



**BUILD A BRIDGE** TO BETTER



**LET'S BUILD A BRIDGE  
TO COMMUNITY PROSPERITY**

Saint Paul Planning Commission July 9, 2021

# Who is ReConnect Rondo

## Board of Directors

Marvin R. Anderson, (Descendent/Resident)  
Mary K Boyd, (Descendent)  
Nick Khaliq, (Descendent/Resident)  
Phillip Terrill, (Rondo Resident)  
Keith Allen, (Former Resident)  
Noel Nix, (Former Resident)  
April D. Lucas, (Descendent)  
Adrian Perryman, (Rondo Resident)  
Margaret Lovejoy, (Descendent/Rondo Resident)  
D'Angelos Svenkeson, (Current Resident)  
Matt Hill, (Commissioner Toni Carter's Aide)

Keith Baker, Executive Director  
Laura Gaitan, Office & Finance Administrator

## ReConnect Rondo

- 501c(3) Non Profit
- Leading a restorative movement to end racial disparities in Minnesota with a specific aim to restore equity and opportunity in Rondo
- Right past wrongs and end systemic oppression



# Restoring the loss (1956-present)



- \* **Loss** - 700 homes 300 Business
  - Homeownership Loss 48%
  - Population loss 61%
  - Intergenerational wealth - \$35m (1980)
  - \$35m = 4800 4 year college degrees (1980)
  - A wealth gap - \$157m unrealized equity value

## Path to healing

- Rondo Days 1983 – present
- Idea for a “cap” – 2009
- Formal apologies – 2015
- Rondo Commemorative Plaza – 2016
- ReConnect Rondo formal launched – 2017



# Building the case

- **Rondo Land Bridge Feasibility Study**— to examine and assess the economic and engineering feasibility of the project with five primary goals: 1) neighborhood connection, 2) affordable housing, 3) equitable development, 4) public health/open green spaces, and 5) community leadership. This was conducted by Kaskaskia Engineering Group.
- **Rondo Past Prosperity Study**— an analysis of transactional loss to Rondo that resulted from 700 homes being bulldozed = \$35M (1980). Concludes that Rondo has never recovered and ranks negative in 18 of 18 equity measure. This study was conducted by the Yorth Group.
- **A Place Based Study of Gentrification**— examines and defines gentrification and how the community has and is addressing its. It identifies tools, resources and methods being used to counter the negative effects of development. This study was conducted by Anna Dolde, Housing Research Assistant, Macalester College Geography Department.
- **Health Impact Assessment**— a scan of current issues and potential impacts of a land bridge project. It puts forward recommendations and ways to address community concerns, taking all other studies into account. This was conducted in partnership with Saint Paul Ramsey County Public Health and Wilder Foundation.

# Timeline of Activities

- 2016 – Healthy Communities Initiative
- 2016-2018 – Friendly Street Initiative/ReConnect Rondo (between 200-300 surveys)
  - Block Party – Surveys
  - Rondo Days – Surveys
  - Selby Jazz Festival – Surveys
- 2017 – Health Impact Assessment – 3 level engagement
  - Technical, advisory and community committees
- 2018 – ULI 5 day Advisory Services Panel (community tours and 125 interviews)
- 2018 – Listening, Learning, Leveraging, Leaning In Report Out (50 plus attendees)
- **2019 – New Executive Director (Strategic/Organizational Planning)**
  - Fund Development
  - Solidify jurisdictional relationships
  - Establish ReConnect Rondo Technical Advisory Team
  - Conduct Community Ecosystem Mapping
  - Submit Purpose & Need Position Paper to MnDOT





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THAT SHOWS US  
A BETTER WAY



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# ReConnect Rondo is leading a restorative movement

- **Mission:** Lead the effort to revitalize the Rondo community with a land bridge that reconnects Rondo and reignites a vibrant African American cultural enterprise district in Saint Paul
- **Plan:** Connect Minnesota leaders, equity organizations and the Rondo community to ensure a better, brighter and more equitable future





