



2023 Transportation Planning Grant Application

Bid No. BD-23-1068-1068C-1068L-81256

All completed applications must be sent by January 31st to be considered for funding for the 2023 Grant Round. Please submit this completed form as well as any relevant attachments to MGCCMF@Massgaming.gov.

For more detailed instructions as well as the 2023 Application Guidelines please visit <https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/>

I. Project Summary
Legal Name of Applicant: Aaron Vega, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Project Name (Please limit to 5 words): Wayfinding
Amount Requested: \$250,000
Brief Project Description (approx. 50 words): <i>Please use this space to provide a high-level overview of what your project entails.</i> A vital opportunity for economic growth and tourism for Holyoke is wayfinding. Holyoke needs advanced wayfinding, especially signage in other languages, and is not just geared towards directing motorists around the City. A SMART Goal in Holyoke's 2018 Tourism Plan is to create and improve wayfinding to create Holyoke as an attractive destination and gateway to the MGM Casino. Improved wayfinding will provide significant recovery opportunities because it improves residents' and visitors' navigation and connectivity. Specifically, improved wayfinding can aid travelers with finding parking, cultural destinations, navigation to the MGM Casino, and commercial districts. Holyoke plans to execute and implement a wayfinding and signage program designed from our Rapid Recovery Plan with the Community Mitigation Transportation Planning grant funds. Funds will include wayfinding design, data collection, and fabrication.

2023 Transportation Planning Grant Application

Bid No. BD-23-1068-1068C-1068L-81256

Page 2

II. Applicant Contact Information

Please provide below the manager for this grant and any other individuals you would like to be copied on all correspondence.

Grant Manager: Jennifer Keitt

Email Address: Keittj@holyoke.org

Telephone Number: (413) 322-5655

Address: 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Suite 406, Holyoke, MA 01040

Contact II: John Carolan

Role: Planner II

Email Address: Carolanj@holyoke.org

Telephone Number: (413) 322-5655

Address: 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Suite 406, Holyoke, MA 01040

Contact III: Stephanie Colon

Role: Mass in Motion Coordinator

Email Address: Mimcoordinator@holyoke.org

Telephone Number: (413) 322-5655

Address: 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Suite 406, Holyoke, MA 01040

III. Detailed Project Description & Mitigation

- 1) Please describe in detail the impact that is attributed to the operation of a gaming facility. Please provide documentation or evidence that gives support for the determination that the operation of the gaming facility caused or is causing the impact (i.e. surveys, data, reports)

The development of an \$800 million MGM-brand casino and its attendant hospitality and entertainment services in Springfield presents a challenge and opportunity for smaller communities in the Pioneer Valley region, including the city of Holyoke. The casino will attract investment from developers who might otherwise look to the built environment and economic niche Holyoke shares with Springfield, as well as tax revenue from tourists and visitors who view Holyoke as a pass-through rather than a destination. Holyoke must seek mitigation to compensate for the expected increased traffic on Route 91 and Route 5 through the city, address the city's diminished visibility compared with Springfield to the south, and develop a strategy to capture regional economic growth related to the development of the MGM casino.

- 2) *(If applicable)* Please explain how this impact was not anticipated in the Applicant's Host or Surrounding Community Agreement.

Holyoke's Surrounding Community Agreement with MGM Springfield does not include elements that would be redundant with this MGC proposal. The Agreement focuses on evaluating conditions and impacts of the MGM casino through a "Baseline Study of Surrounding Community Conditions," and "Retroactive 'Look Back' Studies." The Study Scope for each indicated in Exhibit A of the Agreement identifies "Tourism and Community Business Development" as a potential area of the positive impact that could result from the casino, and which will receive analysis as part of the SCA, suggesting its viability as a strategy to capture regional economic growth.

- 3) Please describe what the Applicant is proposing and how the mitigation request will address the impact indicated.

The Tourism and Historic Plans funded by the Community Mitigation Fund relates to the gaming facility of MGM Springfield in two direct ways. For example, it seeks to develop local resources and identity pertaining to Holyoke's eco-tourism and cultural tourism assets to offset regional investment lost to competition with Springfield's comparative advantage as a tourist destination due to the new casino. As well as to mitigate costs associated with pass-through traffic experienced by Holyoke and other neighboring communities. These efforts made possible by the Mitigation Fund are intended to build upon the regional growth of tourism associated with the completion and operation of MGM Springfield by drawing tourists and capturing revenue from visitors to the region.

2023 Transportation Planning Grant Application

Bid No. BD-23-1068-1068C-1068L-81256

Page 4

4) Please provide details around any consultation with MassDOT, your RTA or MBTA, and or the regional planning agency serving your community as applicable.

The Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) has initiated initial conversations with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) on Wayfinding plans and needs for the City. Additionally, OPED has partnered with the City Engineer and Civil Engineer on internal and MassDOT projects.

IV. Scope, Budget, and Timeline	
Applicant: Aaron Vega, Director of Planning and Economic Development	Vendor Code:
Total Grant Amount Requested: \$250,000	Estimated Total Project Cost: \$250,000

Scope of Work
<p>Please include below a breakdown of the proposed work. The project scope should be sufficiently detailed to allow the review team to understand the steps required for project completion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Gathering Assets - Conducting an audit with maps indicating where current wayfinding signage exists and developing a master list of points of interest and popularity around the City. Obtain input from both the City Engineer and City Civil Engineer.b. Layer the Data - Acquiring quantitative and qualitative data to formulate clear pictures of how the wayfinding system can address the topography of the City and gateway to surrounding towns and cities.<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Generate a list of destinations and descriptions segmented by mode of travel.c. Identify Signage Types - Determine needs of wayfinding and best practices for travelers.d. Design the Signage - Gather objectives of wayfinding and signage types and produce various designs that benefit all modes of travel.e. Select Fabrication Partners - Once signs have been identified and the best locations for new or improved signs, with priority for new signage pointing to the MGM Casino, the Office of Planning and Economic Development will produce an RFP for vendors. Preference will be given to local vendors that establish adequate experience, project costs, and installation.

2023 Transportation Planning Grant Application

Bid No. BD-23-1068-1068C-1068L-81256

Page 6

Proposed MGC Grant Budget

Please use the following table to outline the budget of your project. Include any requests for proposals, quotes, or estimates that would quantify the costs associated with the mitigation as an attachment. In determining the funding request, please round up to the nearest hundred dollars.

Timeline	Description of Purchase/Work	QTY	Budget
2023-2025	Wayfinding Design and Fabrication		\$250,000
	TOTAL:		

Funding Source	Description of Purchase/Work	QTY	Budget
In Kind Services			
Federal			
State	Wayfinding		\$250,000
Local Match			

V. Regional Incentive Award	
Are you applying for a Regional Incentive Award?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Partner Community Contact-
Name:
Role:
Email Address:
Telephone Number:
Address:

VI. Waiver	
If you are applying for a waiver, please submit the Waiver Form with your application. The form can be found at www.massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/forms/	
Are you applying for a waiver?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

VII. Please provide a brief description of each attachment.
Attachment - Rapid Recovery Plan Wayfinding Segment
Attachment - Letter of Support from Director of Department of Public Works

VIII. Applicant Certification

On behalf of the aforementioned municipality/governmental entity I hereby certify that the funds that are requested in this application will be used solely for the purposes articulated in this Application.



**Signature of Responsible Municipal
Official/Governmental Entity**

01.31.23

Date:

Aaron Vega

(print name)

Director, Planning and Economic Development

Title:



Mayor Joshua Garcia

Carl Rossi, Director

City of Holyoke

Department of Public Works

January 26, 2023

RE: Community Mitigation Wayfinding Application

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Gateway City in the Commonwealth, the City of Holyoke has a unique legacy as one of the first planned industrial cities in the country, still evident in the densely developed and populated downtown with a rich history, ongoing services for the community, and significant tourism opportunities. For the continued growth of Holyoke, the City requires enhanced Wayfinding to improve residents' and visitors' life, navigation, and connectivity to the City. Wayfinding provides visual cues to help individuals orient themselves and deliver confidence when navigating a City's geography. The City of Holyoke has a unique geographic landscape with canals, historic buildings, the Puerto Rican Cultural District, and the unique murals embedded within the City.

Designing and implementing a Wayfinding system within Holyoke should encourage walking, visitation, transit, and biking by providing multimodal information. An optimal goal for Holyoke is to increase walking and biking, which aligns with our Complete Street priorities, and create wayfinding signage that offers guidance and functionality. The Community Mitigation Fund funding will allow Holyoke to assess the state of our current signage and acquire data to develop a transparent wayfinding system that constructs a gateway to the many surrounding cities and towns. The City of Holyoke hopes to build signage that will benefit all modes of travel for residents and visitors from other areas outside of Holyoke. As Director of Public Works, I prioritize all aspects of City projects that will benefit the City long-term and create an opportunity for collaboration. The Wayfinding project in this application will equip Holyoke with the critical funding to make appropriate Wayfinding signage possible and better the lives of our residents.

