

CITY OF CINCINNATI



2011 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NBDIP)

City of Cincinnati
Department of Community Development
805 Central Ave., Suite 700
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NBDIP)

PURPOSE AND ALLOWED USES OF FUNDS

The City of Cincinnati created the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP) to assist communities in implementing projects that stabilize, maintain, and improve their neighborhood business districts (NBDs) and overall community economic viability. Funds can be used for legally eligible, community-supported projects that respond to the needs of the business district and solve relevant problems. Neighborhood economic development projects are strongly encouraged. Urban renewal plans, urban design plans, studies, et cetera, are not eligible for funding through the 2011 NBD Improvement Program. However, design funds are available if it is for a specific capital project.

NBDIP Funds can be used for purposes that enhance the business and neighborhood environment, including but not limited to:

- Public parking lot improvements
- Streetscape improvements that are part of a larger redevelopment strategy
- Lighting
- Gateways/signage
- Design funds for any of the above improvements.
- Building renovations
- Site preparation for commercial development including acquisition and clearance (depending on the source of funding an identified end user may be required).
- Façade improvements
- Signage and awnings
- Site and project specific market studies

However, despite the flexibility of the NBDIP program, some restrictions and limitations apply depending on the type of funding and the intended use. Please consult with the Department of Community Development staff regarding whether your proposed project will be eligible to receive funding.

FUNDING SOURCES

For 2011, we estimate \$1,000,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and \$1,000,000 in City Capital funds would be available for the NBD Improvement Program. DCD staff will work with neighborhoods to identify eligible projects that can be implemented in a one-year time frame. Although applicants will not be required to identify a funding source for their proposed project, funding restrictions should be considered when developing potential projects.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG):

CDBG funds are federal funds received by the City that can be used for projects that:

- Provide an Area Benefit to residents of a low/moderate income residential neighborhood; OR
- Provide Job Creation or Retention for low/moderate income residents citywide; OR
- Provide for Removal of Slum and Blight conditions on an area basis with an approved blight study or on a spot basis citywide; OR
- Provide Housing to low/moderate income individuals; OR
- Provide a benefit to low/moderate income individuals on a Limited Clientele basis.

CDBG rules (24 CFR 570) can be found on the web at: http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title24/24cfr570_main_02.tpl

Most NBDIP projects fit under Area Benefit, though there can be exceptions. In order for a project to be eligible to use CDBG funds for Area Benefit, the work generally has to take place in a CDBG-eligible census tract and be shown to provide a direct benefit to low- to moderate-income residents of the neighborhood. Please direct questions about CDBG eligibility to your assigned Development Officer.

CITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS (CIP):

CIP funds can be used for capital improvements in the City's neighborhoods that provide a public benefit for that community. If proposing the expenditure of CIP funds to improve private property, the project must have a clear public purpose that can be demonstrated to City Council.

For example, building or improving a public parking lot on privately owned property would be an acceptable use of CIP funds.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

This year's submission process includes a mandatory pre-application process. This step is a one-page summary of the project (see page 8) and assists in identifying those projects that meet program guidelines and are eligible for City funding. This step will eliminate those projects not eligible for funding, thus saving a community the trouble of submitting a full Funding Application for a project that is ineligible. All applicants seeking funding through this program are required to submit a pre-application form.

Each community may submit two (2) funding requests, one major and one minor request, or two minor requests, for a community. There is no funding limit for major projects; however, applicants should realize that projects that have a higher private-to-public funding ratio are more likely to be funded. Minor projects should not exceed \$30,000. Community organizations are encouraged to work collaboratively with business and property owners in the NBD to identify projects that have broad support.

Community Councils and Neighborhood Business Associations must be informed of proposed funding applications. Applications that have community council and business association support will be given preference in the evaluation process, as reflected in the NBD Improvement Program Criteria.

In addition to Program Process information, Program Criteria and Guidelines have been included in this packet to assist in the preparation of NBDIP funding requests. Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with DCD staff to assist with this process.

Step One: Submit pre-application(s) for review. Applicants are encouraged to submit pre-application as early as possible. Please note that pre-applications can be revised and resubmitted as long as submission meets the pre-application deadline. Pre-applications can be submitted to the Department of Community Development, 805 Central Avenue, Suite 700, Cincinnati, OH 45202. **DUE: 5:00 PM on June 18th, 2010.** After pre-applications are submitted, City staff and CNBDU volunteers will review them. On July 15, 2010, City architects from the Division of Architecture and Urban Design will meet with community representatives to give feedback and recommendations related to the pre-applications and provide preliminary cost estimates.

Step Two: Submit NBD Improvement Program Funding Request Application(s) for consideration. The following items must be included with each NBD Improvement Program project submission to be considered for funding: NBD Improvement Project Funding Request Application, Private or other non-city Sector Commitment Letter(s), and community council notification. Please submit (3) three copies of each NBD Improvement Program request to the Department of Community Development, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45202. **Due: 5:00pm on August 13th, 2010.**

REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United (CNBDU), the advisory group of neighborhood business representatives created to assist the City administration on neighborhood business district issues will review and rate qualifying proposals and make funding recommendations to DCD. A copy of the NBD Improvement Program Rating Sheet used to evaluate each request is enclosed for your information. The City Manager will make a final recommendation to City Council. City Council must approve all recommended funding requests prior to project implementation.

GUIDELINES

Please use the following guidelines, along with the criteria categories, in completing the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program Funding Request. All questions in each category may not apply to your community's project. Please answer the appropriate questions in a clear and concise manner. Each community may submit two funding requests, consisting of one major and one minor request or two minor requests. Major projects do not have a cost limit; however, a minor project should not exceed \$30,000.

QUALIFYING PROJECTS

Community Councils and Neighborhood Business Associations must be informed of each proposed project. In addition, each proposed project must meet the following criteria to be considered for funding:

- Be located within a designated NBD. (See Pages 13-14)
- Have private or other non-City financial investment.
- Have documentation verifying that the Neighborhood Business Association and Community Council were informed of project.
- Can demonstrate a positive impact on businesses and/or create jobs in the NBD

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

Briefly describe the project. How will the requested funds be used? What is the ultimate goal or desired outcome of the project? Does this project implement a community plan? If so, what goal does it implement? Does this project solve a persistent NBD problem? If so, please specify.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Describe the benefits or impact that will result from project implementation such as:

- How many jobs will be created and/or retained from this project? Job impact is limited to the specific project site or project area and reported in full-time equivalents. **Please attach documentation or methodology to support any job creation or retention estimates.**
- How many existing or newly created businesses will be supported by this project? Please explain how these businesses will be assisted **and submit a complete list of businesses by name and address that will be supported by the project.** In some cases, such as façade

programs and parking lots, business impact is limited to the specific project site or immediate area affected by the project.

- What is the low/moderate income benefit? Will the project increase the community's home ownership units? Will the project increase the community's market rate units? Provide written documentation.
- Does this project complete a previously funded NBD Improvement Program project?

PRIVATE LEVERAGE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Does this project leverage private or other non-city funding? **Document any existing funding commitments.** How will this project be sustained beyond receipt of city funding? Are fund raising events planned to provide project implementation or operating costs? Who will carry out this project and what is their experience? Were the community council and business association informed about this project? Does the project have community support? Please include copies of any letters of support.

DOCUMENTED BUDGET

Provide project implementation steps along with estimated costs. Project costs may include acquisition costs, appraisals, environmental assessments, building permits, surveys, or prevailing wages. Clearly itemize all project expenses and detail the sources and uses of funds. Provide a detailed implementation timetable and schedule.

CRITERIA

CNBDU will use the following criteria in conjunction with the enclosed guidelines to evaluate and rate each eligible funding application and recommend a set of projects to the City for funding. Each applicant is expected to address specifically every criteria discussed below:

- Benefit to low- and moderate-income persons based on federal government census data. (This may not apply to all neighbors)
- Neighborhood Business District Impact: There is a positive impact on the whole NBD. Identify the number of property owners to be affected. Identify the businesses physically, contractually or financially impacted and directly benefiting from the project and explain exactly how they will benefit.
- Job Impact: Job impact is limited to the specific project site or within the NBD. All jobs must be reported as full-time equivalent (FTE). FTEs must provide a minimum of 2,080 hours per year or 40 hours per week. **Documentation should be provided to show methodology of arriving at jobs numbers.**

Job retention - Number of existing jobs at project site or within the NBD that will be eliminated without implementation of the proposed project. Must supply individual business letters documenting the number of jobs that will be lost. It is City policy to allocate up to \$6,000 for each retained job.

Job creation - Number of jobs to be created at project site or within the NBD as a result of the assistance. Must supply individual business letters documenting the number of jobs that will be created with implementation of the proposed project. It is City policy to allocate up to \$10,000 for each created job.

- **Businesses Assisted:** Please provide the number of businesses that are assisted by the completion of the project. (*Example – improvements to public parking will assist businesses in a given radius*). **Please list all such businesses by name and address.**
- Degree project impacts and implements:
 - a) Community Plan.
 - b) Completion or continuation of an existing project.
- Evidence of:
 - a) Business association notification.
 - b) Business association support.
 - c) Community council notification.
 - d) Community council support.
- Realistic time frame and detailed project budget.
- Project status:
 - a) Ready-to-bid means that bid documents have been prepared, one copy of the bid documents has been provided to DCD with the three copies of the NBD Improvement Program Funding Request Application.
 - b) Ready-to-implement means ready for construction.
 - c) Projects ready-to-implement will receive priority.
- Degree project leverages private and public (non-NBDIP) dollars.
- Organization's ability to carry out project.
- Clear and brief explanation of projects previously funded, their current status, and their impact on the NBD.

**2011 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NBDIP)**

2010 SCHEDULE

April 9	Packets/Applications emailed to NBD contacts and hard copies mailed to Community Councils. Also placed on City and CNBDU website.
May 8	CNBDU Training Workshop at Fire Museum, 315 West Court Street, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
May- June 18	NBD groups/communities work with Community Development (DCD) staff to identify projects and complete required pre-application for funding request.
June 18	Mandatory pre-applications due by 5:00pm to Community Development Department 805 Central Ave., Suite 700, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 or emailed to greg.koehler@cincinnati-oh.gov DCD/CNBDU screen pre-applications to determine NBD program eligibility. City Budget Office screens pre-applications to determine funding eligibility. DCD notifies applicants regarding status of pre-application.
July 15	Architecture and Urban Design (AUD) pre-planning session with community representatives. City architects will review pre-applications and provide communities with feedback as well as preliminary cost estimates. Will take place at Centennial Building II, 805 Central Ave., 7th Floor, Griesel Room (5:30 PM).
June – August	DCD staff work with NBD groups/communities to complete final versions of applications/proposals. Applicants inform community councils of projects and request a letter of support. Note: Schedule will vary based on timing of pre-applications submittal and approval.
August 13	3 copies of Funding applications/proposals due to Community Development Department, 805 Central Ave., Suite 700, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, by 5:00 PM . All projects to be considered for funding must meet this deadline.
August 16-20	DCD reviews request and determines appropriate funding sources. Projects advanced to City Departments for review and to CNBDU for evaluation
September 8	DCD/CNBDU preliminary review starting at 6:30 PM.
September 25	CNBDU bus tour (8:00 AM)
October 11-13	Community presentations – Each applicant is invited to make a 15 minute presentation to CNBDU and DCD staff on its proposals; followed by a 15 minute Q&A period. Presentations are scheduled Monday–Wednesday from 6–9:30 PM.
October 22	CNBDU Board makes recommendations to DCD.
December	City Council expected to approve year 2009/2010 Budget Update and communities notified of council's action.

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PRE-APPLICATION FORM

Each Neighborhood Business District / Community may submit two project requests: one major and one minor or two minor (each limited to a single activity). *Use a separate form for each project. Please complete each section.*

Project Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Neighborhood: _____

Organization submitting request: _____
(Business Assoc., Comm. Council, Redevelopment Corp.)

Contact Person Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone: _____
 Fax: _____
 E-Mail: _____

1. Type of Project:

- a) Major project _____
- b) Minor project _____

2. Project Description - Please be specific: _____

3. Estimated Funding Request: \$ _____

Office Use Only:

CITY OF CINCINNATI
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FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATION

Each Neighborhood Business District may submit two project requests (one major and one minor or two minor). Complete each section and provide written documentation to receive credit on scoring.

Project Name: _____ Project Address: _____

Neighborhood: _____ Census Tract(s): _____

Business Association: _____ Community Council: _____

Project Description: _____

1. Type of Project:

Major _____ Minor _____

2. NBD Impact: Impact is limited to the specific project site or NBD. Identify the businesses physically, contractually, or financially impacted and directly benefiting from this project. _____ (Sample letter(s) attached)

3. Job Impact: Job impact is limited to the specific project site or NBD. All jobs must be reported as full-time equivalent (FTE). FTEs must provide a minimum of 2,080 hours per year or 40 hours per week. See NBD Improvement Program Criteria for an explanation of retained or created jobs. Please provide documentation/methodology to support these numbers.

Jobs Retained _____ # Jobs Created _____

4. Businesses Assisted: Provide the names and addresses of businesses that will directly benefit from the project, and explain how these businesses will directly benefit. *(Example – a streetscape will benefit all businesses fronting on the improvements. Parking lots benefit businesses needing additional parking in close proximity).*

Businesses Assisted _____

5. Degree to which the project leverages private and other public funding. Private leverage based on commitments through letters of support. List other public funds committed to the project (federal, state, NSP).

<u>Fund Source</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>Public</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Use of Funds</u>
<u>NBD Improvement Program</u>	___	<u>X</u>	\$ _____	_____
_____	___	___	\$ _____	_____
_____	___	___	\$ _____	_____
_____	___	___	\$ _____	_____
Total Budget \$			_____	

6. Attach complete budget, including cost estimates, source of estimates, and contractor's bids.

7. What is the neighborhood contribution to this project (including committed volunteer hours)?

8. Does this project complete or continue a previously funded project? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please specify the following:

a) Phased project (Project Name) _____

b) Cost over run ___ Explain: _____

9. Does your community have an approved plan? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, which goal or objective of the plan does this project implement? _____

Is this project specified in the plan? Yes ___ No ___

10. Letter from:

a) Business Association (Attached) ___ Confirming knowledge of project
 ___ Supporting project

b) Community Council (Attached) ___ Confirming knowledge of project
 ___ Supporting project

11. Attach a map of the project location.

12. Who is the Project Coordinator and Contact Person for this project?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

List the names and phone numbers of active committee members who will be implementing this project.

Name

Phone

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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RATING SHEET

Neighborhood Business District: _____

Project Title: _____

Score: 4=Superior
 3=Above Average
 2=Average
 1=Below Average
 0=Poor

Weight: 1 - 3 as Assigned

Project Rating Categories	Score	x Weight	= Total
1. Benefit to low and moderate income persons. (based on federal government census data)	_____	2	_____
2. NBD impact - number of businesses physically, contractually or financially directly benefiting from the project.	_____	3	_____
3. Job retention - up to \$6,000 of assistance per job. Job creation - up to \$10,000 of assistance per job.	_____	1	_____
4. Businesses Assisted	_____	1	_____
5. Degree project impacts and implements.			
a) Community Plan.	_____	3	_____
b) Completion or continuation of an existing project.	_____	3	_____
6. a) Evidence of Business Association notification	_____	1	_____
b) Evidence of Business Association support	_____	1	_____
c) Evidence of Community Council support.	_____	2	_____
d) Evidence of Community Council notification.	_____	1	_____
7. Realistic time frame and detailed project budget .	_____	2	_____
8. Project status:			
a) Ready to bid.	_____	1	_____
b) Ready to implement.	_____	1	_____
9. Degree project leverages private and public dollars.	_____	3	_____
10. Organization's ability to carry out project .	_____	2	_____
11. Status and/or impact of previously funded projects	_____	3	_____
	Total Score:		_____

CITY OF CINCINNATI
Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The following information should be used to assist applicants in identifying those Neighborhood Business Districts (NBDs) eligible for funding:

Neighborhood Business District definition. CNBDU defines a Neighborhood Business District as “the contiguous placement on primary streets in the neighborhood that are reliant upon neighborhood residents and also serve customers from other communities. Typically, NBDs are composed of retail stores, restaurants, personal services, and other similar ‘walk-in’ customer oriented businesses. NBDs help to define the unique character of their neighborhood and are critically important to the visual impact of the neighborhood and to the maintenance and revitalization of the neighborhood.”

