



Legislation Text

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TO: CRA Board of Commissioners
FROM: Joan K. Goodrich, Economic Development Director
Elizabeth Burrows, Economic Development Manager
THROUGH: Jeff Costello, CRA Executive Director
DATE: May 14, 2019

NEW TOOLS: PROJECT CONSULTANCY + DESIGN SERVICES PROGRAM

Recommended Action:

Approve the Project Consultancy + Design Services Program Guidelines modifications.

Background:

At the CRA Board workshop held on February 12, 2019, the Office of Economic Development staff made a presentation to the CRA Board with recommendations for new ways to accelerate and support business activity and private investment in key priority areas of the CRA District. At that time, the Board indicated their support of updates to the Site Development Assistance Program to offer higher levels of funding to projects located within the West Atlantic (Sub-Area #3), Northwest (Sub-Area #4), Southwest (Sub-Area #8) and Osceola Park (Sub-Area #7) areas, and the creation of new tools designed to assist businesses and property owners more directly during the planning and design phase of a project.

On April 9, 2019, the CRA Board approved modifications to the Site Development Assistance Program guidelines, increasing the maximum award amount for projects in key priority areas to \$75,000, with eligible costs up to \$10,000 fully funded, and additional eligible costs covered at a rate of 75%. Changes to payment procedures were also approved, allowing approved applicants to request CRA payments made either directly to vendors or by reimbursement, to be processed as often as once a month.

Proposed New Tool:

As an additional follow-up to the February 2019 workshop discussion, staff has prepared guidelines for the proposed Project Consultancy + Design Services Program. This new tool would be available for a three-year period, restricted only to CRA Sub-Areas #3, #4, #7 and #8. The guidelines outline two levels of assistance-Consultancy Services (Level 1); and Project Design Services (Level 2) (See Exhibit "A").

Consultancy Services would be available to prospective tenants and property owners in priority areas, to help them refine preliminary ideas on how to activate a space or property. Approved applicants would be able to receive up to five (5) hours of one-on-one consulting with an architect, with

a Feasibility Plan as a final deliverable. The consultancy services would be funded directly by the CRA, through a work assignment issues to an architect under continuing contract with the agency.

Project Design Services would be available to property owners and tenants with executed leases who are moving forward with projects that require signed and sealed plans for site plan approvals and/or building permits. CRA staff would work with approved applicants at this level to determine the appropriate scope of design required for a project and prepare a funding agreement providing for the terms and conditions of the scope of services and funding. The applicant may choose to work with a designer from a list of firms prequalified by the CRA, or they may choose to register their own designer with the CRA.

Staff anticipates all consultancy services and most design services to cost less than \$15,000. As such, the Project Consultancy + Design Services Program has been structured to allow applications and funding agreements to be approved administratively by the CRA Executive Director for the sake of efficiency. Funding agreements for design projects in an amount of \$15,000 or greater will require CRA Board approval.

If the board approves the creation of this program, staff will continue to work with CRA General Counsel to develop a template funding agreement for Project Design Services (Level 2), which would be brought back for board approval before finalizing. Additionally, staff anticipates returning with an agenda item for the process of prequalifying design firms and professionals to participate in Level 2 of the Project Consultancy & Design Services Program. After a year of implementation, staff will study the program's outcomes and results and revisit the guidelines to make any necessary modifications.

Attachments: Exhibit A - Proposed Program Guidelines; Exhibit B - CRA District Sub-Area Map

CRA Attorney Review:

CRA General Counsel reviewed the proposed Program Guidelines for legal sufficiency and determined them to be acceptable.

Finance Review:

N/A

Funding Source/Financial Impact:

Funding will be made available via GL# 7300 - Grant Programs

Timing of Request: