

November 16, 2022

Missouri Department of Economic Development
PO Box 1157
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Representative of Missouri Department of Economic Development,

The Dutchtown Community Improvement District (CID) strongly supports Lutheran Development Group in the Dutchtown-Baden Community Grant Revitalization application. A significant amount of the properties that would be stabilized and renovated through the grant are located directly on the Community Improvement District's footprint. The ability to have more available residential and commercial spaces within our business district would be transformative to the community at large and it would also align with the CID's growing efforts around beautification, safety, and community engagement. The grant would be catalytic in our neighborhood, and would additionally help move the needle for market stabilization in our neighborhood.

The impact of Covid-19 was challenging for our business community, like many communities across the country. However, the neighbors and businesses in Dutchtown have responded well to these challenges. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen the launch of a local Main Streets program, as well as numerous businesses open, grow and thrive. Some businesses that have opened in the neighborhood during the pandemic through affordable commercial rental options have already moved onto owning their properties in the community. We see this model of affordable small business support as something that is not just successful, but also scalable for future growth.

However, numerous challenges have been amplified around vacant and under-utilized properties. There has been an uptick in crime and safety issues within the business district. The city of St. Louis has experienced a growing strain in public services which disproportionately impacts an area like Dutchtown, that solely exists in a qualified census tract. Even in the midst of these challenges, there is still significant demand for people to want to live, work, and play in the community. People from the community and the broader St. Louis region see our neighborhood as one of opportunity, and have come along with the efforts to address these challenges at the community level.

Best,

Caya Aufiero
President, Dutchtown Community Improvement District