NBD areas recognized by community representatives are:

Neighborhood	General Boundary
AVONDALE (A)	Reading Road from Lincoln & University Avenue to Blair Avenue (Avondale Town Center).
AVONDALE (B)	Burnet Avenue from Forest Avenue to Erkenbrecher Avenue, Vine Street from Forest and Woolpert to Ehrman, Rockdale west of Reading Road, Burnet Avenue south to Martin Luther King.
BOND HILL (A)	Reading Road from Anita and Andina Street north to Dale Rd. and Elizabeth Place.
BOND HILL (B)	California Avenue from Reading Road to residential, Paddock Road between California Avenue and Laidlaw Avenue, California Avenue from Paddock Road to Oberlin Boulevard. Laidlaw Avenue between Paddock Road & the bridge.
CALIFORNIA	Kellogg Avenue from Renslar to Sutton.
CAMP WASHINGTON	Colerain Avenue from Elam Street to Township Avenue, Hopple Street from I-75 to Garrard.
CARTHAGE	70th Street north to Paddock Road on Vine Street.
CLIFTON	Ludlow Avenue from Whitfield Avenue to Brookline Avenue, Clifton Avenue from Terrace Avenue to Hosea Avenue.
CLIFTON HEIGHTS	McMillan Street from Ravine Street to Vine Street, Calhoun Street from Vine Street to Clifton Avenue. Including Hughes School.
COLLEGE HILL	Hamilton Avenue from 5742 Hamilton to Wittlou Street.
COLUMBIA TUSCULUM	Eastern Avenue from Stanley Avenue to Delta Avenue, Delta Avenue from Eastern Avenue to Golden Street, Columbia Parkway from Delta Avenue to Stanley Avenue, Stanley Avenue from Columbia Parkway to Eastern Avenue.
CORRYVILLE	Vine Street from E. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. to Wm. Howard Taft Road, University Avenue from Euclid Avenue to Jefferson Avenue.
EAST PRICE HILL	Warsaw Avenue from Grand Avenue to Seton Avenue, Warsaw Avenue between Enright Avenue to Olive Street off St. Lawrence.
EAST WALNUT HILLS	Woodburn Avenue from E. Mcmillian to Lincoln Avenue, Madison Road from Victory Parkway to Hackberry Street.
EVANSTON	Montgomery Road from I-71 to the Cincinnati/Norwood City Limit and Dana

	Avenue from I-71 to Ledgewood Avenue.
HARTWELL	Vine Street from West Mills (Cincinnati/Wyoming City border) south to Caldwell Avenue.
HYDE PARK (A)	Erie Avenue from Michigan Avenue to Zumstein Avenue, Edwards Road from Observatory Road to Gregson Place, Observatory from Edwards Road to Cryer Street.
HYDE PARK EAST (B)	Erie Avenue from Victoria Lane to Pinehurst Avenue
KENNEDY HEIGHTS	Montgomery Road from Tyne Avenue to Coleridge Avenue.
LOWER PRICE HILL	State Avenue from Hopkins Avenue to St. Michael Street, W. Eighth Street from Glenway Avenue to Depot Street.
MADISONVILLE	Madison Road: Ebersole – Plainville, Whetsel Ave.: Chandler - Bramble
MT. ADAMS	St. Gregory Street from Paradrome Street to Jerome Street, Pavilion Street from Belvedere Street to St. Paul Dr.
MT. AIRY	Colerain Avenue from Kirby Road to slightly south of North Bend Road (5434 Colerain Avenue).
MT. LOOKOUT	Intersection of Delta Avenue and Linwood Avenue
MT. WASHINGTON	Beechmont Avenue from Crestview Avenue to Mears Avenue.
NORTH AVONDALE	Glenwood Avenue (south) to Asmann (north), Reading Road from Asmann.
NORTHSIDE	Hamilton Avenue from Hobart Place to Knowlton's Corner (Intersection of Hoffner Street to Elmore on Spring Grove.
OAKLEY	Madison Road from Drake Avenue to Brazee Street.
O'BRYONVILLE	Madison Road from Elmhurst Avenue to Paul Street, Torrence Parkway from Elmhurst Avenue to Madison Road.
OVER-THE-RHINE (Main St.)	Central Parkway from East side of Jackson to include Sycamore Street, North to Liberty, West on Liberty to north on Hughes to West on Shiller, crossing Main Street, including Rothenberg School, crossing McMicken, proceeding West on Corwin, South on Walnut, across Liberty, south on Walnut, to East on 14 th , to South on Clay Street, to West on 13 th Street, to South on Jackson (east side of street) to Central Parkway.
OVER-THE-RHINE (Vine St.)	Central Parkway, from Race Street to Jackson Street north to Liberty, east to Walnut, North to Back St, NW to Elder, West to Vine, North to include all corners of intersection at Clifton Ave, South on Vine to include all corners of 5-point intersection, across McMicken, across Findlay, south on Republic, across Liberty, South on Parvis Alley to 13 th Street, West to Race Street, south to Central Parkway.
PLEASANT RIDGE	Montgomery Road from Lester Road to Woodmont Avenue, Ridge Road from Parkview Avenue to Woodsfield Street.
ROSELAWN	Reading Road from Section Road north to Summit Road, Brookcrest to Reading Road and Shanandoah (includes Valley Shopping Center).
WALNUT HILLS	Gilbert Avenue from Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. to Eden Park Drive, East McMillan Street from I-71 to Victory Parkway, William Howard Taft from Melrose to Victory Parkway.
WEST END	Linn Street from West Court Street north to York Street.
WEST PRICE HILL	Glenway Avenue from Seton Avenue to Boudinot Avenue.
WESTWOOD	Harrison Avenue from Kling Avenue to Higbee Street. Glenmore Avenue from Daytona Avenue to Montana Avenue.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSIGNMENTS

Please Contact Your Neighborhood Development Officer directly at 352- _____

Community	Development Officer	Phone
Avondale	Rick Hardy	6253
Bond Hill	Stephen Dronen	6126
California	Ed Ratterman	6258
Camp Washington	Sam Stephens	6251
Carthage	Rick Hardy	6253
Clifton	Markiea Gore	1932
College Hill	Stephen Dronen	6126
Columbia Tusculum	Ed Ratterman	6258
Corryville	Rick Hardy	6253
CUF/Heights	Markiea Gore	1932
East Price Hill	Markiea Gore	1932
East Walnut Hills	Ed Ratterman	6258
Evanston	Ed Ratterman	6258
Hartwell	Rick Hardy	6253
Hyde Park	Katrina Gragston	6250
Kennedy Heights	Katrina Gragston	6250
Lower Price Hill	Sam Stephens	6251
Madisonville	Stephen Dronen	6126
Mount Adams	Ed Ratterman	6258
Mount Airy	Markiea Gore	1932
Mount Lookout	Katrina Gragston	6250
Mount Washington	Ed Ratterman	6258
North Avondale	Rick Hardy	6253
Northside	Stephen Dronen	6126
Oakley	Stephen Dronen	6126
O'Bryonville	Katrina Gragston	6260
Over-the-Rhine	Ed Ratterman	6258
Pleasant Ridge	Katrina Gragston	6260
Roselawn	Stephen Dronen	6126
Walnut Hills	Rick Hardy	6253
West End	Sam Stephens	6251
West Price Hill	Markiea Gore	1932
Westwood	Markiea Gore	1932

CITY OF CINCINNATI
Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program
COMMITMENT LETTER

DATE

Mr. Michael Cervay
Director
Department of Community Development
805 Central Avenue, Suite 700
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Cervay:

I own the PROPERTY/BUSINESS at ADDRESS OF PROPERTY and support the PROJECT NAME in the COMMUNITY NAME neighborhood business district. BUSINESS NAME has NUMBER full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and, if this project is funded, will create NUMBER new jobs within one year.

My commitment to this project consists of the following: (check all that apply)

- Financial involvement in the amount of \$ _____.
- Permission for easement.
- On-going maintenance of improvements with \$ _____ annually.
- Volunteer time (estimated number of hours) _____.
- Other. Please specify.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: *My community would like to begin a major project that will likely require multiple years and a large amount of money to implement. What should our strategy be in the initial application?*

A: There are exceptions to every rule, but for expensive and complex projects it is usually recommended that your community first apply for design funding. Even if you can convince CNBDU that you have a good idea for a project, your community is less likely to receive a significant amount of construction funds for a new project unless you can demonstrate that the project is feasible and ready-to-implement and that you know what you are doing. If starting from scratch, you may be better off asking for a small amount of funding for an exploratory and design phase. Completing this process should give you an idea of whether the proposal is feasible as originally conceived as well as some knowledge of what scope of work is achievable per given dollar amount. Once the design phase is complete, your community should then be able to revise and refine the original idea and turn it into an exceptional funding request. If the construction phase will require a large amount of funding (+/- \$500,000 or more), your community will be more likely to receive funding if the project is split into 2 or more phases. For example, rather than requesting \$1,000,000 in one year to complete a streetscape, maybe you should start by requesting \$400,000 in funding for the first block or two.

Q: *In general, when putting together a funding request, what types of implementation challenges should my community be prepared for?*

A: (1) Your community should think about whether your existing organization(s) have the capacity to complete a complex project while following City and/or Federal regulations. You should consult with your community's Development Officer with specific questions to this end. When it comes time to do the project, you need to know whether the City or your community will be actually implementing the project. (2) Your community will need to have the funding and manpower to make any improvements sustainable *after* the construction is complete. For improvements to City property or public right-of-way, your community should be prepared to sign a maintenance agreement that will require you to pay for all long-term landscaping, upkeep, utilities, and other maintenance. Similarly, for improvements to private property, your community should have a source of funds to maintain the improvements, pay property taxes, pay for ongoing utilities costs, etc. (3) Just about any NBDIP project involving construction or any kind of manual labor will require prevailing wages to be paid for the whole project as well as an open and transparent process for procuring contractors, with a preference for hiring small business enterprises (SBEs). Prevailing wage often applies to both the publicly funded and privately funded portions of a project, and can substantially increase the cost of construction projects, so make sure your funding application(s) take that into consideration.

Q: *My community is considering applying for a façade grant program. What implementation issues do we need to be aware of?*

A: Façade grant programs can make a tremendous difference in an NBD, but they tend to be extremely labor intensive for the community and challenging to complete on time. (1) No community should apply for a façade program without first having a committed program coordinator for the community. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this. If a volunteer, this person needs to be ready to put in long hours due to the volume of paperwork that will be required. This person will need to work very closely with your community's Development Officer, individual property owners, storefront tenants, and subcontractors to ensure that all applicable City and Federal rules are being followed. Ideally, this person should already have some familiarity with these rules. (2) No

community should apply for a façade program without first getting a critical mass of participants to commit (not just verbally) to participating in the program as soon as it is implemented. (3) No community should apply for a façade program unless the committed participants are willing to pay for at least 50% of the façade improvements. (City-supported façade programs are only offered on a matching formula basis.) (4) If your community receives funding, you will need to set up an arms-length process for reviewing and approving façade improvement proposals from prospective participants in order to avoid conflicts of interest or any other ethics issues.

Q: *My community is considering applying for funding for a project that would involve real property acquisition. What implementation issues do we need to be aware of?*

A: Your community should complete as much due diligence as possible before proceeding with a property purchase, such as environmental assessments, appraisals, title research, etc. The best course of action is to first secure a purchase option that allows your organization at least several months to perform due diligence before closing. If there are any existing residential or commercial tenants at the property, you will likely need to have funds to pay for some or all of their relocation costs. Please plan for expenses that will be incurred for items such as environmental assessments, appraisals, relocation, demolition, etc. Whenever City funds are being used to purchase property (regardless of whether the property will be privately or publicly owned), the City can only reimburse up to Fair Market Value (FMV) or, with special permission, only slightly above FMV. Under no circumstances should your organization ever close on a property without first signing a funding agreement with the City that provides for reimbursement by the City. Otherwise, the City may not be able to reimburse. In addition, your community must account for long term operating costs such as property taxes, utilities, maintenance, conventional loan servicing, etc.

Q: *My community is considering applying for funding for public improvements (eg. streetscape or gateway Improvements). What implementation issues do we need to plan for?*

A: (1) Most public improvements involve a large amount of design work before being ready to implement. Designing a streetscape requires an extraordinary amount of expertise with right-of-way issues, utility issues, and other technical items. Every neighborhood will present its own unique challenges. Therefore, do not try and guess as to the complexity of the project or how much your project will cost to implement. Beginning in 2010, the Architecture and Urban Design Division (AUD) of the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) will be reviewing pre-applications and meeting with community members to discuss the viability of the proposals and to give preliminary cost estimates. It is highly recommended that you attend this session before you put together your community's final funding application. Implementation will go much more smoothly if you perform your due diligence before finalizing your funding request. (2) It is highly recommended that individual businesses that will be affected by the streetscape be consulted and involved in planning the project from the application process onward.

