

DOWNTOWN
Rochester, Minnesota

**Downtown Rochester
Façade Improvement
Grant Program**

Presented by the
Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA)
and the City of Rochester

Rochester Downtown Alliance Façade Improvement Program

- **Up to \$100,000 is available annually (upon City Council approval) for the Façade Improvement Grant Program.**
 - Business and property owners may apply to the program per property per year; except that for a building with multiple tenants at the street level, up to two businesses may apply.
 - The RDA Executive Director is responsible for tracking the total amount obligated per year, not to exceed \$100,000 per year.
 - The RDA Executive Director is responsible for documentation of final grant amount approved, obtaining receipts and proof of payment, and submitting payment request to the City.
 - RDA Executive Director works with property/business owner to set deadline dates for project and payment:
 - Project start date (within 90 days of approval) and completion date
 - All receipts submitted by date (within 60 days of project completion date)
 - Payment within 30 days of receipt submission (no partial payments)
 - The City is responsible for payment to the property owner.
 - The City Council will need to approve the budget each year.

- **Application Process includes the following:**
 - The property and/or business owner will meet informally with the RDA Executive Director to discuss project eligibility, design guidelines, and appropriate documentation.
 - The property and/or business owner prepares documentation (and illustration as appropriate) of planned project, and submits to RDA Executive Director.
 - RDA Executive Director identifies if project meets eligibility requirements and, if so, will facilitate design review and approval process.
 - Upon approval, RDA Executive Director will establish timeline for project and payment deadlines, obtain receipts, and submit for reimbursement to City. An Award letter will be issued by the RDA.
 - The RDA Executive Director provides all documentation, including eligibility, design approval, grant amount, receipts, and timelines for payment.
 - No applications will be accepted for retroactive projects.

If interested please contact:

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Rochester Downtown Alliance
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507-216-9883

Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

The City of Rochester and the RDA recognize the importance of a high-quality retail and business environment to the continued success of downtown Rochester. The Façade Improvement Grant Program is intended to help defray costs associated with improving the facades of business properties in downtown Rochester. The program is offered as an incentive to downtown property owners.

Eligibility

Any property or business owner whose property lies within the Special Services District (downtown Rochester) is eligible for the program. Buildings constructed within the last 3 years are ineligible.

Use of Funds

The funds may be used to pay for up to 50% of the costs associated with the design and construction of improvements to a building's facades. Grant funds will be provided as a reimbursement to the business or property owner.

The funds will not be available to projects seeking assistance for signage only. The RDA Design Review Group will consider signage based on the long-term improvements to the property and signage that is deemed as architectural signage.