Thank you for your time considering this application, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Carl Rossi, Director of the Department of Public Works

Improve Downtown Wayfinding for Automobiles and Pedestrians





Category	 Public Realm
Location	Census Tracts No. 8114, 8115, 8116, and 8117, and major commercial corridors providing access to the City Center Commercial District
Origin	Diagnostic phase; and Holyoke Office of Planning and Economic Development
Budget	 High: Over \$500,000 including \$25,000 to \$150,000+ for wayfinding design; and \$75,000 to \$500,000 for fabrication
Timeframe	 Short-term: Less than five years including four to eight months for designing a wayfinding program and another three to six months for fabrication
Risk	 Low: Primarily concerning financial and installation risks. With proper documentation regarding the location of the signage elements, installation risk can be mitigated early in the fabrication process by the design, fabrication, and installation teams.
Key Performance Indicators	Public surveys for rating the completed signage and wayfinding project; impact of wayfinding signage resident and visitor journeys; number of integrated art installations
Partners & Resources	Holyoke Office of Planning and Economic Development, Department of Public Works, and residents. Google maps is a critical resource for obtaining distances by miles (driving) and time (walking); funding sources include MasTrail Grants, Destination Development Capital Program, Community Development Block Grant, Urban Agenda Grant Program; EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance and Competitive Tourism Grant Programs



Image of wayfinding signage. Photo Credit: Third Eye Network

Diagnostic

Wayfinding in the study area is primarily geared towards directing motorists across the study area. However, survey responses indicated businesses thought it was important to implement marketing strategies, more cultural events, and activities that brings people into the district. There is limited signage identifying key assets and destinations for pedestrians. Respondents also moderately favored amenity improvements for public transit and bike users and changes to public parking availability, management and policy. Improvements in wayfinding provide significant recovery opportunities because it improves navigation and connectivity. Particularly, it can assist travelers with finding available parking, cultural destinations, and commercial districts. By incorporating digital resources like QR codes, it can provide a meaningful boost to district-wide marketing activities.

Additionally, 63% of businesses indicated that they generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 70% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID, with more than 50% reporting a reduction of 25% or more. This project aims to steer multimodal traffic to Holyoke's City Center Commercial District to raise awareness of available points of interests from cultural assets and natural resources to retail and social destinations. It also supports mental health and wellness for residents who have become frustrated with remaining homebound—constrained by remote work.

Action Item

Identify and catalog neighborhood-level resources, amenities, sites, and services to indicate relevant points of interest.

Leverage community-based delineations (e.g., wards and neighborhoods) to collaborate with residents to inform the development of the wayfinding system.

Expand resources and the efforts of arts-based groups and support cultural integrations and utilization of the districts and routes encompassed within the downtown wayfinding system. These actions will ensure wayfinding efforts are not disconnected from these dimensions of the community.

Refer to the enclosed “Best Practices and Recommendations; Signage and Wayfinding” report.



Image of parking signage. Photo Credit: Third Eye Network

Process

- [Gather Your Assets](#)

Conduct an audit with maps indicating where current wayfinding signage exists.

Master planning documents that outline goals for the city will also be useful.

Gather a master list of points of interest and sort them into groups based on popularity.

- [Layer the Data](#)

The data will begin to form a clear picture of how the wayfinding system should address the topography of the city. The team should be able to see major routes for vehicles and pedestrians, points of interests, town limits, parking and points of entry and exit.

Generate a list of destinations and descriptions segmented by mode of travel. A hub-and-spoke model (e.g., districts and connecting routes) can be used to determine when to use walking, biking, automobile signs. Also, note that wayfinding users will have different objectives. QR codes can be powerful sign assets.

Permanent applications are preferred over temporary applications (e.g., “tactical urbanism”).

- [Identify the Sign Types](#)

Determine the needs of your wayfinding from a mapping perspective and assessing how those needs can be met with physical signs before selecting a branded “signage family.”

A best practice is to indicate the amount of time it would take to walk to each destination, either in time or distance.

Signs should also be placed before users have to make turns in their journey—with time for interpretation and decision-making.

- [Design the Signage](#)

Let the objectives of each sign type to lead in this phase, do not allow visuals to dictate the overall design.

Vehicular and bike signage should be large to allow for large type.

All signage should be high contrast and use fonts that are highly legible.

Pedestrian signage can be smaller in size, but should be more targeted.

- [Select Fabrication Partners](#)

Once the wayfinding package has its locations and signs identified, prepare a request for proposals and select fabrication vendors.

Coordinate base pricing to establish overall project costs, including installation.



Image of Heritage State Park: Third Eye Network