Q: *My community is considering applying for funding for parking lot improvements. What implementation issues do we need to be aware of?*

A: Please be aware that maintaining a parking lot can be expensive, and the City will expect your community to have a plan in place to deal with long-term maintenance. Any revenues received from pay boxes are unlikely to completely cover the costs of re-paving, re-striping, property taxes, utilities costs for lighting (not cheap), and other maintenance.

Q: *What other kinds of issues are often neglected during the funding application process?*

A: (1) *Any* project, even a minor project, will probably require a serious time commitment on the part of the community. Please be aware of this. (2) Businesses should be involved in the application and planning process. (3) Communities need to articulate a long-term vision for how the project will implement an economic development strategy, how it (preferably) goes hand-in-hand with existing plans and strategies, how the project can remain viable long after construction, etc.

Q: *I have a question that isn't covered in this packet. Help!*

A: You should always feel free to contact your community's assigned Development Officer with any questions. Your community will have a better funding request if you ask questions early and often.

Glossary of Terms

AUD (Division of Architecture and Urban Design) – AUD is a division of the City Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOT). With respect to design and day-to-day construction-related issues with NBDIP projects, DCD is AUD's client. AUD will assign an architect to the project. That architect is charged with working with DCD, in consultation with community stakeholders, to implement the project.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Funds – *“The [CDBG] program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1209 general units of local government and States.”* CDBG funds can only be spent to assist low-to-moderate income individuals or communities or to eliminate slum or blight conditions. Please consult with your community's assigned development officer for more information on whether your community is eligible to use CDBG funds and how to meet the required national objectives.

City Capital Funds – City Capital funds, sometimes referred to as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds, exist primarily for capital infrastructure projects. Income restrictions that apply to CDBG funds do not apply to Capital funds. However, City Capital projects normally can only be spent to improve City property or public right-of-way. Any exceptions must exhibit a clear public purpose and must be specially approved by City Council via ordinance.

CNBDU (Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United) – CNBDU is the stakeholders' group that exists primarily to help administer the NBD Improvement Program and NBD Support Program, make recommendations as to whether the City should fund proposed projects, and to advocate for Cincinnati neighborhoods. Communities interested in receiving funds for their business districts should become members and attend their regular meetings.

DCD (Department of Community Development) – DCD is responsible for administering the grant funds budgeted by City Council for the NBD Improvement Program, in partnership with CNBDU. DCD assigns a development officer to each Cincinnati neighborhood in order to provide neighborhoods with economic development expertise and to assist in implementing NBD Improvement program projects. With respect to these types of projects, your assigned development officer should be your community's primary point of contact with the City.

DO (Development Officer) – DOs, sometimes referred to as community development analysts, are employed for the express purpose of serving Cincinnati communities in a variety of economic development capacities. Most DOs are assigned to particular neighborhoods and should serve as your community's primary point of contact with the City for economic development issues.

DOT (Department of Transportation and Engineering) – DOT is the City department that can handle most of the implementation of a physical infrastructure improvement, including architectural and design services, subcontractor bidding, and construction management.

HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) – HUD is the federal agency that administers the CDBG program.

NBD (Neighborhood Business District) – CNBDU defines a Neighborhood Business District as “the contiguous placement on primary streets in the neighborhood that are reliant upon neighborhood residents and also serve customers from other communities. Typically, NBDs are composed of retail stores, restaurants, personal services, and other similar ‘walk-in’ customer oriented businesses. NBDs help to define the unique character of their neighborhood and are critically important to the visual impact of the neighborhood and to the maintenance and revitalization of the neighborhood.” In order to participate in the NBD Improvement Program, the City and CNBDU must officially recognize the district as an NBD.

NBDIP (Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program) – NBDIP refers to the annual funding round in which the City grants funds to communities for capital projects in officially recognized business districts. Community Development shares the responsibility for reviewing, rating, and making recommendations on funding requests with CNBDU. Based on CNBDU’s recommendations, the City Manager makes funding recommendations to City Council.