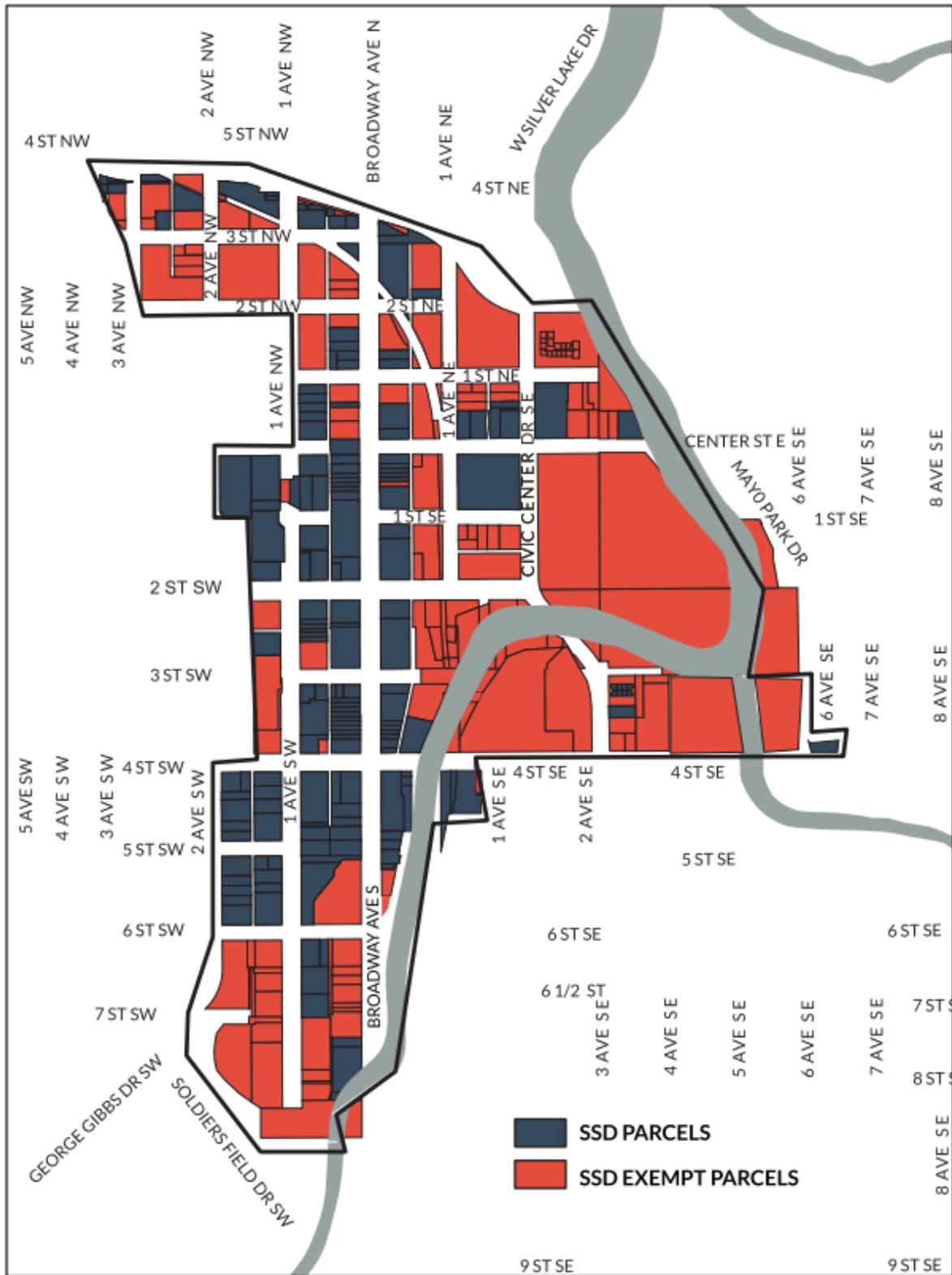
Grant Amount

Property and business owners may apply for grant assistance of up to 50% of the cost of improvements, not to exceed \$20,000. Grant funds will be made available on a first come first serve basis. Up to \$2,000 of the grant amount may be used to procure professional assistance for RDA Design Review process. This funding is outside of the max amount of \$20,000. Thus, a project may receive a max amount of \$22,000 if it qualifies.

Steps in the Process:

1. The property and/or business owner will meet informally with the RDA Executive Director to discuss project eligibility, design guidelines, and appropriate documentation.
2. The property or business owner prepares an application, including plans and specifications, at an appropriate level of detail, and submits to RDA Executive Director. If the applicant is not the owner of the property where the improvements will be made, they must obtain a letter of approval from the property owner authorizing the improvements.
3. The RDA Executive Director determines if project meets eligibility and funding requirements and, if so, facilitates the design review and approval process.
4. Upon review and recommendation by the RDA Design Review Group, the applicant and RDA Executive Director finalize grant negotiations. An award letter will be issued by the RDA.
5. If the applicant is on the Design Review Group, the application goes to the RDA Board of Directors for approval (with recommendation coming from the Design Review Group).
6. Business or property owner makes approved façade improvements and pays all invoices related to the improvements. Lien waivers are to be provided to the RDA Executive Director.
7. Applicant submits request for reimbursement to RDA Executive Director, providing documentation that the work was completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, and provides receipts for all work completed.
8. RDA Executive Director submits funding request and documentation to the City.
9. The City issues check to the applicant.

2016 SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT MAP



RDA Design Review Group Practice

Purpose

To ensure that RDA/City improvement money is used to make properties more consistent with Overlay Zone Design Guidelines (or at least NOT be used to make properties less consistent with Overlay Zone Design Guidelines). A professional body of experts will consult with the RDA Executive Director and the Space & Place Committee to apply Urban Village Overlay Zone Design Guidelines to project proposals and render an opinion on whether the project meets the guidelines. Design Guidelines are purposely non-specific in areas, thus are best interpreted by design professionals.

