

City of Minneapolis 2023 City Budget Requests from the Lake Street Council

Background:

As the Mayor's Office and City Council Members deliberate our 2023 Budget options, some deeper consideration should be made for our most localized and impacted economic generators: small and BIPOC owned businesses, Cultural Districts, and other commercial & retail corridors.

Our neighborhood commercial & retail corridors have not fully recovered from the multiple impacts of a 2-year pandemic, a sudden recession, a tragic racial reckoning that reverberated across the globe, extensive property destruction due to the Civil Unrest of 2020, a diminished customer base, and ongoing negative public perceptions about public safety.

Many BIPOC business and property owners along Lake Street continue to struggle after the 2-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and the physical and economic devastation that followed. Lake Street still bares the tangible scars on our buildings and vacant lots. Commercial corridors throughout the city have seen the closure of countless retailers and restaurants. These businesses had helped to stabilize many of our corridors and transform them into thriving economic assets.

The next few years will be pivotal for forging a lasting recovery. We are confident that 2022 can be the tipping point that begins our collective healing and leads to the reconstruction of what we've lost. There are tremendous resources available to help accomplish this, including: new state and philanthropic investments, CPED's commitment to provide extensive case management services to some of our hardest hit businesses and properties, locally raised individual and corporate contributions, and peer-to-peer business and cultural community supports. What we really need to compliment those resource investments is an intentionally focused 2023 budget document that makes an "Inclusive Economic Recovery" our strategic priority.

Local, on-the-ground organizations have worked very hard to secure long-term funding (grants, technical assistance, forgivable loans and patient capital), but local government can and should play a larger role moving forward.

We are asking the Mayor, lead staff members of major city departments and the City Council to carefully consider how we can utilize next year's budget investments to restore our corridors and help our businesses, nonprofit and arts organizations, neighborhood associations and other public partners continue the mission towards a full economic recovery.

Recommendations

We propose the following corridor recovery recommendations for the 2023 City Budget. These recommendations have been compiled from many conversations with small businesses, small business support organizations, and other community stakeholders. We believe that these strategies should land squarely on the city's economic recovery agenda, as represented in the 2023 city budget allocations process and perhaps beyond. These recommendations are:

- Corridor Marketing, Events & Placemaking for neighborhood commercial corridors, which could be implemented by expanding funding to the effective Great Streets Business District Support Program **(\$3 Million)**
- Public Realm Maintenance – Provide additional support for public realm upkeep in Cultural Districts including extra litter pickups, graffiti removal, replacement of damaged streetscape infrastructure, etc. **(\$2 Million)**
- Pilot municipal sidewalk snow clearance on Pedestrian Priority Network corridors **(\$6 Million)**
- Increased support for B-TAP & D-TAP technical assistance programs **(\$2 Million)**
- Increase CPDF **(\$10 Million - \$30 Million)**. Note: the Mayor’s Economic Recovery Task Force recommend that the size of this fund be quadrupled.
- Increase allocation to the Façade Improvement Program **(\$1.25 Million)**
- Income replacement grants to BIPOC-owned restaurants that were shut out of the federal Restaurant Revitalization Program **(\$5 Million)**
- Pilot an Ambassador program along the Lake Street corridor – partnering with SSD & Business Associations **(\$5 Million)**
- Support infrastructure and staffing for a new Safety Center **(\$ TBD)**
- Provide matching funds to increase the budget of the LEAD program **(\$1 million)**
- Dedicated staff to coordinate safety initiatives between city, county, and community groups, led by a CPS type city employee or a partner organization **(\$500,000 for Lake Street corridor/Midtown)**

In addition to these specific budget requests, we encourage the City to lift up the **Mayor’s Inclusive Economic Recovery Work Group** recommendations and integrate them into the budget allocations. This work group encouraged the City to set realistic performance goals, create a timeline for implementation and measure our progress on the Recovery Work Group recommendations, as noted in the report:

Part 3: Implementation plan and timeline - The Work Group recommends that the Mayor:

- Direct staff to develop an implementation work plan and timeline for the recommendations that the Mayor is moving forward
- Develop a communications strategy to report progress at regular intervals and invite opportunities for continued input from and partnership with Work Group members and other community stakeholders.

In conclusion: As city leaders examine their budget allocation options, we ask that they pay particular attention to the many businesses along our commercial and retail corridors who have struggled during the pandemic and continue to adjust to the profound economic shockwaves of the last 2 years. Minneapolis’ vibrant BIPOC communities, cultural corridors and entrepreneurs have been especially impacted by these social and economic forces.