sup> Projects located in cities that have a current comprehensive plan amendment under review that would make the city ineligible to apply or draw down funds under Livable Communities program rules may not apply until the review is complete.

## Award Limits and Eligible Activities

Applications are limited to \$100,000. Grant funds may be used for staff or consultant time directly related to the project.

## Review and Recommendation Process

Met Council staff will conduct a preliminary review of all proposals to ensure completeness and eligibility before applications are scored.

All applicants will receive an Outcome Score and a Quality Score, as defined below. The Outcome Score is automatically calculated based on applicant responses and verified by staff. The Quality Score is determined by staff subject matter experts. The sum of the two scores is the total project score.

Projects are recommended for funding starting with the highest-scoring project until all funds are awarded.

## Application Requirements

A complete application includes:

- Documentation of local support for the project. Options include:
  - Letter from the Mayor
  - Letter from the City Administrator
  - Resolution of support ([download sample text as a Word Doc](#))
- Sources and Uses Budget. The Livable Communities program will accept this in whatever format your project currently uses, provided it clearly shows:
  - Sources, noting which have been secured and are pending or planned.
    - The pending Livable Communities grant request should be one of these sources
  - Uses.
  - A financial gap (pending Livable Communities award).

## Evaluation Criteria

### Outcome Score

How many of the following set of outcomes will your project meet? The selected outcomes must be included in the final small area plan.

- ❑ Situate affordable housing near transportation options and amenities
- ❑ Plan for mixed-use areas on infill or redevelopment sites
- ❑ Create or improve small-scale commercial spaces and/or commercial corridors
- ❑ Establish or improve multi-modal transportation options to connect housing, jobs, and transit
- ❑ Establish or improve a cultural corridor
- ❑ Protect areas of ecological significance within planned development areas and/or incorporate strategies to promote public and ecosystem health
- ❑ Include public gathering space or incorporate green infrastructure elements

If your project meets one to three of these outcomes, it will receive 16 points. If it meets four or more of these outcomes, it will receive 24 points.

### Quality Score

Applications will be assessed on how well they meet the Livable Communities program goals using the following questions and corresponding maximum possible scores.

- How will future amenities and connectivity be designed to prioritize residents who have been impacted by disinvestment? (5 pts max)
  - 0-1 points (Limited or unclear description of proposed planning approach): The application does not meaningfully describe how the proposed small area planning process would prioritize residents impacted by disinvestment or displacement. The response may acknowledge historic disinvestment in the selected geography, but does not provide further explanation or analysis. Any references to amenities or connectivity are vague or lack an explanation of the planning approaches, processes, or strategies that would guide equitable outcomes.
  - 2-3 points (Moderate and partially articulated description of proposed planning approach): The application describes an intent to prioritize residents who have been impacted by disinvestment or displacement through future amenities or connectivity and identifies some planning approaches or strategies to do so. However, the description lacks sufficient detail, clarity, or explanation of how these approaches would be implemented through the small area planning process.
  - 4-5 points (Clear, intentional, and well-supported description of proposed planning approach): The application clearly describes how the proposed small area planning process would be structured to prioritize residents who have been impacted by disinvestment or displacement in shaping future amenities and connectivity. The response identifies specific, feasible planning approaches, engagement processes, and strategies that demonstrate how equity considerations would meaningfully inform plan development and recommendations.
- How will the city prevent displacement or other potential negative impacts of the plan on Black, American Indian, or other residents of color? (5 pts max)
  - 0-1 points (Limited or unclear description of displacement prevention and approach): The application does not meaningfully identify existing or potential displacement pressures affecting Black, American Indian, or other residents of color. The response does not explain how the proposed small area planning effort or use of grant funds would be used to examine, understand, or consider displacement risks or potential negative impacts as part of the planning process.
  - 2-3 points (Moderate and partially articulated description of displacement prevention approach): The application identifies existing or current displacement pressures experienced by Black, American Indian, or other residents of color and moves beyond simple acknowledgment of historic or current disinvestment. However, the response lacks sufficient clarity or detail regarding how the

proposed small area planning approach, process, or use of grant funds would be used to further analyze these pressures, engage impacted communities, or identify potential mitigation considerations or next steps. The connection between identified risks and the proposed planning process is only partially explained.

