Grant Review Committee for the South St. Petersburg CRA
October 29, 2021, 8:30 am
City Council Chambers in City Hall
175 5th St N, St. Petersburg, Florida

Overview of the Grant Review Committee Meeting

On October 29, 2021, the South St. Petersburg CRA Grant Review Committee (GRC) will hold a public meeting to evaluate and make recommendations for funding to City Council on the FY 2020 grant applications to the CRA Commercial Matching Grant program to be funded with tax increment revenue from the South St. Petersburg CRA Redevelopment Trust Fund. These recommendations will be forwarded to City Council for action before the end of the year. Highlights of the overview include:

- City Council approved $440,634 in October 2020 for the CRA Commercial Matching Grant program as part of the FY 2021 budget for the South St. Petersburg CRA.

- Thirty-six applications to the CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program were submitted to the City by the September 10, 2021, deadline, totaling over $4.5 million in estimated project costs with requests for more than $674,000 in grant funding. See Attachment 1 for snapshot of the grant.

- After preliminarily reviewing the applications and removing ineligible expenses for each application, staff reduced the total eligible project costs to nearly $2.1 million with the funding requested being reduced to $553,964.

- Staff is recommending three applications be removed from consideration, one for being a substantially incomplete submission while the other two were projects that proposed replacing the flooring in the building. Staff interpreted these two applications as being ineligible due to amendments made by City Council in June 2021 to the Commercial Building Interior grant program that reduced eligible costs to those projects that focused on maintaining critical building systems such as roofing, HVAC, plumbing and electricity. If the Grant Review Committee agrees to these applications being removed from consideration, the funding requests are reduced to $506,038.
I. South St. Petersburg CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program

The GRC was created by City Council to administer the South St. Petersburg CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program that is funded by tax increment financing (TIF) revenue from the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Trust Fund. The Matching Grant Program actually consists of two separate programs – the Commercial Site Improvement Grant and the Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant. Both of these grant programs call for a maximum matching grant award of up to $20,000 or $40,000 if the project is for a local historic landmark and the work is approved by the City’s historic preservation officer. Applicants may apply for funding from both programs for the same property. They may also apply for different properties that they have ownership or business interest in. For more information on the programs see attachments 2 and 3.

Each of the two programs has a different objective as well as different source of funds. The Commercial Site Improvement Grant applies primarily to improving the aesthetics of a business on a commercial corridor, uplift property values and customer interest and demonstrate visible private investment. The Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant, on the other hand, was created to increase the functional life of older commercial buildings by providing funding to upgrade major building systems and needed capital equipment for businesses to operate. Maintaining an inventory of older but usable building stock helps smaller businesses that may not be able to afford the rents commanded by new commercial construction.

These two programs also have different funding sources based on Pinellas County’s June 2014 policy governing use of its tax increment financing revenue. The County has approved use of its TIF revenue to assist funding Commercial Site Improvement grants but not Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement grants. Therefore, as an accounting measure, City Administration created two separate programs to clearly demonstrate the use of funds are in accordance with County policy.

In June 2021, City Council approved amendments to the Commercial Matching Grant program to clarify CRA program policy on several issues. First, City Council tightened requirements for national commercial franchises that would still allow them to apply for the program provided that at least 50 percent of the employees of the business are residents of the South St. Petersburg CRA. In addition, these employees must have been actively on payroll for at least six months and working at least 20 hours per week.

It should be noted that none of the applicants in this cycle were identified as national chains. Secondly, City Council refined requirements for non-profits that would require those non-profit agencies that would provide social services such as a childcare, education or workforce development to be a tax exempt organization under the requirements of 26 U.S. Code 501.
Third, City Council added language that faith-based organizations providing these and other social services of benefit to the CRA residents

*may apply for funding through the Commercial Matching Grant program to renovate facilities that provide services to the broader community, such as childcare, in a secular manner. Worship, religious instruction, proselytizing and similar activities conducted in these renovated facilities must be voluntary and privately funded.*

Finally, the Matching Grant Program was amended to require healthcare providers that apply to the program “have at least one healthcare provider on staff that has an unencumbered license through the State of Florida. In addition, facility types that are licensed and/or certified or regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA) must have an active/licensed/registered ACHA license status to apply for the grant.”

While the above amendments applied to both the Commercial Site Improvement Grant program and the Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant program, City Council also approved revisions to the eligible uses of funds for each program. The most notable changes occurred to the Commercial Building Interior and TI program to make it focused entirely on providing funding for projects that renovate or replace “essential building systems such as roofing, heating and cooling equipment and plumbing” to forestall disinvestment and blight through deferred maintenance. Notable deletions include the following:

- Fixed capital equipment at a minimum cost of $3,000 to include stationary equipment such as kitchen equipment
- Room/space reconfiguration, wall relocations
- Electronic security systems
- Partial demolition of interior spaces made necessary for renovation or expansion

As noted in the opening section, these amendments caused the budget for several applications to be reduced and for two applications to be deemed ineligible for any funding because the entire projects involved reflooring their buildings.

The major amendment to the Commercial Site Improvement Grant program was to eliminate landscaping as an eligible expense. (A 2017 amendment reduced the amount of funding a project could receive for site improvements such as signage, paving and restriping parking, and lighting to no more than 25% of eligible costs.)

