



The City of Fitchburg
Massachusetts
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

Feb 29 2024 9:08 am

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February 14, 2024

President Anthony Zarrella
Fitchburg City Council
718 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear President Zarrella:

In consideration of the recommendation of the Planning Board and comments by various citizens regarding the Year 50 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), I hereby submit to the City Council the following year 50 CDBG application for your review. Attached, please find Year 50 Estimated Funding, Year 50 Funding Requested, and Year 50 Funding Recommended.

The Year 50 Action Plan must be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development no later than May 15, 2024 to ensure funds will be available by July 1, 2024. In order to meet the submission deadline for Year 50 CDBG program, comments must be received by the City Council's March 5, 2024 meeting.

Sincerely,

Samantha M. Squailia
Mayor of Fitchburg

Cc: Fitchburg City Council
Jacqueline Cronin, City Auditor
Kimberly LeBlanc, Community Development Coordinator

YEAR 50 ESTIMATED FUNDING

Estimated CDBG funds available for Year 50 (2024-2025) are as follows:

	Amount to be determined
Year 50 Estimated Entitlement*	
Year 49 Entitlement	\$949,218.54
Estimated Program Income available from prior years (Misc.)	\$950
Reprogrammed Funds	\$7,372.64
CDBG HRL	\$30,000

*** This figure may fluctuate pending budget approval by Congress**

CDBG YEAR 50 FUNDING REQUESTED

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS (10)	\$606,750
PUBLIC SERVICES (11)	\$292,324.80
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (5)	\$335,000
REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION (3)	\$291,043
PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (1)	\$210,000
TOTAL YEAR 50 FUNDING REQUESTS (30)	\$1,735,117.80
ESTIMATED FUNDS AVAILABLE:	\$955,157.64

CDBG YEAR 50 FUNDING RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS (7)	\$304,401
PUBLIC SERVICES (9)	\$137,500
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (4)	\$172,256.64
REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION (3)	\$151,000
PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (1)	\$190,000
TOTAL YEAR 50 FUNDING RECOMMENDED (24)	\$955,157.64
ESTIMATED FUNDS AVAILABLE:	\$955,157.64

SUMMARY OF YEAR 50 PROPOSALS

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

	PROJECT	SPONSOR	YEAR 50 Request	YEAR 50 RECOMMENDATION
A	ADA Crosswalk Improvements on Electric Avenue and Deerfield Road	Department of Public Works	\$50,000	\$50,000
	<p>The proposed project includes the construction of an ADA-compliant crosswalk and a pair of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) on Electric Avenue near the intersection with Old Deerfield Road. These improvements will provide a safer, more accessible crossing location for pedestrians. This area sees a relatively high volume of pedestrians due to its proximity to the businesses at Parkhill Plaza, several schools, and other City amenities including the Forest Hill Cemetery Trail Loop, Coggshall Park, and Parkhill Park. The project also includes funding to perform minor repairs to failing sections of asphalt along the Forest Hill Cemetery trail loop.</p>			
B	ADA Crosswalk Improvements on John Fitch Highway & Pearl Street	Department of Public Works	\$100,000	\$83,651
	<p>The proposed project will include the installation of six ADA-compliant crosswalks on John Fitch Highway and Pearl Street to provide better, safer access to Coolidge Park. Please see the attached Project Map. Each crosswalk will include ADA-compliant ramps as needed and will be constructed of concrete where possible, with asphalt to transition to existing surfaces where needed to match existing asphalt.</p>			
C	City Park signs Replacement	Parks and Recreation Department	\$12,000	\$12,000
	<p>The purpose of this project is to create uniformity and provide the names and locations of the parks in the city. This information should be available to the community in all of the parks, more importantly, the signs will help those visiting the parks know what parks they are visiting and bring uniformity to the city's parks system.</p>			
D	Outdoor Fitness Center and Outdoor Fitness Studio Installation	Parks and Recreation Department	\$20,000	\$20,000
	<p>The Fitness Court is designed for adults of all ages and abilities, fully accessible, and home to premiere outdoor fitness classes and training programs. It is an innovative outdoor bodyweight circuit training center designed to improve the quality of life in cities, schools, parks, and trails across America. The equipment for the Fitness center has already been purchased with prior year's funds. The funds requested this year will be used for the Installation of the fitness center equipment.</p>			