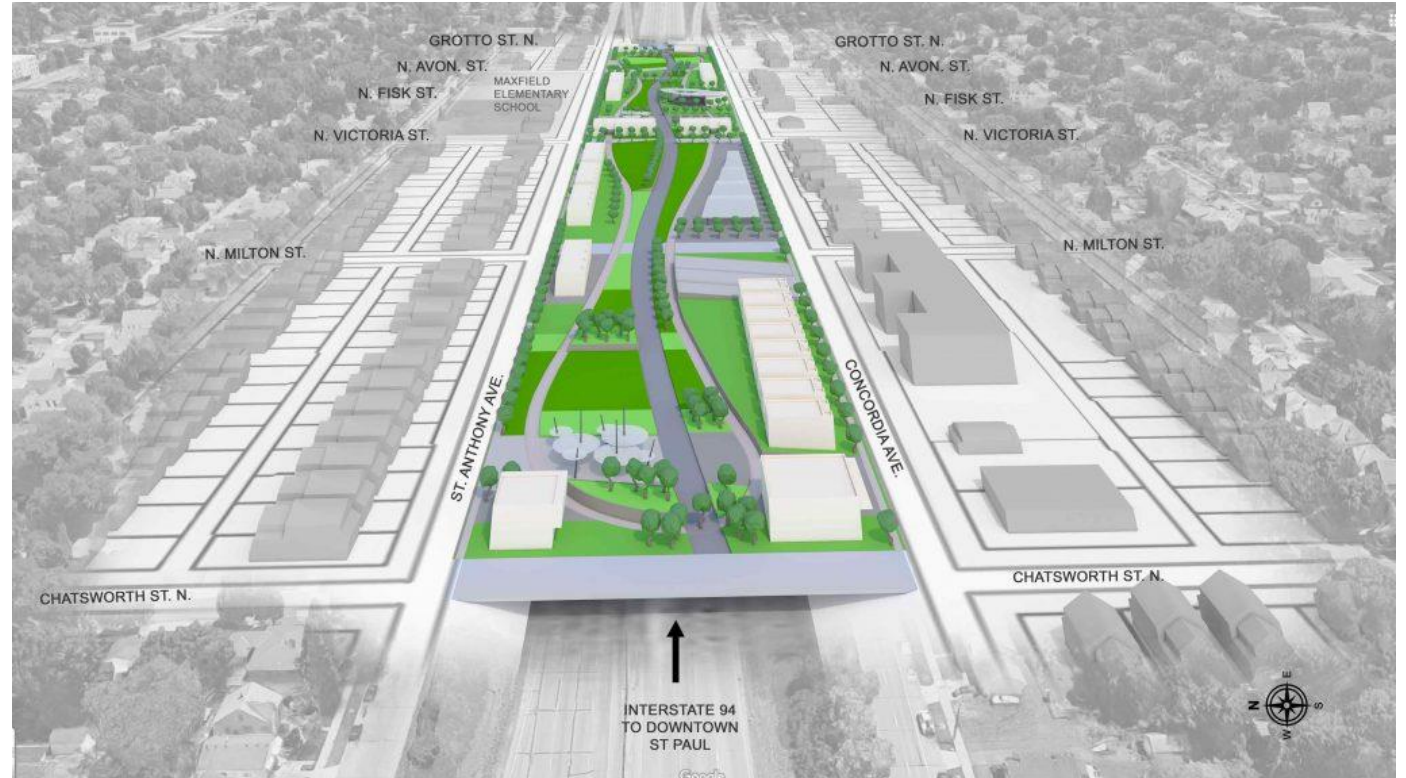
# Rondo Land Bridge Feasibility Study

## Goals

- Neighborhood Connections
- Housing Affordability
- Equitable Development
- Public Health/Green Space
- Community Leadership

## Concept Screening

- 7 Ideas & Concepts
- 3200 lin. ft. (up to 21 acres)
- 13.8 acres green space
- 5 of 5 goals






# The idea is big

- Minnesota's first African American cultural enterprise district connected by a community land bridge



A photograph of a man and a young boy looking up at a tree in a park. The man is in the foreground, looking up with a smile. The boy is standing on his shoulders, also looking up and reaching towards the leaves. The background is a lush green tree with yellow leaves. The image has a warm, golden-yellow tint. The text "What is the initial budget breakdown for Phase O?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