II. South St. Petersburg CRA Grant Evaluation System

Because CRA funding for the Commercial Matching Grant program is limited but with a high demand, City Administration created a competitive program designed to ensure that public
funds are efficiently, equitably and transparently distributed to assist businesses and property owners in the revitalization of the CRA. This intent is implemented through the South St. Petersburg CRA Grant Review Committee and the CRA Grant Scoring and Evaluation System. The Review Committee is comprised of three City Council members from District 5, District 6 and District 7 as well as four members of the Citizen Advisory Committee of the South St. Petersburg CRA.

The scoring system, which is applied to all applications the City receives during a grant cycle, is tied to the goals of the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan and weighs factors such as remedying blight, providing affordable housing, enhancing facades, bringing a building back into service and the location of a project on a major commercial corridor. Many of the criteria are simple “yes” or “no” questions while others may involve interpretation. To administer the scoring system, staff creates a “summary sheet” for application that includes the amount requested, eligible project costs, project budget, applicant information and a preliminary score for each of the several dozen evaluation criteria. This preliminary score is for the Grant Review Committee to approve or differ with staff based on evidence.

In June 2021, City Council approved amendments to the Grant Evaluation System. The primary change includes the addition of criteria designed to implement the City’s “Healthy St. Pete” and “Health in All Policies” framework for decision making, including awarding scoring points to an application for:

- Certification as a “Healthier Together Certified Workplace”;
- Accepting as a healthcare provider Medicaid/Medicare or other low-cost services;
- Authorized vendor by the Supplemental Nutrition Program for “Women, Infants and Children” and/or a “healthy food retailer”;
- Improvements in indoor air quality including those reducing infectious disease transmission; and
- Remediation of asbestos contamination

The revisions also subtract points for applications associated with a fast-food restaurant that is part of a national restaurant chain or franchise operation. Points were also subtracted for applications that have the potential to create or exacerbate noise or odor pollution for adjoining property owners.

Staff has provided a One Drive link to each of Grant Review Committee members that includes a folder for each of the 36 grant applications that were submitted in September 2021. For each application a PDF has been created that includes the staff summary scoring sheet, the application, estimates, site plans, designs and photos. The One Drive link will also include information that the GRC can use to score the applications themselves. This information includes:
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- Small Business Enterprise Contractors – for determining bonus points and awards.
- Official Street Map – bonus points for location at the intersection of an arterial
  and/or collector
- Florida Main Street Districts – bonus points for being within the official boundaries
  of either the Deuces Live or Grant Central

A link to a map of building permits in the CRA can be found HERE so the GRC can determine
whether to award bonus points to an application located on a block where a building permit
has been issued since September 2019 and in excess of $10,000. The map also serves to
illustrate the distribution of the grant applications through the CRA.

III. Overview of Applications Submitted in September 2021

As mentioned above, thirty-six applications were submitted for projects initially valued at $4.5
million with grant requests totaling $674,244. After reviewing the applications according to
the eligible uses allowed in both Commercial Matching Grant staff reduced the total project
value of these applications to $2.088 million, with the applicants eligible for a total of $553,964
in funding from the City. The data in Table 1 below reflect the eligible project costs and grant
requests after the staff evaluation of the application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Program</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Eligible Project Costs</th>
<th>Grant Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Site Improvement</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>$1,171,573</td>
<td>$318,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of 5th Avenue</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$362,604</td>
<td>$131,322</td>
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<tr>
<td>South of 5th Avenue</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$808,968</td>
<td>$187,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Interior and TI Grant</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$917,261</td>
<td>$235,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of 5th Avenue</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$590,196</td>
<td>$164,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of 5th Avenue</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$327,065</td>
<td>$70,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$2,088,833</td>
<td>$553,964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the geographical distribution of the 36 applications, sixteen of the total Commercial
Matching Grant applications being reviewed by the GRC are located south of 5th Avenue South
and represent 44 percent of the grant requests. These percentages are well below what was
submitted in the FY 2019 grant cycle, where 63 percent of the applications submitted –
comprising 66 percent of the total grant funding request - were located south of 5th Avenue
South. There were also seven applications submitted from the Grand Central district east of 31st

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1 Note: Many applicants entered the total project value as the grant amount requested or overestimated that
grant amount for which they are eligible. The grant request total above reflects the maximum amount that an
applicant is eligible for under the Commercial Matching Grant program.

2 Since 2015, the aggregate property valuations south of 5th Avenue South have increased from 61% to 63% as a
percentage of the total value of the CRA.
Street totaling $81,543 in grant requests. Another nine applications from Central Avenue businesses west of 34th Street were submitted with $174,737 in funding requests.

Before turning to reviewing the final preliminary staff scoring and ranking, staff will elaborate on those eligible applications that have received prior CRA funding as well as those whose applications that remain eligible but had their total eligible project costs reduced by staff.

**Current Applications that have Previously Received CRA Commercial Funding**

Of the 36 applications being scored by the GRC, five of their associated properties have received CRA grants in one or more of the prior cycles in 2016, 2017 and 2019. Below provides an overview of the prior projects on these properties and an assessment of their overlap with the current applications. It is important to note that all of the improvements associated with the current funding requests can be clearly differentiated from the completed improvements from prior awards.

1. **(#1) 2001 2nd Avenue South (Brick Street Farms)** – Property was awarded $13,316 to fund essentially the same project as being requested in the 2021 grant cycle. However, they never started the work.

2. **(#20) 1011 22nd Street South (Boys and Girls Club)** – Property, which is a local historic landmark, received $40,000 in funding in 2017 through the Commercial Site Improvement program for outdoor recreational furniture and equipment. In 2019, the Property received $40,000 in funding through the Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement program for replacement of its historic Quonset hut roof. In 2020, the Boys and Girls Club received $40,000 funding for interior renovations including the repair and replacement of electric wiring, repairing stucco and partial floor replacement. All but one of these projects are separate from the current application. If the GRC does deem “floor replacement” to be an eligible use to receive funding, staff will require the applicant to differentiate between the two projects to ensure no overlap.

3. **(#21 & #22) 4699 Central Avenue (Emery and Associates)** – Property was awarded $40,000 in funding through both grant programs during the 2020 grant cycle. The 2020 interior work involved renovation work on the lobby, interior doors, and replacing floors. The proposed 2021 interior work by the applicant will provide solar panels, replace plumbing and an air purification system for the HVAC. There is no overlap between the two grant applications. The 2020 exterior work involved painting, landscaping, repairing signage, and replacing front entrance door. The 2021 exterior work involves resurfacing the parking lot, adding lighting, replacing railing for back stairs and repairing the colonnaded front.
4. (#23, #27, #31, #34) 833 22nd Street South (Advantage Solutions) – Property, which is a multitenant office building, received $20,466 in funding for two grants in the inaugural grant cycle in 2016. The work in 2016 involved primarily the tenant buildout of Advantage Solutions office space in the northernmost tenant space of the building (Suite 3). This included plumbing, electrical, HVAC and drywall. On the exterior of the building, the applicant added windows, two awnings (Suite 1 and Suite 3) as well as repairs to the roof. The 2021 work is split between Advantage Solutions, which owns the building, and the Deuces Live Main Street office. Advantage Solutions has submitted both an exterior and interior grant for the entire building. The exterior grant involves adding exterior lighting and an awning to Suite 2 as well as pressure washing and painting the building. The interior grant will reroof the entire structure. The applications for Deuces Live involve adding a pergola to the rear of their office and tenant buildout of the Deuces portion of Suite 3 which involves adding plumbing and moving walls. None of these projects overlaps with earlier work approved for funding.

5. (#35) 2800 26th Avenue South (McCabe United Methodist Church) – Property received 2020 CRA grant funding to replace flooring in its daycare center. The 2021 request is to reroof the daycare center, which does not overlap with the 2020 CRA grant award.

Commercial Site Improvement Grant Applications with Reduced Eligible Costs

During its review of each application, staff would scrutinize each budget to ensure that the costs were eligible expenditures for the program applied for. The majority of budgets were amended by staff to some degree, but most could continue moving forward in the process with the potential to receive some grant funding. However, two applications to the Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant program were recommended for ineligibility because the entire scope of work proposed in each were determined by staff to be ineligible expenses. Both the St. Petersburg Opera (#9-2145 1st Avenue South) and the Boys and Girls Club of the Suncoast (#20-1011 22nd Street South) proposed reflooring their facilities. This determination was based on the aforementioned 2021 amendments to the Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant program to focus funding requests on upgrades or replacements of critical building systems such as roofing, plumbing, HVAC, electrical and structural supports. Cosmetic changes, construction or outfitting of tenant spaces, cabinets and capital equipment, and bathrooms – formerly allowed in the program before the 2021 amendments – were deleted by City Council. A case could be made to accept flooring as an eligible expense if replacement was made necessary by foundation or structural issues with the building but neither of these applications demonstrated this problem. Consequently, staff is recommending that both applications be deemed ineligible.

(As mentioned earlier, staff is recommending that three applications be deemed ineligible. One application by DTF Foods (#19 - 101 34th Street South) submitted a substantially incomplete application that excluded the $35 application fee, current business tax certificate, and written
consent from the property owner to apply for the grant. Repeated attempts to contact the applicant to remedy the deficiencies have been unsuccessful.

The total eligible project costs that were originally submitted were also reduced for six applications that included such items as landscaping, fencing, paving of parking lots. This reduction was due to a change to the program in 2017, approved by City Council, to allow "site improvement features such as landscaping, fencing, parking lots, lighting, dumpster enclosures and buffer walls provided such features do not collectively exceed more than 25 percent of the eligible project costs".

The rationale for the change was to ensure that the bulk of funding for CSI projects would go to upgrading building facades while still recognizing that site improvements are important for demonstrating private investment and beautification along the CRA’s commercial corridors.

As reflected in Table 2 below, applying this rule to the six applications below reduced the total grant awards available for all applications from $84,496 to $56,052. The application for 4699 Central Avenue is still eligible to receive the full grant award amount of $20,000 due to the high eligible project cost. However, the remaining applications saw reductions in their expected grant award between $827 and $14,336.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Applicant Request</th>
<th>Staff Evaluation</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eligible Costs</td>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Eligible Costs*</td>
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<td>2001 2nd Ave S</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2950 Central Ave</td>
<td>$19,200</td>
<td>$9,600</td>
<td>$4,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2590 34th St S</td>
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<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$36,025</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>1201 34th St S</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>4699 Central Ave</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>2753 5th Ave S</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>833 22nd St S</td>
<td>$14,700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>$339,120</strong></td>
<td><strong>$106,075</strong></td>
<td><strong>$121,509</strong></td>
<td><strong>$60,755</strong></td>
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</table>

Note: Eligible Project Costs also include the 10% contingency reserve allowance for each applicant to account for cost inflation occurring between the time of the estimate and when the project starts.

IV. Summary of Staff Evaluation of Eligible Applications

After reviewing and scoring the 36 applications staff developed Table 3, which provides the preliminary CRA grant scores for FY 2021 Commercial Matching Grant Cycle. Brick Street Farms, located at 2001 2nd Avenue South, achieved the highest score of “80”. Fourteen of the 36 applications scored “40” or more points and would have been eligible for funding in the FY 2019
CRA Commercial Matching Grant cycle. Sixteen applications scored “30” points or below, which would have fallen below the funding threshold in FY 2019. See the table below for the individual scores.

Table 3. Preliminary CRA Grant Scores for All Reviewed and Scored Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Score</th>
<th>File #</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Revised Costs</th>
<th>Revised Grant</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Brick Street Farms</td>
<td>2001 2nd Ave S</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>55</td>
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<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>St. Petersburg Opera Company</td>
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<td>2616 Emerson Ave S</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Indicates application that staff is recommending be deemed ineligible for funding.
If the Grant Review Committee decides to accept the three applications that staff is recommending be deemed ineligible then the current budget of $440,634 for the Commercial Matching Grant program would fully fund all applications receiving a score of “15” or greater, assuming no changes to the scoring. These applications would utilize $426,447 of the budget leaving $14,187 to be split between the six applications that received “10” points, which would equal a $2,365 award per application.

If the GRC agrees with the staff recommendation to make ineligible the aforementioned three applications then applications also receiving “15” could be fully funded leaving $54,596 to be split between the remaining five eligible applications receiving “10” points, which would equal a $10,919 award per application.
## Attachment 1
Summary of 2021 CRA Commercial Grant Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File #</th>
<th>Applicant/Business</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Eligible Costs</th>
<th>Requested Award</th>
<th>Revised Costs</th>
<th>Revised Award</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brick Street Farms</td>
<td>2001 2nd Ave S</td>
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<td>33</td>
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</table>
Commercial Site Improvement Grant
South St. Petersburg CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program

COMMERCIAL SITE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

I Description and Purpose

The Commercial Site Improvement Grant provides reimbursable matching grants to commercial property owners and businesses that upgrade their building façades, landscaping, lighting, loading and service areas and other features of their sites visible from the public right-of-way.

II Consistency with South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan

The Commercial Site Improvement Grant program is consistent with the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Plan by promoting revitalization of commercial corridors in the CRA by improving their appearance and upgrading building stock.

The South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan recognizes the importance of the CRA’s commercial corridors in growing existing businesses and attracting new ones. In the Action Plan, under “Business Development and Job Creation”, one strategy calls for working with owners along “primary commercial corridors in the CRA to maintain and upgrade their properties”, while another specifically instructs the City to develop a TIF program that will “provide incentives to owners of land and buildings along the CRA’s primary commercial corridors.”

These strategies are reinforced in the Redevelopment Program and Funding Strategy, which details the implementation approach of the Plan and redevelopment programs that will carry it out. Improving the image and identity of South St. Petersburg to remedy blighting influences and encourage investment is a key feature of the Plan and TIF programs are to be designed for façade and site improvements for both residential and nonresidential properties. The Plan specifically states that “the main commercial corridors within the CRA will be a particular focus for this effort because they represent the front-doors to most neighborhoods and their appearance will drive or reduce investment.” To that end, the Plan identifies among its CRA Business Programs a “Commercial Site Improvement Grant” that will provide matching grants to commercial property owners that upgrade their building façades, lighting, loading and service areas and other features of their sites visible from the public right-of-way.

III Type and Amount of Award

An applicant may receive a matching grant of up to $20,000. To receive the full award from the City, eligible project costs must exceed $40,000. Applicants with properties
listed on the Local Register of Historic Places may be eligible for an increase in the matching grant of up to $40,000 provided the award will be used to renovate the historic portion of the property and the approved work is found compliant with the City of St. Petersburg Historic Preservation Ordinance. In awarding a historic property bonus, under no circumstance will the City contribute more than 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. Therefore, to receive the full $40,000 eligible project costs for a historic project must exceed $80,000. The TIF contribution will be reimbursable to the applicant upon completion of work.

An applicant may also be awarded additional funding for projects that utilize SBE contractors or allow occupancy of a building by a targeted industry user identified in the Grow Smarter Strategy. These industries are Financial Services, Specialized Manufacturing, Marine and Life Sciences, Data Analytics, and Creative Arts and Design. The recommended awards are as follows:

- Using contractor with City SBE certification $5,000 bonus
  - CRA-based SBE contractor up to $5,000
  - St. Petersburg-based SBE contractor up to $4,000
  - Other SBE contractor up to $2,500
- Grow Smarter Initiative $5,000 bonus

To receive the bonus for the SBE contractor, an applicant must first complete the work and document use of the contractor through invoices and payments. To receive the bonus for the Grow Smarter incentive, the applicant must document that the commercial space funded by the CRA grant is occupied by a targeted industry within one year of completion of the project. Only one (1) bonus award per type shall be given for each property. To receive the full $5,000 bonus for the SBE contractor and Grow Smarter bonuses, total project costs must equal or exceed $50,000. This will ensure that the City will contribute no more than one-half the total project cost. If the final project costs total between $40,000 and $50,000 then the City will reimburse the applicant the $20,000 maximum award allowed plus 50 percent of the remaining costs up to $5,000.

IV Funding Source

City of St. Petersburg may allocate funding annually to this program from Pinellas County and/or City TIF contributions.

V Eligible Properties and Improvements

The Commercial Site Improvement Grant program is available to fund eligible exterior improvements on commercial, industrial and mixed-use properties. While designed to assist locally owned businesses, the grant program recognizes that national commercial
franchises, healthcare providers and not-for-profit agencies are present on most of the CRA’s commercial corridors and that maintaining their buildings in good repair is essential for remedying blight and preventing its spread. They often employ CRA residents and help assist in the economic uplift of South St. Petersburg, while not-for-profit agencies and healthcare providers provide essential services to the CRA. Finally, the CRA’s national franchises also contribute revenue to the South St. Petersburg redevelopment trust fund that pays for this grant program.

At the same time, these entities may often have access to capital from their national parent organizations that locally owned businesses do not have. To that end, the following outlines the conditions that national franchises, not-for-profit social service agencies and healthcare providers must meet in order to receive funding through the program.

National commercial franchises are eligible to receive funding through this grant program provided that at least 50 percent of the employees of the business are residents of the South St. Petersburg CRA. In addition, these employees must have been actively on payroll for at least six months and working at least 20 hours per week.

Not-for-profit agencies that provide social services important to CRA residents such as childcare, education or workforce development must be tax exempt organizations under the requirements of the 26 U.S. Code 501. These would include charitable organizations (501(c)(3)) as well as social welfare organizations, employee benefit associations, labor and agricultural organizations, business leagues, social clubs, fraternal societies, and veterans’ organizations. Faith-based organizations may apply for funding through the Commercial Matching Grant program to renovate facilities that provide services to the broader community, such as childcare, in a secular manner. Worship, religious instruction, proselytizing and similar activities conducted in these renovated facilities must be voluntary and privately funded.

Healthcare providers must have at least one healthcare provider on staff that has an unencumbered license through the State of Florida. In addition, facility types that are licensed and/or certified or regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) must have an active/licensed/registered ACHA license status to apply for the grant.

TIF funding priority will be given for applications for properties located within one or more of the following commercial corridors in the South St. Petersburg CRA:

➢ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street South
➢ 16th Street South
➢ 22nd Street South
➢ 34th Street North/South
Commercial Site Improvement Grant
South St. Petersburg CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program

➢ 49th Street North/South
➢ Central Avenue Corridor (including 1st Avenues North and South)
➢ 5th Avenue South
➢ 18th Avenue South

The Citizen Advisory Committee for the South St. Petersburg CRA will determine the priority corridors for grant scoring for each grant cycle. Please see the map on page 6 for the corridor boundary limits.

1. Eligible Improvements
- Exterior painting, re-siding, and/or cleaning
- Masonry repairs
- Removal of architecturally inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes and materials
- Restoration of significant architectural details or removal of materials that cover said architectural details
- Site improvement features such as fencing, parking lots, lighting, dumpster enclosures and buffer walls provided such features do not collectively exceed more than 25 percent of the eligible project costs
- Construction of pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as benches, shelters, bike racks and bike lockers
- Installation or repair of exterior signage, including wall, window, hanging, and monument signs advertising the business name and identity provided such features do not collectively exceed more than 25 percent of eligible project costs
- Awnings and canopies installation or repair
- Doors and windows
- Roof repairs that attach to a new or renovated façade
- Exterior lighting attached to an existing building
- Demolition of obsolete accessory structures and partial demolition of exterior walls made necessary for renovation or expansion
- Window and cornice flashing and repair
- Remediation of environmental contamination on the exterior site such as lead, petroleum or asbestos
- Architectural and engineering fees as well as permitting and development review fees not to exceed 10 percent of the total eligible project costs
- A contingency reserve of up to 10 percent to be used by the applicant in the event material and labor costs of approved budget items increase between the time of the original estimate and the commencement of the project. The reserve can only be used to pay for construction items described in the budget of the executed grant agreement.