E	Mama Fitz Park and Parkhill Park	Community Development	\$100,000	\$0
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Funding will supplement the budget for the installation of new play equipment at Mama Fitz Park and Parkhill Park and the renovation of the Mama Fitz basketball court with related site work. Initial bids for construction came in significantly higher than the consultant's estimates. All funding will be utilized for the construction component of this project.

F	Public Art Sculpture Walk	Community Development	\$36,000	\$0
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The Community Development & Planning Department would work collaboratively with City leadership and the New England Sculpture Association to develop a call for up to 6 sculptures to be installed in downtown to create a sculpture walk. The sculptures would be on exhibit for two years and then rotated out for new sculptures at the end of the two years. The sculptures themselves would be "on loan" for the two year exhibit period and the funds would pay for the costs of facilitating the call for public art, coordinating the installation with the artists by the New England Sculpture Association and a stipend to the artists for the loan of the pieces and transportation costs. We have identified two potential public locations for sculptures; the extra wide sidewalks around the Theater Block, between 633 Main Street and 759 Main Street, or the perimeter of Riverfront Park. We will request assistance from DPW for installation of cement bases and the sculptures. If DPW is unable to assist, we will use some of the funds for installation costs.

G	Streetscapes	Community Development	\$100,000	\$100,000
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The majority of requested funds will support the development of the Twin Cities Rail Trail Connector which the city is responsible for the design and construction that connects the completed Phase I with the Phase II MassDOT project. Work may also include design, installation or replacement of sidewalks, curb cuts, fencing, lighting, plantings, line painting, intersection improvements, other streetscape infrastructure or accessibility improvements along City Gateways, or other strategic locations.

Depranos Drive Repaving

H	Project	Community Health Connections, inc.	\$150,000	\$0
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The primary goal of the project is to repave the approximately 1,000 feet of pavement constituting Drepanos Drive, a private way that is adjacent to CHC's Fitchburg Community Health Center at 326 Nichols Road. Along with repaving, there will be other associated improvements including painted lines, stop signs, informational signs, and the removal of some vegetation adjacent to the roadway. Funds will be used for a contractor to repave Fitchburg's Drepanos Drive, a private way adjacent to Community Health Connections' (CHC) headquarters at 326 Nichols Road.

I	Phoenix Building Entrances and Historic Facades	Fitchburg Historical Society	\$6,250	\$6,250
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This project will improve the appearance and visibility of the entrance, facade and monumental foyer of the Phoenix Building. It will also improve the appearance and visibility of the entrance from the parking lot at the rear of the building. These will improve the appearance of Upper Main Street's streetscape, while also increasing visitorship to the Historical Society, an important public educational resource that draws visitors to its location on Main Street. The improvements will consist of lighting, painting, signage and historic preservation of entrances to the 1892 National Register Phoenix Building, designed by Fitchburg architect, Henry M. Francis. Funds will be used for the Facade Lighting fixtures; an electrician to install the facade lighting, equipment rental for the Cherry Picker Lift, permit fees, window replacement above the facade doorway, and installation of energy efficient exterior door light.

J	Crocker Field- Handrails, Benches and Steel Painting	School Department	\$32,500	\$32,500
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This project is a subproject within the ongoing Crocker Field Restoration. Funds will be used to design, fabricate and install handrails for the field house; remove, purchase and install grandstand benches; and clean and paint steel at the press box. Handrails to be installed: 58 linear feet, Benches to be removed and replaced: 14 benches totaling 112 linear feet, and Steel to be cleaned and painted: 2000 sq ft.

