



Tompkins County Legislature

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July 29, 2019

The Hon. Svante Myrick
Mayor, City of Ithaca
108 East Green Street
Ithaca NY 14850

Dear Mayor Myrick,

It's said that the values of a government are expressed in its budget. I agree with that, which is why we are requesting that the City of Ithaca commit an additional \$100,000 for the 2020 budget year to the Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF), and to plan for a similar commitment in 2021.

We are seeking to add to the CHDF's resources at this time because, based on conversations with developers, we conservatively estimate that 14 projects may apply to CHDF in the next 2 years; most of the 500 potential new units would be built in the City. This is good news. But the bad news is that, at current award caps, these known projects represent approximately \$2.8 million in requests, while the CHDF has only \$1.2 million (45% of that total) available for awards.

As you know, the CHDF is a unique partnership among the City of Ithaca, Tompkins County, and Cornell University. Since 2009, CHDF has awarded \$3.8 million, leveraging more than \$114 million in other development funds, towards the construction and rehabilitation of 491 permanently affordable units. Most of the units funded so far – 384, or 78% – have been located in the City of Ithaca.

Without CHDF awards to help leverage other necessary funds, many of the potential projects will not move forward and we will lose vital housing opportunities that may not come again. Several other requests are currently in process. For example, Cornell recently agreed to add another \$100,000/year for the next two years, to its current annual allocation of \$200,000, a strong testament to the importance of the CHDF.

The City's goals of equity and sustainability are strongly advanced by the CHDF. Housing that is safe, stable, and affordable for a city's financially or otherwise vulnerable residents is necessary, if those residents are to have any hope of economic and social stability. The CHDF also promotes the City's sustainability commitments by encouraging energy efficient, sustainable design in locations that can be served by transit. CHDF awards have funded all subsidized affordable units built and/or rehabbed within the City since 2009.

The enclosed information provides more detail on the CHDF's track record and photos of CHDF-funded housing in the City of Ithaca. Please contact me or Megan McDonald in the County's Department of Planning and Sustainability (274-5560; mmcdonald@tompkins-co.org) if you need any further information. Thank you so much for considering this important request.

Sincerely,



Martha Robertson
Chair, Tompkins County Legislature



Inclusion through Diversity