2. Ineligible Improvements

1 Administratively amended on April 7, 2017, to support St. Petersburg’s sustainability and bike trail initiatives.
Commercial Site Improvement Grant
South St. Petersburg CRA Commercial Matching Grant Program

- Installation of aluminum or vinyl siding
- Work performed by an unlicensed contractor
- Improvements performed prior to approval of the TIF application
- New building construction
- Reducing or enclosing existing storefront windows
- Improvements to buildings constructed within the last 5 years
- Equipment, mechanical and HVAC systems
- Minor roof repairs (other than those portions that directly attach to a new or renovated façade)
- Security systems (including metal roll down gates, window bars, cameras)
- Any interior work
- Any improvements to secondary or accessory buildings (i.e., garages, sheds, garage apartments, carports)
- Improvements in progress or completed prior to preliminary approval
- Routine maintenance
- Improvements to buildings primarily used for residences, which is defined as more than 50 percent of the building square footage in residential use

VI Submission Procedures and Requirements

Applications must be submitted electronically through the City of St. Petersburg’s “Open Gov” platform located at stpete.org/cra or stpetegreenhouse.com/incentives.

For more information, please contact

Anthony Chan
Economic Development Specialist
727-551-3279
tony.chan@stepete.org

Application packages must include the following information:

- Completed and signed application form
- $35 application fee paid in check or money order, refundable if not awarded grant
- Copy of current business tax certificate
- Confirmation that mortgage, property insurance and property tax payments are current and in good standing.
- Documentation of property ownership or written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct the identified improvements. (The property owner will be required to sign the Grant Agreement to assume responsibility for maintenance of improvements funded by the Grant.)
• Applicants that are national franchises must include an employee roster that contains the name and address of all current employees, their length of service with the franchise as well as the number of hours worked for those eligible CRA residents in the past six months.

• Applicants that are in the healthcare industry must provide first and last name, license number and profession name. In addition, the facility types that are licensed and/or certified or regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) must provide their facility/provider type and their license number with the application.  

• Applicants that are a not-for-profit agency providing social services must include their tax exempt certificate with the application and any licenses or certifications required to provide the service.

• Legal description and survey of project site
• Proposed use is consistent with the City’s Land Development Regulations
• Digital photographs of existing conditions of the project site
• Sketches or conceptual drawings of improvements that will be funded by the Grant.
• Written description of project improvements

Failure to provide required information will delay the review and/or approval process with the potential for the application being declined.

Program applicants and their related interests, including officers in a corporation or investment partners, will be evaluated on the basis of their financial character and can be determined ineligible for the TIF program based on the following criteria:

a. Code enforcement liens over $2,500
b. Special assessment liens over $500
c. Pending judgment or foreclosure
d. Felony conviction for financial mismanagement within the last five years
e. Mortgage payments three months in arrears
f. Unpaid property taxes
g. Unpaid property insurance

VII Review and Approval Process

Projects will be awarded TIF funding based on a competitive grant scoring system. The matching grant reimbursement for the project will not be made until all project

2 City Administration requires this information to search on Individual provider licenses from the Florida Department of Health: https://mqa-internet.doh.state.fl.us/MQASearchServices/HealthCareProviders as well as Facility Type/Provider from the Agency for Health Care Administration: https://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/facilitylocator/FacilitySearch.aspx
components identified in the grant agreement budget have been completed, inspected and issued a Certificate of Occupancy by the City.

VIII Compliance Requirements

Successful applicants must sign a Grant Agreement with the Mayor or designee which specifies their obligations and rights upon issuance of the Grant. To ensure timely commencement and completion of the Project, the Applicant shall abide by the following deadlines:

a. Within 60 days of execution of the Grant Agreement, file a “Notice of Commencement” pursuant to the requirements of the City’s Construction Services and Permitting Department.

b. Within 6-18 months of execution of the Grant Agreement, request a “Review of Completed Work” from the City of St. Petersburg. (Length of time will depend on the nature of work to be performed.)

Applicants shall have no more than 90 days from City Council approval of awards to execute grant agreements, otherwise the City will revoke the awards. At the discretion of the Mayor the revocation may be waived upon demonstration of good cause. Applicants requiring the execution of a Grant Agreement to secure additional financing will be allowed 90 days from the execution date to do so before the above deadlines will commence. Absent approval of an extension of the deadlines in VIII.a. and VIII.b by the City, failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the TIF Agreement, rescission of the Grant Award and return of the earmarked funding to the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Trust Fund. The applicant must maintain the improvements in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement as well as the City’s Code of Ordinances.
COMMERCIAL BUILDING INTERIOR AND TENANT IMPROVEMENT GRANT

I Description and Purpose

The Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant provides matching grants to commercial property owners and businesses for interior upgrades with a focus on projects that remedy degraded building systems and extend the economic viability of the building.

II Consistency with South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan

The Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant program is consistent with the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) by promoting revitalization of commercial corridors in the CRA by improving and upgrading building stock. This program is a companion to the Commercial Site Improvement Grant, which focuses on exterior improvements, by helping extend the economic viability of commercial buildings through upgrades to critical interior building systems.

The South St. Petersburg CRP recognizes the importance of the CRA’s commercial corridors in growing existing businesses and attracting new ones. In the Action Plan, under “Business Development and Job Creation”, one strategy calls for working with owners along “primary commercial corridors in the CRA to maintain and upgrade their properties”, while another specifically instructs the City to develop a TIF program that will “provide incentives to owners of land and buildings along the CRA’s primary commercial corridors.” A further strategy calls for the adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings.

