

CIB Project Proposal Form – STREETS AND UTILITY (SU) & COMMUNITY FACILITIES (CF)

Thank you for your interest in the Saint Paul Capital Improvement Budget.

Please respond to each question listed below. If it does not apply to your project, state that it is not applicable. The questions are designed to correspond with how projects will be scored by citizen task forces.

Please do not submit the proposal until it is complete.

You will present your proposal to a CIB task force in March or April, and you may distribute additional materials then. All proposers will be sent presentation instructions in February.

Section A – Background Information

Project Title: Enhancement of the bike trail that runs along Interstate 35E from Grand Avenue to St. Claire Avenue

Proposing Agency, Group, or Individual: Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association

Proposer's Address: 455 Banfil Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

Contact Person: Mark Fangmeier

Phone Number: (612) 787-6767

Primary E-mail Address: mark.fangmeier@gmail.com

Address or Cross Streets of Proposed Project: Bike path parallel to 35E between Grand & St. Claire Avenue

Citizen Participation District(s): 9

City Council Ward(s): 2

Map of Citizen Participation Districts and Wards can be found here:

<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/75433>

Which category best describes your project?

Community Facilities

Streets and Utilities

Please indicate that you are aware of the City's public art ordinance. Text of the ordinance may be viewed online at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/12228>.

Additional Public Art information can be found here: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?nid=4167>

Yes No

Please indicate that you have read the CIB eligibility Requirements, found here:

<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/75366>

Yes No

Section A – Background Information

Please provide a short (50 words or less) description of your project:

Enhancement of the bike trail that runs along Interstate 35E from Grand Avenue to St. Claire Avenue. Funding request includes a crosswalk at the start and end of bike path (Grand and St Claire Avenue), resurfacing the path, lighting in key areas of safety concern, access to water for the critical maintenance of several thousands dollars worth of trees, shrubs, and plants that are part of a landscaping plan starting spring 2015.

Section B – Narrative/Long Description

Please describe the project. Provide pertinent information, using the following questions as a general guide:

- *Why is this project important?*
- *Is there any historical context we should be aware of?*
- *What does this project accomplish? What problem is it trying to solve?*
- *Will this project occur in phases or stages? What are they?*

The Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association (LBNA) is working to increase the safety, quality and usability of the bike/walking trail and adjacent green spaces that runs along 35E between Grand Avenue and St Clair Avenue. Our neighborhood has identified that this is an under-utilized amenity that could greatly add to the quality of life in the neighborhood if better equipped and maintained.

Not only is this trail a community asset with great potential, it has been identified as a section of the City's existing bicycle facilities network that could benefit from improvement. In addition, this proposal is supported by a number of Saint Paul's adopted planning documents, including the City's Transportation Plan policy 3.5, recommending "Support existing off-street shared-use paths and add facilities and amenities supportive of active living principles," and policy 3.6 which suggests "Fill gaps in the bikeway system." This path is a critical transportation corridor because it is the only major direct connection dedicated to bicycles between Highland Park and Downtown within the West End. This trail, when properly maintained, can also increase cyclists' safety by allowing St. Paul residents to avoid busy arterial streets such as West 7th.

The LBNA has taken an active role in the maintenance and development of the trail and adjacent green spaces and provides ongoing volunteer labor to care for the trail, including organizing annual cleanup efforts.

2010 - 2011:

In 2010, a portion of the path that runs parallel to Harrison Ave was resurfaced and new lighting was added as a part of the Residential Street Vitality Program construction project for that street. As a part of RSVP, the LBNA received \$25,000 in funding for design, production and installation of public art that serves as exercise equipment in Pleasant Place, a new park established by the LBNA at the corner of Harrison Avenue and Garfield Street. The LBNA further enhanced the park through participation in the City of Saint Paul's Adopt a Planter and Adopt a Container (trash can) programs.

2012:

In 2012, the LBNA received funding from Community Neighborhood Housing Services for landscape

improvements to Pleasant Place, including a welcome garden. Also in 2012, the LBNA received a grant from Greening the Avenue for the design and installation of a new sign identifying the park.

2015 and Beyond:

This project will enhance a neglected amenity that is an essential arterial component that runs through the length of the Little Bohemia Neighborhood. In addition, the path is also an important link in Saint Paul's bike trail system that helps link Downtown Saint Paul to the greater West 7th Street area and Highland Park.

In its current state, the trail is unusable at night as a result of safety concerns due to a lack of sufficient lighting. The deteriorated condition of the path makes it unsafe for young children, the elderly and for people with physical impairments or disabilities. In addition, due to poor lighting and its overall dilapidated condition, the path is subject to homeless encampments that creates further safety issues and results in increased amounts of trash, empty liquor bottles and other debris.

Resurfacing, additional lighting and other enhancements will not only alleviate these areas of concern, but will promote increased usage of the bike path and trail.

Up to this point, work to enhance the bike trail and Pleasant Place has occurred in stages, based on the availability of various funding sources. Ideally, sufficient CIB funding will allow for the full rehabilitation of the trail and installation of both lighting and water access amenities. However, the plan does allow for incremental implementation and is flexible in the way in which individual components of the plan are fulfilled.

Section C – Fit with Evaluation Criteria

1) Project importance. Consider criteria such as (but not limited to):

- *Project stabilizes the structural or mechanical integrity of an asset*
- *Project improves or creates an asset that is currently in high use or demand*
- *Project improves or creates an asset to meet new demand*
- *Project improves the functionality of an asset*

The importance of this project is that it enhances a neglected bike trail that serves as an important corridor for wildlife, a valuable bike path connecting Highland Park and Downtown through the West End, and a community gathering/focal point for our West End neighborhood. With the growth of the Little Bohemia Neighborhood and the prominence in which we promote the bike trail and Pleasant Place, inside and outside of our community, we have received reports of the trail becoming more popular and being used more often. Though the demand and importance of the trail may be increasing, its capacity to serve this demand and functionality is limited due to its poor condition, lack of lighting, connectability and absence of other amenities.

2) A. For Community Facilities and Streets and Utilities Projects Only.

Safety concerns. Consider criteria such as (but not limited to):

- *Project remedies pressing life safety issues that pose a danger to the community*
- *Immediate action is needed to address critical safety issues*
- *Project addresses code violations or other mandates or legal requirements*

The improvements achievable with CIB funds would remedy significant, ongoing safety concerns.

1. The pavement is in poor condition—including buckled pavement, cracked and deteriorating surface, and encroachment of dirt, sand, and other natural debris—creating an unsafe environment for users (particularly children and the elderly). There are nearby “55+” retirement homes and townhouses and several children in the area that could be hurt due to the conditions of the trail.

2. The lack of sufficient lighting is another major area of concern. Poor lighting causes the trail to be extremely dark at its two key points of entry at Grand and St. Clair Avenues, as well as a long stretch from Western Avenue to St. Clair, at night as well as dawn and dusk. This makes the trail difficult to use because users can’t see the impediments along the path (due to its poor condition). It also attracts loitering, illegal activities, and other safety concerns. The poor lighting makes users feel unsafe from potential predatory criminal activity. Once more, the dark conditions tend to attract vagrants, who camp (or pass out) along the trail creating an unwelcoming, hazardous environment ripe with the potential for conflict.

3) Demonstrated commitment. Consider criteria such as (but not limited to):

- Continued funding is needed to deliver expected services or to preserve an asset*
- Project leverages outside funding*
- Project has been proposed in previous cycles*
- Proposal demonstrates evidence of community collaborations or partnerships*
- Project demonstrates community support and organizational commitment*

2013:

2013 marked the first proposal for CIB funds in support of the 35E bike trail. However, past community support and partnerships with the City of Saint Paul and other organizations, has led to a more valued and viable amenity. As detailed in Section B of this application, the dedication and commitment of the residents of the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association resulted in \$30,000+ in investment and countless hours of volunteer support to try and establish the trail as a community asset.

2014:

Since our previous CIB proposal the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association has entered into a landscape partnership agreement with the City of Saint Paul and MNDOT by way of the Community Roadside Partnership (CRP) grant. City Forestry also helped remove a few declining trees of safety concern in 2014.

2015 and Beyond:

The CRP grant (see attached CRP Grant Information) awards over the next three years, a maximum of \$30,000 per year, starting in spring 2015–2017, for plant materials, herbicides, compost, wood chips, rodent protection, etc. There is a professional landscape plan draft for phase 1 (of 3) that has been provided by MNDOT (see draft attached). Additionally, work prior to the start date of the CRP grant is being done by MNDOT, including repairs to sound walls, invasive removals and treatment (e.g. for buckthorn), major ground prep work (e.g., mowing along hillsides and grading), structured removal of ash and other damaged or dangerous trees, and more.