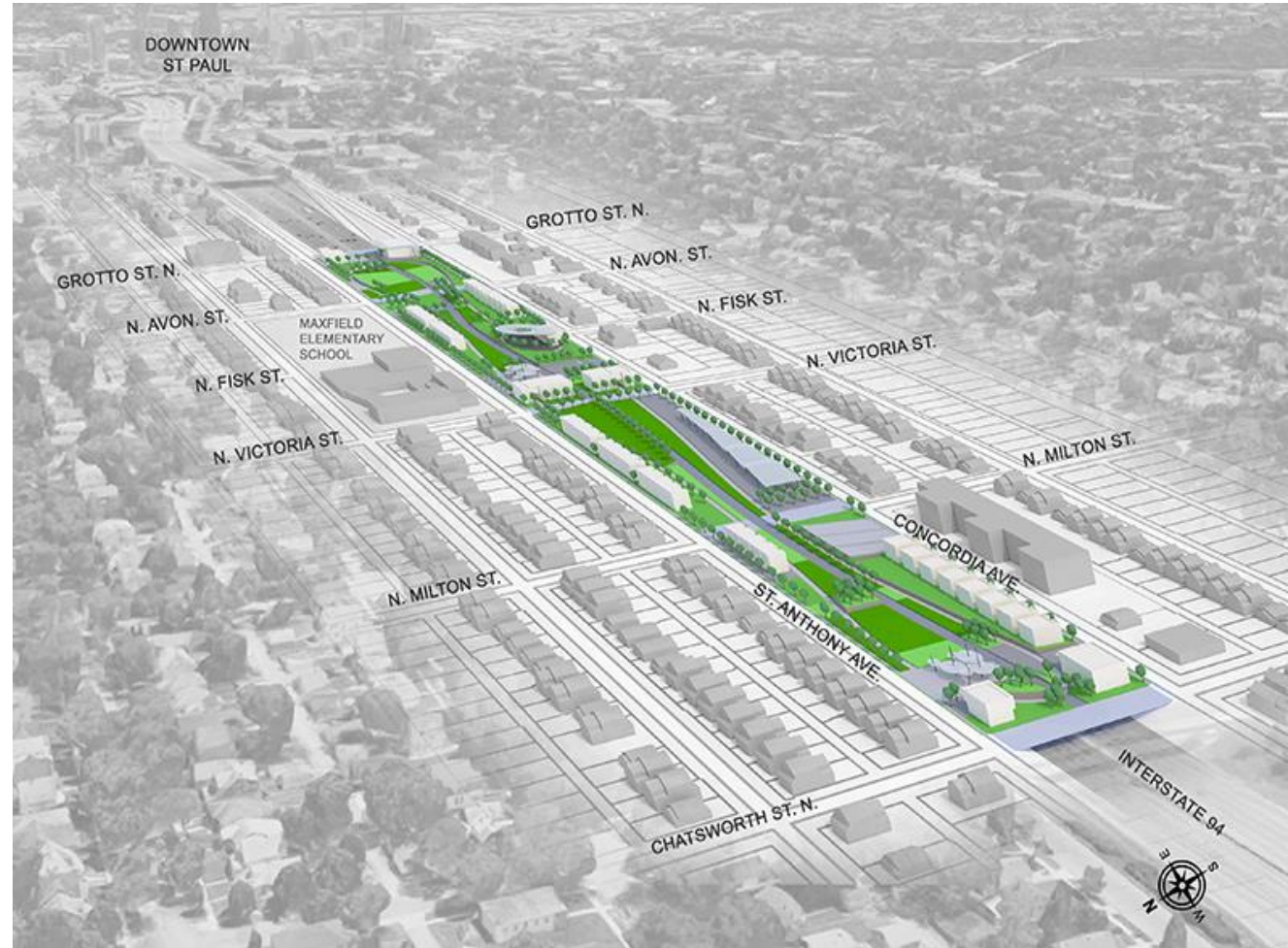
**What is the initial  
budget breakdown for  
Phase O?**



# Yes, the land bridge is a big undertaking

Pre-Planning: Phase 0 & 1	Amount
Community Planning & Engagement	\$200K
Assessment & Analysis, Environmental & Master Planning	\$3.6M
Organizational & Ecosystem Capacity Building	\$1.2M
Anti-displacement/Restorative Development Modeling	\$1.2M
Total	\$6.2M

Construction: Phase 2 & 3	Amount
Bridge & Infrastructure (Land/Roadway Bridges)	\$247M
Building, Utilities & Park & Open Space	\$167M
Design & Engineering	\$45M
Total	\$459M