These strategies are reinforced in the Redevelopment and Funding Program, which details the implementation approach of the CRP and redevelopment programs that will carry it out. Improving the image and identity of South St. Petersburg to remedy blighting influences and encourage investment is a key feature of the Plan.

III Type and Amount of Award

An applicant may receive a matching grant of up to $20,000. To receive the full award from the City, eligible project costs must exceed $40,000. Applicants with properties listed on the Local Register of Historic Places may be eligible for an increase in the matching grant of up to $40,000 provided the award will be used to renovate the historic portion of the property and if the approved work is found compliant with the City of St. Petersburg Historic Preservation Ordinance. In awarding a historic property bonus, under no circumstance will the City contribute more than 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. Therefore, to receive the full $40,000 eligible project costs for a historic project
must exceed $80,000. The TIF contribution will be reimbursable to the applicant upon completion of work.

An applicant may also be awarded additional funding for projects that utilize SBE contractors or allow occupancy of a building by a targeted industry user identified in the Grow Smarter Strategy. These industries are Financial Services, Specialized Manufacturing, Marine and Life Sciences, Data Analytics, and Creative Arts and Design. The recommended awards are as follows:

- Using contractor with City SBE certification: $5,000 bonus
  - CRA-based SBE contractor: up to $5,000
  - St. Petersburg-based SBE contractor: up to $4,000
  - Other SBE contractor: up to $2,500
- Grow Smarter Initiative: $5,000 bonus

To receive the bonus for the Grow Smarter incentive, the applicant must document that the commercial space funded by the CRA grant is occupied by a targeted industry within one year of completion of the project. Only one (1) bonus award per type shall be given for each property. To receive the full $5,000 bonus for the SBE contractor and Grow Smarter bonuses, total project costs must equal or exceed $50,000. This will ensure that the City will contribute no more than one-half the total project cost. If the final project costs total between $40,000 and $50,000 then the City will reimburse the applicant the $20,000 maximum award allowed plus 50 percent of the remaining costs up to $5,000.

**IV Funding Source**

The City of St. Petersburg may allocate funding annually from its TIF contributions to support this program.

**V Eligible Properties and Improvements**

The *Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant* program is available to fund eligible interior improvements on commercial, industrial and mixed-use properties. The program recognizes the negative impact that building vacancies play in fueling disinvestment and blight through deferred maintenance and focuses on ensuring the long-term economic viability of the CRA’s building stock through renovation and/or replacement of essential building systems such as roofing, heating and cooling equipment, and plumbing. While designed to assist locally owned businesses, the grant program recognizes that national franchises, healthcare providers and not-for-profit agencies are present on most of the CRA’s commercial corridors and maintaining their buildings in good repair is essential for remedying blight and preventing its spread. They often employ CRA residents and help assist in the economic uplift of South St. Petersburg, while not-for-profit and healthcare agencies provide essential services to the
CRA. Finally, the CRA’s national franchises also contribute revenue to the South St. Petersburg redevelopment trust fund that pays for this grant program.

At the same time, these entities may often have access to capital from their national parent organizations that locally owned businesses do not have. To that end, the following outlines the conditions that national franchises, not-for-profit social service agencies and healthcare providers must meet in order to receive funding through the program.

National commercial franchises are eligible to receive funding through this grant program provided that at least 50 percent of the employees of the business are residents of the South St. Petersburg CRA. In addition, these employees must have been actively on payroll for at least six months and working at least 20 hours per week.

Not-for-profit agencies that provide social services important to CRA residents such as childcare, education or workforce development must be tax exempt organizations under the requirements of the 26 U.S. Code 501. These would include charitable organizations (501(c)(3)) as well as social welfare organizations, employee benefit associations, labor and agricultural organizations, business leagues, social clubs, fraternal societies, and veterans’ organizations. Faith-based organizations may apply for funding through the Commercial Matching Grant program to renovate facilities that provide services to the broader community, such as childcare, in a secular manner. Worship, religious instruction, proselytizing and similar activities conducted in these renovated facilities must be voluntary and privately funded.

Healthcare providers must have at least one healthcare provider on staff that has an unencumbered license through the State of Florida. In addition, facility types that are licensed and/or certified or regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) must have an active/licensed/registered ACHA license status to apply for the grant.

TIF funding priority will be given for applications for properties located within one or more of the following commercial corridors in the South St. Petersburg CRA:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street South
- 16th Street South
- 22nd Street South
- 34th Street North/South
- 49th Street North/South
- Central Avenue Corridor (including 1st Avenues North and South)
- 5th Avenue South
- 18th Avenue South
The Citizen Advisory Committee for the South St. Petersburg CRA will determine the priority corridors for grant scoring for each grant cycle. Please see the map on page 7 for the corridor boundary limits.

1. **Eligible Improvements**
   - Structure stabilization (repair/replacement of foundations, footers, load bearing walls, roofing systems)
   - Plumbing, natural gas and electrical systems
   - Energy efficiency improvements (window upgrades, insulation, hot water heater, HVAC systems)
   - Painting when accompanied with interior work such as installing or relocating walls, minor demolition and any work as long as it is part of an improvement and not the sole project for which a funding request is being made
   - Remediation of environmental contamination on the interior of the building including painting, such as lead, mold or asbestos
   - Architectural and engineering fees as well as permitting and development review fees not to exceed 10 percent of the total eligible project cost
   - A contingency reserve of up to 10 percent to be used by the applicant in the event material and labor costs of approved budget items increase between the time of the original estimate and the commencement of the project. The reserve can only be used to pay for construction items described in the budget of the executed grant agreement.

2. **Ineligible Improvements**
   - Work performed by an unlicensed contractor
   - Improvements performed prior to approval of the TIF application
   - Any exterior work not made necessary by interior improvements (i.e., windows, air handlers, roofing systems)
   - Routine maintenance
   - Improvements in progress or completed prior to preliminary approval
   - Painting when not associated with other improvements
   - New building construction (additions to existing structures are permitted)
   - Any improvements to secondary or accessory buildings (i.e., garages, sheds, garage apartments, carports)
   - Improvements to any building primarily used for residences, including those in mixed-use projects, which is defined as more than 50 percent of the building in residential use. (Commercial space associated with mixed use projects is eligible for funding)
   - Improvements made to secondary or accessory buildings on the property
   - Improvements to buildings constructed within the last 5 years
   - Demolitions of more than 50 percent of existing building square footage

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**VI Submission Procedures and Requirements**
Applications must be submitted electronically through the City of St. Petersburg’s “Open Gov” platform located at stpete.org/cra or stpetegreenhouse.com/incentives. For more information, please contact

Anthony Chan
Economic Development Specialist
727-551-3279
tony.chan@stepete.org

Application packages must include the following information:

- Completed and signed application form
- $35 application fee paid in check or money order, refundable if not awarded grant
- Copy of current business tax certificate
- Confirmation that mortgage, property insurance and property tax payments are current and in good standing.
- Documentation of property ownership or written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct the identified improvements. (The property owner will be required to sign the Grant Agreement to assume responsibility for maintenance of improvements funded by the Grant.)
- Applicants that are national commercial franchises must include an employee roster that contains the name and address of all current employees, their length of service with the franchise as well as the number of hours worked for those eligible CRA residents in the past six months.
- Applicants that are in the healthcare industry must provide first and last name, license number and profession name. In addition, the facility types that are licensed and/or certified or regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) must provide their facility/provider type and their license number with the application.¹
- Applicants that are a not-for-profit agency providing social services must include their tax exempt certificate with the application and any licenses or certifications required to provide the service.
- Legal description and survey of project site
- Use must be consistent with the City’s land development regulations
- Digital photographs of existing conditions of the project site
- Written description of project improvements
- Sketches or conceptual drawings of improvements that will be funded by the Grant.

¹ City Administration requires this information to search on Individual provider licenses from the Florida Department of Health: https://mqa-internet.doh.state.fl.us/MQA.searchServices/HealthCareProviders as well as Facility Type/Provider from the Agency for Health Care Administration: https://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/facilitylocator/FacilitySearch.aspx
Failure to provide required information will delay the review and/or approval process with the potential for the application being declined. Program applicants and their related interests, including officers in a corporation or investment partners, will be evaluated on the basis of their financial character and can be determined ineligible for the TIF program based on the following criteria:

- a. Code enforcement liens over $2,500
- b. Special assessment liens over $500
- c. Pending judgment or foreclosure
- d. Felony conviction for financial mismanagement within the last five years
- e. Mortgage payments three months in arrears
- f. Unpaid property taxes
- g. Unpaid property insurance

**VII Review and Approval Process**

Projects will be awarded TIF funding based on a competitive grant scoring system. The matching grant reimbursement for the project will not be made until all project components identified in the grant agreement budget have been completed, inspected and issued a Certificate of Occupancy by the City.

**VIII Compliance Requirements**

Successful applicants must sign a Grant Agreement with the Mayor or designee which specifies their obligations and rights upon issuance of the Grant. To ensure timely commencement and completion of the Project, the Applicant shall abide by the following deadlines:

- a. Within 60 days of execution of the Grant Agreement, file a “Notice of Commencement” pursuant to the requirements of the City’s Construction Services and Permitting Department.
- b. Within 6-18 months of execution of the Grant Agreement, request a “Review of Completed Work” from the City of St. Petersburg. (Length of time will depend on the nature of work to be performed.)

Applicants shall have no more than 90 days from City Council approval of awards to execute grant agreements, otherwise the City will revoke the awards. At the discretion of the Mayor the revocation may be waived upon demonstration of good cause. Applicants requiring the execution of a Grant Agreement to secure additional financing will be allowed 90 days from the execution date to do so before the above deadlines will commence. Absent approval of an extension of the deadlines in VIII.a. and VIII.b by the City, failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the TIF Agreement, rescission of the Grant Award and return of the earmarked funding to the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Trust Fund. The applicant must maintain the improvements in
accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement as well as the City’s Code of Ordinances.
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