7 PROPOSALS - \$304,401

PUBLIC SERVICES

PROJECT	SPONSOR	YEAR 50 REQUEST	YEAR 50 RECOMMENDATION	
K	Street Outreach	Board of Health	\$20,000	\$20,000

The City of Fitchburg recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Opportunities for Hope, a newly formed organization under the auspices of the Fitchburg Housing Authority, to utilize a FHA-owned building in Fitchburg to create a Temporary Warming Center. Open only at times of extreme, sustained weather and staffed by experienced professionals who are familiar with the local unsheltered population, the temporary warming shelter will be available to the unsheltered individuals in an effort to create an efficient and sustainable model. The Winter Warming Center is an "in-house" approach to keeping individuals safe while providing an opportunity for discussion of available resources. Funding will be used for the outreach activities conducted including street outreach engagement with unsheltered population providing direct referrals to shelter, medical/mental health/substance use treatment, permanent housing, etc. Outreach activities will also include Winter Warming Center implementation as needed. The other portion of the funding will be put toward winter warming shelter operational costs.

L	Fitchburg Farmers' Market	Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.	\$7,324.80	\$7,000
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The Fitchburg Farmers Market serves the Fitchburg community with a focus on low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons and Environmental Justice populations that are at increased risk for food insecurity. In addition to accepting SNAP and the MA Healthy Incentive program for all market vendors, the Fitchburg Farmers Market supports older adults and low-income families through the acceptance of Senior and WIC Farmers Market Coupons. The project also assists small businesses as vendors, as well as youth through market activities hosted by the Youth Leaders. The Fitchburg Farmers Market is in the downtown North of Main neighborhood in a City park/public space, so it is accessible to these populations. Funds will be used to pay the Salary of the Farmers' Market Manager and two youth Leaders.

M	Spartacus	YMCA of Central Massachusetts Montachusett Community Branch	\$25,000	\$12,000
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Spartacus is a program designed to help at-risk teens who are vulnerable to issues such as substance abuse, failing school, and anger management, make healthy decisions. Through a diverse offering of curriculum, including exercise, academic tutoring, community service opportunities, and workshops focused on topics like anger management, leadership development, and substance abuse, participants build their character, self-confidence as well as abilities. Funds will be used for salary of a Youth and Teen Program Coordinator.

Drug Enforcement & Foot

N	Patrol Program	Fitchburg Police Department	\$60,000	\$60,000
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The overall goal of this program is two-fold; to reduce drug activity through the apprehension of narcotics dealers and to increase community policing efforts in the downtown & Rail Trail area. The Fitchburg Police Department will use grant funds to assign police overtime to conduct drug related investigations within designated and allowable CDBG areas. Project activities will include arrests, surveillance, execution of search warrants, drug seizures, weapons seizures, and other related activities. Funds will also be used to conduct additional, proactive foot patrols in the downtown district and the Rail Trail region. For the purposes of this application, foot patrols will include walking beats and bicycle patrols.

O	Family Homeless Shelter	North Star Family Services	\$10,000	\$9,500
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North Star is the only shelter for families with children experiencing homelessness in our region. They provide emergency shelter, food, clothing, and comprehensive case management services to guide families to stability and self-sufficiency in permanent housing. The funds will be used for staff salary.

P	Homelessness Prevention	Community Legal Aid	\$20,000	\$5,000
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The project will provide thorough and comprehensive legal outreach and advocacy to Fitchburg's low-income and elderly renters, with the goal of helping them obtain and maintain safe, affordable housing. Funds from the Fitchburg CDBG program will allow CLA to continue to assist tenants with eviction cases before their court dates and to represent subsidy program participants threatened with termination from the programs, work that they are unable to prioritize in the absence of dedicated funding.

Resident Services Coordinator

Q	and Activities	First Parish Housing/The Sundial	\$22,500	\$0
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This project will provide case management, activities, and information and referral services for residents at the Sundial. Services will be provided by a Social Worker, who is the current Resident Service Coordinator. The Resident Service Coordinator will educate residents on available services, public benefits, and assist with any tenancy issues. The Resident Service Coordinator will also set up for activities, crafts, and games to decrease isolation. The funding request is for half the Resident Service Coordinator's salary.