The scope of the CRP plan is stated as such:

“As a community-building endeavor we hope to 1. increase tree canopy along this corridor for greater livability (filter air pollution and noise from freeway, provide shade, etc.), 2. environmental stewardship (remove invasives, erosion prevention, etc.), 3. community improvement (with thoughtful design we hope to deter loitering, garbage dumping, etc., and other criminal activity), 4. roadside beautification. Overall, we hope to make the area a safe place that we can enjoy, share (bikers currently commute on bike path but use amongst walkers is limited due to safety concerns), and be proud of.”

Volunteers for the planting and ongoing maintenance include: Little Bohemia residents, Saint Paul Citizen Pruners, LBNA Community Garden Club, Journey's students and staff, Minnesota Tree Care Advisors, MN Master Naturalists, bike groups, local businesses, and more.

The CRP grant does not include lighting, path repaving, or water utilities—yet these functions are necessary for the improvements in the area to be a success. These same goals can be fully achieved with the aid of CIB funds, particularly of interest is water to establish the wealth of plant materials (trees, shrubs, perennials, etc.) being planted over the next three years.

4) Community benefit. Consider criteria such as (but not limited to):

- *Project significantly benefits a neighborhood, district, area, or city as a whole*
- *Project enhances livability by improving quality of life or property values, providing unmet needs, improving safety or accessibility, etc.*
- *Project improves aesthetic appearance of an asset or area through landscaping, public art, lighting, signage, or other design features*

This project will significantly benefit the Little Bohemia Neighborhood. This trail runs through a neighborhood that has been traditionally underserved. Identified as a target area for the City's Invest Saint Paul and Neighborhood Stabilization Program, Little Bohemia has seen significant investment by the City in the purchase of more than 20 vacant and foreclosed homes. Rehabilitation has been completed on four homes, with ongoing work currently taking place on two homes and work on an additional three homes planned to begin within weeks, all of which are located less than a block or two from the trail. Enhancement of the trail as proposed in this application will provide substantial improvement to a neglected amenity that would greatly enhance the marketability of the neighborhood.

In addition to increasing the marketability of the neighborhood, investment in this trail will also improve its vitality, usability and safety.

This project will also benefit the greater West 7th Street area. The trail serves residents as a link to downtown Saint Paul and would provide users with an alternative to West 7th Street. It also connects to the Jefferson Avenue bike trail.

In addition to benefiting the West End, the project also stands to benefit the entire city through an enhanced trail system. As stated in Section B of this application, investment in this trail is supported through the City's adapted planning documents including the Transportation Plan.

5) Long-range impact. Consider criteria such as (but not limited to):

- *Project's impact on future operating costs (both increases/decreases)*
- *Project exceeds standards in environmental sustainability*
- *Project provides tangible return on investment*
- *Project is included in City-approved plan*
- *Project maintains an asset with historical significance*
- *Project demonstrates ability to achieve stated outcomes*

Investment in the 35E bike trail that runs through Little Bohemia will have a long lasting impact on our neighborhood. The project will greatly improve the overall livability of the neighborhood by providing a significantly enhanced amenity that all residents will have the opportunity to enjoy. It will help build a stronger sense of community, and help provide a focal point for community gatherings and interaction. It will assist the LBNA in leveraging additional dollars for investment from other funding sources to provide additional investment in the trail and neighborhood. Investing in the trail will help the LBNA build new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships with neighboring organizations that stand to benefit from its improvement, including United Hospital, the Salvation Army, Journeys Secondary School, the West 7th Community Center, senior residences and more.

6. Additional information requested. Please provide additional information that would be important to know about your project. Information can include, but not limited to, the following:

- *Traffic count on street projects*
- *Pavement condition of streets*
- *Number of people who use facility*
- *Demographics of surrounding community*

The demographics who utilize this trail are diverse; from neighborhood children to elderly neighbors living in near by retirement housing, to daily commuters biking into Downtown from the surrounding neighborhoods. Currently the pavement on the bike path is in such a state of disrepair that it is unsafe for many of these key demographics to utilize this community resource. There are points on the path where tree roots have caused large dips and bumps along the path - some of which require caution cones for safety. With the allocation of CIB funds this community asset will finally reach it's full potential and expand to serve the diverse demographics for which it was intended.