- 4-5 points (Clear, intentional, and well-supported description of displacement prevention approach): The application clearly identifies existing or current displacement pressures experienced by Black, American Indian, or other residents of color and demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of how these pressures relate to the plan area. The response describes specific and intentional small area planning approaches that explain how the planning process and use of grant funds would be used to assess displacement risks, engage impacted communities, and identify potential mitigation strategies, tradeoffs, or next steps to be addressed through the resulting plan recommendations.
- Whose perspective will be represented in the plan through community engagement and/or as part of the planning team? And how will their perspectives be represented? (5 pts max)
  - 0-1 points (Limited or unclear description of represented perspectives): The application does not meaningfully describe which perspectives would be represented in the proposed small area planning process. Key community partners, participants, or lived-experience perspectives are not identified, and the response lacks an explanation of how perspectives would inform the planning process.
  - 2-3 points (Moderate and partially articulated description of represented perspectives): The application outlines a community engagement approach and identifies some community partners or participants, such as residents or community members, but provides limited detail on whose perspectives would be represented and how those perspectives would meaningfully inform the proposed small area planning process.
  - 4-5 points (Clear, intentional, and well-supported description of represented perspectives): The application includes a clear and detailed description of whose perspectives would be represented in the proposed small area planning process, including residents, community partners, and other participants with relevant lived experience. The response describes multiple, intentional engagement approaches and explains how and why these approaches were selected to ensure identified perspectives meaningfully inform the planning process and outcomes.
- Do you have a clearly defined work plan/scope? (2 pts if yes)
- What is the per capita net tax capacity (NTC) of the city (See [Appendix: Adjusted Per Capita Net Tax Capacity and Corresponding Livable Communities Point Value](#))? Of cities in the seven-county metropolitan region, if per capita net tax capacity falls within the:
  - Top 25%: 1 point

- 50%-75% Percentile: 2 points
- Below 50% Percentile: 3 points

## Grant Terms and Grantee Expectations

All Livable Communities grants are for a period of three years. If needed, the grantee may request a two-year extension.

All grants are reimbursement-based. If a grantee does not have eligible expenses to utilize the full grant award or is unable to spend the full award before the end of the grant term, any unspent funds will be relinquished and made available for future Livable Communities programming through the Metropolitan Council.

If awarded a grant, grantees must continue to meet the following requirements through the grant term:

- Submit semi-annual reports on project progress and a final report at grant closeout.
  - As part of the grant closeout, the small area planning project must be presented for adoption by the city council and, if approved, included as part of or submitted as an update to the city’s comprehensive plan, or, if the grantee is a county or development authority, an equivalent process.
- Notify the Met Council of any significant changes to the project.

If awarded a grant, the city in which the project is located (this may or may not be the same as the grantee) must continue to meet the Livable Communities program requirements, including:

- Have an adopted Fair Housing policy.
- Have a Comprehensive Plan that is consistent with Metropolitan Council Policy.
- Guide land at sufficient densities to enable the city to meet the city’s forecasted affordable housing need. This is also known as the Metropolitan Council’s [Land Guided for Affordable Housing \(LGAH\)](#) policy.
- Submit a Housing Action Plan annually through the Housing Policy and Production Survey.
- Spend its statutorily required Affordable and Lifecycle Housing Opportunity Amount (ALHOA).

