

Application request for Fund Transfer:

Section 3 – The Application

Answer each question for your proposal or project as completely as possible

If approved funds may be released in 2 lump sums with compliance reports due along the project timeline. First 50% of funds released on contract being signed and the second 50% being released on completion of project or proposal. Municipal projects may receive funds in one payment.

Project Title: CT River Pathways/Mass Trails Grant – Main St Improvement Plan

Applicant Info: Name or department of Organization – address – email – primary contact person for this grant application.

Office of Planning & Economic Development (OPED)

20 Korean Plaza, Suite 406 Holyoke MA 01040

Aaron Vega, OPED Director

Amount Requested: **\$12,500**

Project Summary: Please provide a brief description of the project including the reason or need for this project, timeline of work, additional budget supporting this project and any significant information relevant to the approval of this project.

The Main Street - Springdale Corridor provides an essential connection from the southern portion of the city to the flats (downtown) area and connects downtown Holyoke to Route 5 in West Springfield. The Main Street - Springdale Corridor requires upgrades and repairs to resolve public safety and economic development concerns. The project area contains one City of Holyoke's larger parks and open spaces, Springdale Park. It is the roadway for one of the main entry points for 500+ employees working in the cannabis industry and customers who visit our several dispensaries. This entryway runs along the downtown IG zone, where cannabis companies are permitted to be licensed. The work along this corridor has been started with previous funding from the CT River Pathways / Mass Trails grant. Previous funding has allowed the city to conduct a feasibility design and select a preferred cross-section for the roadway and adjacent shared-use path. The next step is to confirm the design with an on-the-ground survey to review impacts and design options.

The project aims to incorporate multi-modal safety improvements through complete street design elements, including constructing an adjacent shared-use path. These design elements will benefit current and future cannabis business owners and customers by delivering a new shared-use path to enhance access to key destinations. Providing connections to points north and south of the project will expand pedestrian accessibility, access, and mobility along the corridor. The funding for this project will fund a topographic survey and 10% level design plans that will be completed by June 2023. OPED

has been awarded \$50,000 from MassTrails toward the next phase of the plan and requires a \$12,500 match to secure the grant. Planning and infrastructure are listed as one of the principal uses of Cannabis Impact Fee Funds; therefore, utilizing \$12,500 from the Cannabis Innovation and Impact Fund to support this plan is advantageous to the city and on par with the mission of these funds.

Project Impact: Please provide a brief description as to how the Cannabis Industry has impacted the need for this project. What impact from the Cannabis Industry does this project address? How will the project support or deter the impact of the Cannabis Industry in Holyoke? **Significant increases in vehicular and foot traffic along the south end of Main Street are in part directly related to the new cannabis industry in downtown Holyoke. An increase in out of state and non Holyoke resident traffic is significant entering the city along this corridor and is increasing public safety concerns.**

Public safety and infrastructure deficiencies in the downtown area are due to years of disinvestment and urban sprawl and are impacting the growth of the cannabis industry in Holyoke. Previous studies confirm a high rate of speed along the proposed corridor. Raised crosswalk(s) have been installed along the corridor near Dean Technical High School to remedy the safety issue of speeding. Further improvements need to continue as the CT River Pathway will benefit local commuters, provide access to the retail and cannabis areas, Holyoke Rows, La Finca, and increase the safety of students who walk or bike to school.

The CT River Pathway is the foundation of Main Street's ongoing planning and economic development in Holyoke. We foresee this shared-use path as a foundation for future pathway networks connecting the Main Street corridor. Ensuring streets and public ways are safe and built for all forms of transportation while having viable and inviting curb appeal are all critical to the success of Holyoke's downtown and the cannabis industry. The project will address the safety concerns and impacts on the city's infrastructure from the increased traffic from employees and visitors to the area and improve health and the quality of life for residents and visitors of Holyoke.

Community Need and Support: Please describe the community need and support for this project. Provide any letters of support and other documentation that may support our application.

The previous CT River Pathways / Mass Trails Grant had a public input aspect to the plan. Overwhelmingly, residents and businesses wanted to see improvements in the walkability of this section of Main Street, safety concerns addressed, particularly speeding on the street as well as intersection safety, and a comprehensive parking plan for the area. Additionally, previous studies confirm a high rate of speed along the proposed corridor. Raised crosswalk(s) have been installed along the corridor near Dean Technical High School to help remedy the safety issue of speeding. The CT River Pathway will benefit local commuters, provide access to the retail and cannabis areas, Holyoke Rows, La Finca, and increase the safety of students who walk or bike to school.

In addition, the CT River Pathway will improve accessibility to one of our most used parks within the city to the populations with limited mobility. The project will accomplish this by adding a shared-use pathway to reduce vehicle speed physically and visually on the proposed site and have a barrier to provide safety for users of the pathway. During the design process, we will engage with populations with limited mobility to gather feedback and learn ways to design around their safety needs. The proposed shared use path will be designed to meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) requirements. It will include pedestrian ramps at crossings, bus loading zones, accessible materials, and grading requirements.

Ongoing costs of maintenance: Please provide information as to whether this application will need additional or future funding after this application.

There are no ongoing costs as this project is to bring the Main Street Improvement plan to the next phase in hopes of prioritizing these efforts for the city and MassDOT.

Request Related to City Projects: Does this application enhance a current city plan or project such as the Urban Renewal Plan, The city of Holyoke Tourism Plan, or any action items in the Local Rapid Recovery Plan?

This plan and potential implementation of the improvements to Main Street will benefit the South Holyoke Homes project, all current residents, and businesses while creating an improved and safer gateway into the city of Holyoke. The City of Holyoke received a \$6.5M MassWorks Grant to support projects in South Holyoke for streetscape and Complete Streets. The CT River Pathway will be a crucial feature in the ongoing development of spaces and places along Main Street to make this street an accessible and fruitful destination for all.