# Economic opportunities are considerable



## New housing

468 - 576 housing units in Rondo



## Growing community

1000+ new residents



## New jobs

1,304 - 1,872 new permanent and construction related jobs



## Retail & Office

87,750 - 108,000 square feet



## Nonprofit & Institutional

29,250 - 36,000 square feet



## Increased city revenue

approximately \$3.8 million - \$4.2 million annually

# What we know

## Land bridges



Freeway Cap, Duluth, MN

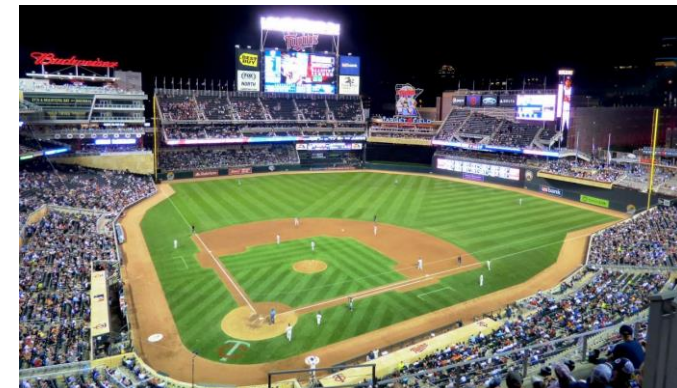


Klyde Warren Park Land Bridge (Dallas, Texas)

## Publicly funded projects



US Bank Stadium



Target Field

# A multifaceted funding approach

## ULI Curtis Infrastructure Grant

- 4P Fund Model Exploration
  - Restorative financing
  - Community ownership and benefits

### That model should offers:

- Ease of administration
- Transparency, cooperation and accountability
- Collective impact
- Common framework for measuring success
- Market space where all stakeholders recognize expectations/goals w/aim toward direct community benefit

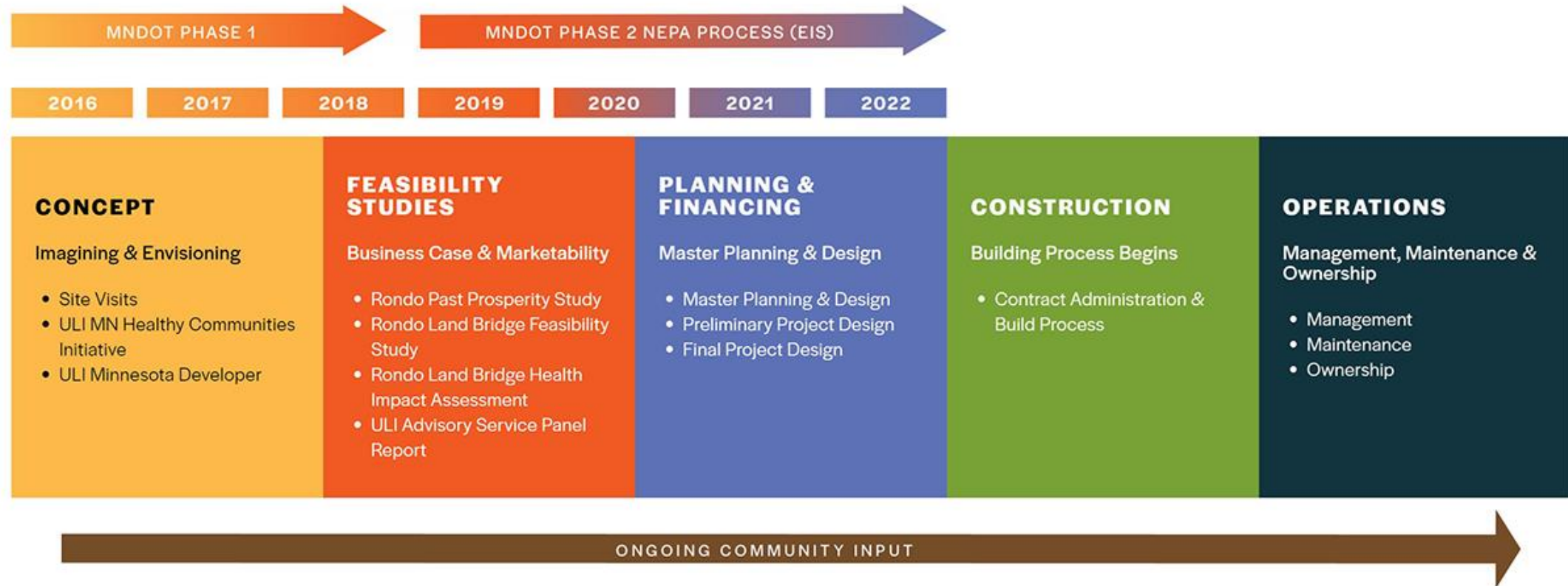




A woman with short dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, a colorful patterned headband, and large gold-rimmed glasses, is shouting into a white megaphone with a red band. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. In the background, a smiling Black woman is visible, and to the right, a woman with blonde hair and sunglasses is partially visible. The scene is set outdoors with a warm, golden light. A dark blue vertical bar is on the left side of the image, and several thin white lines cross the lower right portion of the image.

**What are accomplished  
milestones to date?**

# A purposeful path to equity



# Timeline of Activities (cont.)

- 2020 – COVID

- Administrative lead agency for Rondo Roundtable
- Brand refresh with sharper organization vision and mission and clearer strategic direction
- Conducted presentations/outreach via zoom

- 2021 – A steep trajectory

- February-July – Media coverage (6 consecutive month news cycle)
- February 2 – Testify (informational) MN House Transportation Policy Committee
- March – Two bills developed, sponsored and introduced
- March 25 – Testify (informational) MN House Transportation Policy Committee
- March-May – Submission of Member Designated Requests Submissions (T&I and EDI)
- April – 9000 post card to all households/business in Summit University/Frogtown area
  - May 24-27 – 12 1 hour zoom Listen & Learn Zoom Meetings – (120 accumulative)
  - June 2-3 – Community Benefits Workshops – (40 participants over two days/4 hours)
  - June 10-29 – 4P Funding Model Exploration – (58 participants, six days giving 10 hours each over 30 days)
- June – Congressional Action (House passed Invest In America Act) (5.2M) (McCollum)
- July – Legislative Success (Tax Transportation Committee) (6.2M) Pre-planning
- July 7 – Let's Build a Bridge Together Conversations
  - Conversation 1: 10 AM (22 participants) and Conversation 2: 5:00 PM (58 participants)



# A progress plan is in place



## Next 60-180 days (preliminary)

- **ReConnect Rondo capacity building**
  - Staff & Board Development
  - Program Management Services
- **Advisory committee formation (ideas & solutions taskforce)**
  - 5-7 topic areas (Co-Chairs w/5-7 community/organizational members)
    - Anti Displacement & Innovation Overlay District Planning (*Housing Ideas & Solutions Team*)
- **Establish project management team**
  - MnDOT, METC, City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, and ReConnect Rondo Technical Advisory Team
- **Develop program management schedule**
  - Master Planning; Transportation; Development; Community Programming
- **Formalize partnership agreement**
  - Rondo Round Table
  - Amplify and resource community ecosystem

## Next 60-180 days (cont.)

- **Issue community engagement RFPs**
  - Develop community and stakeholder engagement plan
- **Establish master planning team**
- **Restorative Development Modeling**

### Additional next steps

- **Establish 4P finance mechanism**
- **Impact assessment and analysis**
  - Social
  - Economic
  - Environmental
- **Establish fund development team**
  - Corporate Champions
- **Identify potential anchor tenants**





**Who are our current  
stakeholders and partners?**

# Ecosystem expertise & resources





A photograph of a row of historic houses. The house in the foreground is a two-story structure with green horizontal siding and a prominent red brick chimney. It has several windows with dark shutters and a small front porch. To its right is a red brick house with a gabled roof and arched windows. To the left, a white house is partially visible. The scene is set on a street with a sidewalk and a lawn. The text "Q&A" is overlaid in the center.

Q&A





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**THANK YOU!**



**BUILD A BRIDGE**  
BETWEEN YESTERDAY,  
TODAY AND TOMORROW



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# Questions, concerns and opportunities

- Authentic community engagement
- Formation of advisory committee
- Racial Impact analysis and other studies
- Financial reporting
- Scope of property tax impacts
- Right of return policies
- ReConnect Rondo board members
- Developers and/or contractors
- Engagement data and reports
- Co-creation process
- Repair and reconciliation





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FOR OUR  
BUDDING YOUTH



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