## Funding Schedule

Date	Milestone
February 11, 2026	Council authorization of FY2026 Livable Communities funding
Early March	Round 1 application window opens
March 16, 2026 (approx.)	Responses to additional questions asked by potential applicants will be published online under “ <a href="#">Funding Availability</a> ”
April 1, 2026 (approx.)	Responses to additional questions asked by potential applicants will be published online under “ <a href="#">Funding Availability</a> ”
April 15, 2026	Round 1 Livable Communities applications due

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
Late Spring-Early Summer	Staff evaluate applications
July (anticipated)	Council considers action to award Round 1 grants
Early September	Round 2 application window opens
September 16, 2026 (approx.)	Responses to additional questions asked by potential applicants will be published online under “ <a href="#">Funding Availability</a> ”
October 1, 2026 (approx.)	Responses to additional questions asked by potential applicants will be published online under “ <a href="#">Funding Availability</a> ”
October 15, 2026	Round 2 Livable Communities applications due
Late Fall-Early Winter	Staff evaluate applications
December 2026-January 2027 (anticipated)	Council considers action to award Round 2 grants

## Program Evaluation

The Metropolitan Council will review the overall impact of funded projects and the efficacy of the Council’s program and application process with a focus on continual improvements.

## Contact

We encourage project teams to reach out to a Livable Communities Program Coordinator early. You can schedule time with a Program Coordinator [online](#) or reach out directly:

- Olivia Boerschinger, Program Coordinator, [Olivia.Boerschinger@MetC.State.MN.US](mailto:Olivia.Boerschinger@MetC.State.MN.US)
- Andrew Tran, Program Coordinator, [Andrew.Tran@MetC.State.MN.US](mailto:Andrew.Tran@MetC.State.MN.US)

## Appendix: Adjusted Per Capita Net Tax Capacity and Corresponding Livable Communities Point Value

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Afton	\$3,602	1
Andover	\$1,842	3
Anoka	\$1,551	3
Apple Valley	\$1,766	3
Arden Hills	\$2,275	2
Bayport	\$1,657	3
Baytown Township	\$3,810	1
Belle Plaine	\$1,548	3
Belle Plaine Township	\$3,606	1
Benton Township	\$3,615	1
Bethel	\$1,477	3
Birchwood Village	\$2,911	2
Blaine	\$1,864	3
Blakeley Township	\$4,506	1
Bloomington	\$2,352	2
Brooklyn Center	\$1,344	3
Brooklyn Park	\$1,685	3
Burnsville	\$1,896	3
Camden Township	\$2,944	2
Carver	\$1,753	3
Castle Rock Township	\$3,518	1
Cedar Lake Township	\$2,952	2
Centerville	\$2,195	2
Champlin	\$1,711	3
Chanhassen	\$2,884	2
Chaska	\$1,994	3

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Circle Pines	\$1,493	3
Coates	\$2,929	2
Cologne	\$1,662	3
Columbia Heights	\$1,321	3
Columbus	\$2,846	2
Coon Rapids	\$1,669	3
Corcoran	\$2,628	2
Cottage Grove	\$1,735	3
Credit River	\$3,371	1
Crystal	\$1,545	3
Dahlgren Township	\$3,596	1
Dayton (Hennepin part vs Wright Cnty part)	\$2,363	2
Deephaven	\$7,098	1
Dellwood	\$5,216	1
Denmark Township	\$3,957	1
Douglas Township	\$3,578	1
Eagan	\$2,260	2
East Bethel	\$1,823	3
Eden Prairie	\$2,563	2
Edina	\$3,757	1
Elko New Market	\$1,594	3
Empire	\$2,147	2
Eureka Township	\$3,291	1
Excelsior	\$4,581	1
Falcon Heights	\$1,462	3
Farmington	\$1,582	3
Forest Lake	\$1,976	3
Fridley	\$1,736	3

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Gem Lake	\$3,548	1
Golden Valley	\$2,918	2
Grant	\$3,357	1
Greenfield	\$2,940	2
Greenvale Township	\$3,590	1
Greenwood	\$10,676	1
Grey Cloud Island Township	\$2,425	2
Ham Lake	\$2,261	2
Hamburg	\$1,289	3
Hampton	\$1,430	3
Hampton Township	\$4,244	1
Hancock Township	\$3,658	1
Hastings	\$1,576	3
Helena Township	\$3,008	2
Hilltop	\$1,277	3
Hollywood Township	\$2,918	2
Hopkins	\$1,903	3
Hugo	\$2,012	3
Independence	\$3,598	1
Inver Grove Heights	\$1,977	3
Jackson Township	\$2,081	3
Jordan	\$1,480	3
Lake Elmo	\$2,722	2
Lake St. Croix Beach	\$1,801	3
Lakeland	\$2,291	2
Lakeland Shores	\$2,852	2
Laketown Township	\$2,604	2
Lakeville	\$2,105	2

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Landfall	\$3,074	2
Lauderdale	\$1,593	3
Lexington	\$1,362	3
Lilydale	\$3,238	2
Lino Lakes	\$1,894	3
Linwood Township	\$1,859	3
Little Canada	\$1,772	3
Long Lake	\$2,935	2
Loretto	\$1,763	3
Louisville Township	\$3,711	1
Mahtomedi	\$2,318	2
Maple Grove	\$2,345	2
Maple Plain	\$1,929	3
Maplewood	\$1,648	3
Marine on St. Croix	\$3,524	1
Marshan Township	\$3,550	1
May Township	\$3,781	1
Mayer	\$1,432	3
Medicine Lake	\$5,336	1
Medina	\$4,443	1
Mendota	\$3,465	1
Mendota Heights	\$3,193	2
Miesville	\$2,437	2
Minneapolis	\$1,832	3
Minnetonka	\$2,897	2
Minnetonka Beach	\$13,888	1
Minnetrista	\$3,998	1
Mound	\$2,658	2

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Mounds View	\$1,500	3
New Brighton	\$1,677	3
New Germany	\$1,360	3
New Hope	\$1,661	3
New Market Township	\$3,258	2
New Trier	\$1,533	3
Newport	\$1,848	3
Nininger Township	\$2,755	2
North Oaks	\$4,293	1
North St. Paul	\$1,330	3
Norwood Young America	\$1,404	3
Nowthen	\$2,214	2
Oak Grove	\$2,041	3
Oak Park Heights	\$2,975	2
Oakdale	\$1,706	3
Orono	\$7,302	1
Osseo	\$1,637	3
Pine Springs	\$2,559	2
Plymouth	\$2,663	2
Prior Lake	\$2,361	2
Ramsey	\$1,755	3
Randolph	\$1,558	3
Randolph Township	\$3,957	1
Ravenna Township	\$2,098	2
Richfield	\$1,506	3
Robbinsdale	\$1,375	3
Rogers	\$2,813	2
Rosemount	\$2,005	3

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Roseville	\$2,220	2
San Francisco Township	\$3,503	1
Sand Creek Township	\$3,245	2
Savage	\$1,972	3
Scandia	\$2,881	2
Sciota Township	\$3,258	2
Shakopee	\$2,238	2
Shoreview	\$1,988	3
Shorewood (Hennepin part)	\$4,301	1
South St. Paul	\$1,558	3
Spring Lake Park	\$1,506	3
Spring Lake Township	\$3,345	1
Spring Park	\$3,194	2
St. Anthony	\$1,509	3
St. Bonifacius	\$1,741	3
St. Francis	\$1,444	3
St. Lawrence Township	\$3,215	2
St. Louis Park	\$2,249	2
St. Marys Point	\$4,014	1
St. Paul	\$1,436	3
St. Paul Park	\$1,904	3
Stillwater	\$2,082	3
Stillwater Township	\$3,574	1
Sunfish Lake	\$6,283	1
Tonka Bay	\$7,928	1
Vadnais Heights	\$2,205	2
Vermillion	\$1,759	3
Vermillion Township	\$3,181	2

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2024 Adjusted Net Tax Capacity Per Capita (based on 2024 pop.)</b>	<b>2026 Livable Communities Point Value</b>
Victoria	\$2,544	2
Waconia	\$2,092	2
Waconia Township	\$3,729	1
Waterford Township	\$3,167	2
Watertown	\$1,424	3
Watertown Township	\$3,754	1
Wayzata	\$7,972	1
West Lakeland Township	\$2,972	2
West St. Paul	\$1,552	3
White Bear Lake	\$1,962	3
White Bear Township	\$2,283	2
Willernie	\$1,683	3
Woodbury	\$2,157	2
Woodland	\$18,774	1
Young America Township	\$3,466	1



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