

Lincolnwoods Townhome HOA Proposal for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

1. Introduction

Dear Northfield HRA,

We are submitting a proposal for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to address the urgent need for repairing the driveway in our Homeowners Association (HOA) community. Our neighborhood is located within a census tract designated as a low- to moderate-income (L/M) area by the HUD 2020 census, which we believe qualifies our community for consideration of this funding.

2. Background Information

Lincolnwoods Townhomes, our HOA community, was originally developed as a HUD housing project in the 1990s. At that time, an easement was established that allows heavy trucks to traverse our driveway to access another driveway owned by a cable and cell phone tower company. Unfortunately, no shared maintenance agreement was put in place at the time of the easement. A multiyear attempt was made to negotiate one, but the tower ownership has changed hands multiple times, and we have been unable to secure contributions for maintenance costs from any owners. As a result, the burden of repairs has fallen entirely on our HOA, increasing the financial burden on us, exacerbated by the deteriorating condition of the driveway.

The driveway has now fallen into significant disrepair, with large ruts, cracks, and surface damage that pose serious safety risks to our HOA residents. The previously-estimated cost for necessary repairs, based on a bid from 2023, is approximately \$60,000. This bid included standard asphalt reclamation, repairing the base, and adding improved drainage. A new estimate will be obtained to reflect current costs. Given the L/M income designation of our area and the historical context of the easement, this project aligns with the CDBG program's objectives, although specific income data for residents not available to the HOA.

3. Community Profile

- Lot 65 Block 2 of LINCOLN WOODS ADD, RICE COUNTY
- HUD Designation: Our community is located within an L/M income-designated census tract per the 2020 census.
- Demographics: Our community is part of a broader area that includes a mix of income levels and is recognized by HUD as having a significant proportion of L/M income households.

4. Project Description

This project involves repairing and resurfacing our private HOA driveway, which is currently in severe disrepair. The current condition poses numerous safety hazards, including:

- Black Ice Formation: The surface is damaged with ruts, ricks, and potholes, which allow water to accumulate, creating dangerous patches of black ice during subfreezing temperatures. This significantly increases the risk of slips, falls, and vehicle accidents.
- Injury Prevention: The uneven surface is particularly hazardous for children, elderly residents, and individuals with mobility issues, increasing the likelihood of trips, falls, and related injuries.

- **Emergency Access:** The poor condition of the driveway hinders access for emergency vehicles, potentially delaying critical response times.
- **Heavy Vehicle Damage:** The regular use of the driveway by heavy trucks, due to the easement agreement, has exacerbated the wear and tear on the surface, making repairs more frequent and more costly.

Considerations for Enhanced Durability and Safety

To ensure the long-term sustainability and safety of the driveway, we are considering the following enhancements:

- **Use of Durable Materials:** We are exploring the possibility of using reinforced concrete or standard asphalt designed for heavy load-bearing capacity to better withstand the heavy vehicle traffic allowed by the easement. As concrete, while more durable, is expected to be significantly more expensive, therefore it is less likely to be requested from CDBG funds.
- **Improved Drainage Solutions:** The previous bid included improvements to the drainage system to prevent water accumulation and reduce the formation of black ice. This may involve installing additional drainage channels or making adjustments to the slope of the driveway to ensure better water runoff management.
- **Concrete Resurfacing:** While this would be the most-optimal solution due to its potential long-term benefits, its higher cost likely will exclude it from our request for CDBG funds.

5. Benefit to HOA Residents

Repairing the driveway will directly benefit our HOA residents by:

- **Improving Safety:** A well-maintained driveway will reduce the risk of accidents and enhance overall safety, particularly by mitigating the risks of black ice formation and injuries from uneven surfaces.
- **Ensuring Access:** Enhanced driveway conditions will ensure better access for emergency services, which is crucial for the health and safety of all community members.
- **Supporting Mobility:** By addressing the ruts and cracks, we improve accessibility for residents with mobility challenges, contributing to a safer, more inclusive environment.
- **Reducing Financial Burden:** By securing funding for these necessary repairs, we reduce the financial strain on our L/M income residents who would otherwise bear the full cost of maintaining a driveway heavily used by commercial vehicles due to the easement.
- **Once repairs are complete,** we will have an easier time negotiating a cost-sharing agreement for any future repairs with the easement owner. Payment of their share of the repair costs has been the delaying factor in past negotiation attempts.

6. Cost Estimates

The cost estimate of approximately \$60,000 is based on a bid obtained last year for standard asphalt reclamation, repairing the base, and improving drainage. We will obtain a new estimate to reflect current prices. These costs include materials, labor, and any additional work required to ensure a durable and long-lasting repair. Should concrete be considered, it may not be included in the CDBG funding request given its costs. We will evaluate and obtain multiple bids that address all issues and find the most cost-efficient solution with the most impact.

7. Justification and Community Impact

Although the driveway is private and serves only our HOA, the project aligns with the goals of the CDBG program by significantly improving living conditions for our residents, who are part of an L/M income-designated area. A new driveway will:

- Provide safer and more reliable access for residents, reducing the risks associated with black ice and surface irregularities.
- Lower maintenance costs for residents in both the short and long term
- Address the long-standing challenge posed by the heavy truck traffic due to the easement agreement, which has contributed to the driveway's deterioration.
- Promote a sense of community pride and investment in the neighbourhood, enhancing the overall living environment.

8. Required Documentation

Included with this proposal are the following supporting documents:

- HUD 2020 census data confirming the L/M income designation of our area.
- Photographs and reports detailing the current condition of the driveway, highlighting areas prone to black ice, injury risks, and damage from heavy vehicles.
- Detailed cost estimates from contractors (current and past estimates as available).

9. Conclusion

We respectfully request the allocation of CDBG funds to support this critical infrastructure project. The improvements will provide substantial benefits to our HOA residents, who live in an area identified as low- to moderate-income by HUD census data. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhood.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lincolnwoods HOA

Attachments:

1. HUD Census Data
2. Photographs of Driveway Condition
3. Contractor Cost Estimates

Summary of the Proposal's Alignment with CDBG Criteria:

- **National Objectives:** The proposal emphasises that the project benefits L/M income residents in an eligible area, aligning with the CDBG's goal to support communities with significant low-to moderate-income populations.

- **Eligible Activities:** The project involves repairing and improving a critical piece of infrastructure, directly addressing safety and access concerns, which are valid under the CDBG guidelines for public facilities and infrastructure improvements.

- **Health and Safety:** The proposal clearly articulates how the project will mitigate health and safety risks, such as black ice formation and emergency vehicle access, directly addressing CDBG priorities.

- **Cost Efficiency and Sustainability:** The proposal discusses the long-term benefits of the proposed improvements, including potential reductions in future maintenance costs, which is an important consideration for CDBG-funded projects