Role

To review design elements for projects requesting funding as part of Façade Improvement and Interest Buy-Down programs. Over time, may expand to other types of reviews. So an additional purpose of the practice is to gain experience with the concept of design review, and to educate local design professionals and building owners as to the content and mission of the Design Guidelines.

The Purpose of the Urban Village Overlay Zoning District

- Promote development of a compact pedestrian-oriented urban village providing opportunities to live, work, shop, learn, and play in a unique, attractive, and engaging environment at densities and intensities that support transit usage.
 - Promote a select mix of uses (residential, retail, business, institutional, educational, cultural, and entertainment).
 - Enhance the urban village's character through high quality urban design, attractive to locals and visitors.
 - Promote the health, well-being, and social interaction of workers, visitors, and residents by creating an environment where people can incorporate physical activity into daily life; by encouraging walking, biking, and alternative means of transportation.
 - Create confidence in the future, incentive to stay and invest, plus long-lasting value
- (approved by full RDA Board 07-25-2008)

Group Purpose

- Providing evaluation of project proposal to ensure conformance to the Urban Design Guidelines for approval.
- Facilitate quick turnaround of review, as well as provide assistance to building owners who need professional design or project input
- Encourage local design professionals and owners to become familiar with Urban Village Overlay Zone Design Guidelines and agree with the guidelines and overall vision for downtown Rochester.

Funding, Organization and Process

- RDA Executive Director/staff to call group to action and provide needed documentation for review, collate response, and provide final approval documentation as appropriate
- Group will be asked to complete the RDA Design Review Worksheet and render a "yes" or "no" opinion, along with supporting comments
- Time and opinion will be paid for out of program funds as described in the specific program guidelines.

Membership

- The Design Review Group should be comprised of five members and one facilitator.
- Applicants must commit to a 2-year term minimum
- Applicant must provide or demonstrate their qualifications for reviewing design proposals
- Applicants must be able to review design proposals for their compliance with the Urban Village Overlay Zone Design Guidelines and respond with a vote and commentary within 5 business days of notification by RDA Executive Director
- All members of the Design Review Group report directly to the RDA Executive Director
- Members of the Design Review Group are allowed and encouraged to confer and communicate between themselves before rendering a decision
- Any group member who becomes engaged with a client applying for a Façade Improvement Grant must recuse themselves from a project proposal vote
- Information shared by the RDA Executive Director for the purposes of evaluating proposals is to remain internal to the Design Review Group and not disseminated via social media, email, or any other means to the public, including other businesses or organizations.



RDA Application for Downtown Financial Assistance

Name of Applicant(s): _____

1. Mailing Address of Applicant: _____

2. Telephone Number(s): _____

3. Proposed Business Address: _____, Rochester, MN _____

4. Does the applicant own the building? Yes No

(If the answer to question #4 is "No", please attach a letter from the building owner evidencing a commitment to the applicant.)

5. Estimated Total Project Cost: \$ _____

6. Total Private Loan being obtained: \$ _____

7. Total Financial Assistance Requested: \$ _____

8. Proposed project start date: _____

9. Proposed project completion date: _____

10. The legal name of the borrower/grantee is:

11. The borrower/grantee is: Individual: Corporation: LLC Partnership:

12. Checklist of required attachments for Façade Improvement Grant applicants:

- Documentation (and illustration as appropriate) of planned project
- RDA design approval
- A brief narrative description of the business
- Letter of approval authorizing leasehold improvement from the property owner if not owned by the business

The undersigned applicant affirms that:

1. The information in this application is true and accurate.
2. The applicant has read and understands the program guidelines and conditions which are incorporated here by reference.
3. The Rochester Downtown Alliance reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject this application.

Date: _____

Signature of Applicant(s):

X

Tax ID# of business: _____

When completed submit to:

Karli McElroy, Program Manager
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 Rochester Downtown Alliance
 113 South Broadway Ave, Suite A2
 Rochester, MN 55904