R	Transportation STEAM	Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster	\$67,500	\$14,000
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The Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster after-school program focuses on offering STEAM-based education and holistic health activities to approximately 400 students in our combined communities, with 120 being from Fitchburg schools. However, transportation barriers prevent many students from accessing these enriching opportunities. The requested funds will be allocated towards providing reliable and safe transportation services, enabling Fitchburg students to participate regularly in this program.

S	Mayor's Energy Fund	Mayor's office	\$25,000	\$5,000
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The Mayoral Energy Fund will utilize CDBG funding per HUD income guidelines to allow low-income residents to apply for relief to go toward utility costs during winter months. The Fitchburg Mayor's Office serves the residents of the city, this program is merely a beneficial extension of the work and services already provided through the Mayor's Office in collaboration with the Community Development office.

Serving Fitchburg Through

T	Partnership	Spanish American Center	\$15,000	\$5,000
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The Spanish American Center serves many families in Fitchburg (close to one half of our client caseload). Our goal is to establish a physical presence in a convenient location in the city. We will be working with Restoration Recovery in a mutually beneficial collaboration: They will provide us with office space for our Domestic Violence Advocates and our Information and Referral Specialist on a once weekly basis and we will meet one of their current needs through providing an English language class for their agency geared toward their client population as well as the general Fitchburg community of English language learners. Funds will go toward an English Language Instructor, occupancy, books, supplies, food, travel, and administration.

Children of Fitchburg and

U	Leominster Calming Kit Project	Empower Children for Success	\$20,000	\$0
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The Calming Kit project will provide parents, childcare providers, teachers, first responders and other professionals who care for our children who are low-income, BIPOC, recent immigrants, and non-English speakers an effective tool to support the social-emotional, mental and behavioral health of children in Fitchburg and Leominster. Funds will be used for materials and supplies.

9 PROPOSALS - \$137,500

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT	SPONSOR	YEAR 50 REQUEST	YEAR 50 RECOMMENDATION	
V	Small Business Technical Assistance	NewVue Communities	\$30,000	\$30,000

NewVue Communities seeks funding for personnel to continue to provide technical assistance to small business owners and those positioned to start a small business. Providing business owner counseling, targeted outreach to minority business owners, and packaging loan (and grant) applications will be the activities that drive their effort to impact the economy in Fitchburg. In addition, the small business team will partner with the North Central Chamber of Commerce to offer in-person training and webinars addressing the beginning stages of developing a small business.

W	Sign & Façade Program	Community Development	\$60,000	\$50,000
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This project proposes to reduce blighted conditions in downtown/ gateway roads and increase economic activity by providing assistance to replace defunct signs with professionally designed, quality signage. Owners provide a \$2000 match or 30% of cost. This is potential. Owners may also match by investing 30% of cost into other physical improvements of the space.

X	Small Business Development Funding	Community Development	\$90,000	\$57,256.64
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Funds will be used for a combination of direct loan and grant assistance AND to solicit an entity to create a shared retail location in downtown Fitchburg. Some may provide services such as residents being trained to be home day care providers enabling a resident to buy the supplies they need to open a day care business in their home and provide themselves income while watching their own child. We also have entrepreneurs who would like to sell unique, often hand-crafted products. These funds would allow the CD&P Department to work with an entity who would operate a retail incubator. The entity would agree to identify and secure a space downtown and operate that space to allow numerous retailers to sell their goods either through consignment or rental of a small area within the space. The ultimate goal would be to create a curated space that offers low cost entry to physical retail for local entrepreneurs/makers, becoming a destination for visitors, and further brands Fitchburg as a destination for arts and culture.

Y	Downtown Coordinator	Community Development	\$55,000	\$35,000
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The Downtown Coordinator position, developed and supported collaboratively by the InTown Fitchburg partnership (previously known as ReImagine North of Main), is a critical component in the revitalization efforts underway in downtown Fitchburg. This position works directly with microenterprises by offering marketing and promotional services to grow sales and revenue for the overall economic development of downtown. The Downtown Coordinator is also responsible for developing and implementing events and activities that bring residents and visitors to the downtown area for the benefit of the businesses in the district. We are requesting full salary funding in the event that the City of Fitchburg is unable to fund the other half of the salary with general funds. It is our intention to make this position a city position.

