



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

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March 17, 2016

The United States Conference of Mayors
1620 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20006

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the City of Saint Paul, I am writing to support the Frogtown Rondo Home Fund proposal to the CommunityWINS grant program. This grant will be used to fund the rehabilitation of small rental apartment complexes in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods of the City of Saint Paul.

The housing supply in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods is dominated by small rental buildings. Over the past five years, the number of renter households has increased by 13 percent citywide, outpacing homeowners by 2 percent. This shows the need to address the capital issues related to rental property in order to provide decent and affordable homes to these communities. Many of these properties need substantial investment to address deferred maintenance and update critical systems. Funding these improvements through rent increases could “price out” residents who benefit from recent public investments in transit, schools, parks, and other public amenities in these neighborhoods. Unlike the single family housing stock that has benefited from substantial funding through the City’s Inspiring Communities program with close to 70 units built or rehabilitated in the past years, there is currently no program or funding available to help improve the blighted condition of small rental buildings.

Through this letter, we acknowledge specific roles and responsibilities we will fulfill in this partnership that will be led by Frogtown Rondo Home Fund. In the event this proposal is funded, we would expect our role in the CommunityWINS grant program to include:

- Providing the technical assistance needed through the City’s Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI) to identify the buildings in critical condition and needing immediate repairs;
- Facilitating the authorization of permits for a timely rehabilitation of the buildings;
- Aligning the City’s housing development resources in support of the Frogtown Rondo Home Fund; and
- Incorporating the insights and challenges identified through the process into the City’s general planning and policy-making decisions.

This letter pledges our commitment to join the Frogtown Rondo Home Fund to continue working with resident organizations, community development corporations, community institutions, and other service providers and foundations to significantly improve housing conditions in the Frogtown and Rondo areas, with a special focus on preserving high quality affordable multifamily units for low income families.

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I encourage your support of this unique effort to boost housing choice opportunities for the residents of the vibrant and diverse Rondo and Frogtown neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher B. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Christopher B. Coleman

Mayor