We will request City Funds for half of the salary, however we do not yet have this approval. If this is approved, we would reduce our CDBG funds by that amount to allow those funds to be reprogrammed to another activity.

Z	Fitchburg Public Market	Worcester Regional Food Hub	\$100,000	\$0
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The Fitchburg Public Market (FPM) is a shared kitchen and marketplace operated by the Worcester Regional Food Hub. Small food businesses will be able to rent out the kitchen to produce their food in a fully permitted commercial-grade kitchen, and can sell their meals directly to customers in the front-end of the marketplace. Local food options from farms, orchards, and other food producers in the area will be available for retail as well.

This application is for an entrepreneurship technical assistance program called Launching Diverse Food Entrepreneurs in Fitchburg. There have been several iterations of this programming in Worcester run by the Food Hub, and a pilot program was run in Fitchburg with a small class of 10 which was held at city hall. Under this proposal, up to 24 low-income entrepreneurs of color, primarily women and immigrant business owners, will get all the necessary certifications and permits to start a food business and begin operating out of the FPM.

4 PROPOSALS - \$172,256.64

REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION

PROJECT	SPONSOR	YEAR 50 REQUEST	YEAR 50 RECOMMENDATION
AA FRA Grants Program	Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority	\$150,000	\$20,000

This program includes grant funding to activate properties along Main Street and throughout the downtown corridor. The Main Street Housing Grant, which provides funding for up to ten (10) upper story residential units at \$5,000 each; and the Design Grant program, which allocates up to \$2,000 for any type of design drawing (architectural, mechanical, etc.) for business and/or property owners or developers alike. The FRA also intends to create a new grant program allowing funds to be directed towards energy efficiency projects for commercial spaces within the Urban Renewal District.

To date in 2023 alone, the FRA has allocated a total of \$45,000 between two grants, and we hope to allocate more, coupled with the inaugural energy efficiency grant. Funding will go towards the three (3) programs, which will not only activate properties within the downtown, but will assist developers, property owners, and small business owners in bridging their funding capital stack in order to kick-off or complete their projects. It will also further economic development and business opportunities, provide jobs and possible upward mobility for residents within the area, as well as much-needed housing within the Urban Renewal District.

BB	Critical Home Repair	Habitat for Humanity of North Central MA	\$30,000	\$30,000
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The Critical Home Repair program provides needed interior and exterior repairs addressing code violations, safety concerns, accessibility problems, and weatherization issues for low-income homeowners in Fitchburg so that they may maintain a safe, decent, and affordable place to live. Funds will go toward the cost on construction materials, subcontractor costs, and wages.

CC	Code Enforcement	Board of Health	\$111,043	\$101,000
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The proposed project will consist of implementation of an overall inspection and enforcement strategy to eliminate housing deterioration, substandard housing, vacancy, abandonment, and conditions of blight in lower income, older housing stock, CDBG strategy neighborhoods. The overarching goal also consists of efforts to provide safe and sanitary housing for owner and rental units, whereby improving neighborhoods and increasing property values. Heath Department intends to fund a portion of a full time clerk salary (50%) and one full time code inspector.

3 PROPOSALS - \$151,000

ADMINISTRATION

PROJECT	SPONSOR	YEAR 50 REQUEST	YEAR 50 RECOMMENDATION	
DD	CDBG Administration	Community Development	\$210,000	\$190,000

Project funds will provide for the necessary administration of CDBG programs and sub-recipient contracts in accordance with federal guidelines, including staffing, technical services, and planning activities. This also includes the cost of various activities such as the Consolidated Plan; Consolidated Annual Performance Report; Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing; and other strategic plans and services. These funds enable the City to apply for, receive, and administer additional federal and state grants. (Funding will not to exceed 20% of entitlement.)

1 PROPOSAL - \$190,000

