I Description and Purpose

The Commercial Revitalization Program (CRP) provides grant awards to projects in the South St. Petersburg CRA that improve established business districts by redeveloping properties, decreasing vacancy rates, adding to the tax base, creating jobs, leveraging private sector investment, and improving the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods through removal of blight including properties declared a public nuisance by the city’s Nuisance Abatement Board, and revitalizing vacant underutilized properties. The CRP combines into one grant program the intent of two existing CRA programs - the “Commercial Site Improvement” and “Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement” grants – to support larger economic development projects in South St. Petersburg, while also incentivizing new construction.

II Consistency with South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan

The Commercial Revitalization Program is consistent with the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) by promoting revitalization of commercial corridors in the CRA, improving their appearance and upgrading their building stock.

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 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.”

1 “Project” is defined as work on new or existing commercial development.
2 “Blight” is defined as a condition that results in substantial diminution of property values of one or more properties in the same block or in a block adjacent to the block in which the condition is located, or a condition that endangers life or property.
III Type and Amount of Award

This program works in conjunction with the City-wide “Commercial Revitalization Program” (CRP) but is focused on projects located within the South St. Petersburg CRA. Applicants may receive up to $100,000 as a grant award for an approved project. City Council must approve a funding award under this program predicated upon the recommendation provided by the Mayor, if the economic impact of the project warrants an increased investment. Also, non-profit organizations who are eligible for the City’s “Social Action Funding” program are not eligible for this program.

IV Funding Source

City of St. Petersburg TIF contributions to the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Trust Fund and General Fund budget allocations made to the citywide Commercial Revitalization Program. In addition, Pinellas County contributions can be utilized if the project components are used in compliance with its February 6, 2017, policy governing their use. These include the following project types as well as the improvements identified in Attachment A:

- Brownfield Remediation
- Commercial Façade Grants
- Economic Development

V Eligible Projects

The Commercial Revitalization Program will be made available to support future projects in the South St. Petersburg CRA, that provide visible improvements to a building or site, decrease vacancy rates of the area, provide missing retail or service opportunities, retain or create jobs, and/or create new commercial space. The intent of the Commercial Revitalization Program is business development, thus the applicant should be an occupant of the building or a property owner that can demonstrate evidence that the building will be occupied by a business. Additionally, eligible projects must demonstrate that “but for” city investment, the project would not occur.

Mixed-use residential projects are eligible for the Commercial Revitalization Program provided the commercial component of the project comprises more than 51% of the gross square footage of the development and meets the minimum capital improvement threshold of $100,000. Eligible projects must have completed the conceptual planning stage and have sufficient documentation to submit for the city’s Construction Services and Permitting Division review.
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 annually the priority corridors for grant application evaluation. Please see the map on page 9 for the corridor boundary limits.

Furthermore, 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. Unpaid code enforcement liens
- b. Unpaid 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

VI Evaluation and Approval Process

Applicants will submit the required Commercial Revitalization Program application and attachments to the city’s Economic and Workforce Development Department. Staff will mentor and assist applicants throughout the process and will provide information regarding additional resources and partnerships, including The Greenhouse, Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation (TBBIC), and the city’s Brownfields Program, as well as other resources. Considerable attention will be devoted to the business plan.

Application packages will be reviewed by an internal review committee and that will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the applications relative to
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- the location of the project on a priority commercial corridor identified by the Citizen Advisory Committee of the South St. Petersburg CRA,
- creation of new commercial space through new construction or renovation of a previously vacant and blighted building,
- the number of jobs to be created and/or retained by the proposal,
- the number of CRA residents employed by the applicant at the time of application submittal,
- the capital investment by the applicant and the leverage provided by the City funding, and
- the use of environmentally sustainable materials and practices recommended by the City’s Office of Sustainability and Resiliency (OSR).

After receiving the evaluation from the review committee, a recommendation and a priority list will be made by the Mayor to the St. Petersburg City Council. St. Petersburg City Council has the final authority to approve CRP applications funded entirely or partially with South St. Petersburg TIF funding, an action which will add 6 to 8 weeks to the approval process.

Applicants will be informed of their approval by email. At this point, applicants may begin with the design and permitting phase of their projects. Eligible soft costs (architectural, engineering, and design fees) incurred after approval notice may be submitted for reimbursement under the grant. After the grant agreement is executed, construction may begin on the project and all eligible project costs may be submitted for reimbursement. Projects must commence within 180 days of grant agreement execution.

VII Minimum Selection Criteria

The Commercial Revitalization Program has two maximum funding thresholds, depending on the scope and impact of the proposed project.

Project Funding Criteria for up to $50,000 Grant Award

Projects will be awarded funding based the ability to meet the following criteria. If the project is multi-phased, it may be eligible for a renewal of funding in the subsequent fiscal year.

- Must be located in one of the following zoning districts: CCS-1, CCS-2, CCT-1, CCT-2, CRS-1, CRS-2, CRT-1, CRT-2, RC-1, IT, IS, and IC;
- Capital investment (excluding land) by applicant represents must be at least $50,000;
- Rehabilitates and returns to service a vacant commercial structure or adds new commercial square footage to a building or a business district through new
construction or adaptive reuse of a building formerly used for non-commercial purposes, or removes blight or a declared public nuisance;
• Visibly improves exterior building, site, and/or essential interior building systems such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and energy efficiency improvements;
• 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
• Work must be performed by licensed contractors;
• Business must occupy space that is improved or constructed (no speculative development); and.
• Creates at least two jobs, or retains at least five jobs, or facilitates the relocation of a company with five or more employees to the South St. Petersburg CRA. At least 50 percent of the job creation requirement must be met by residents of the CRA.

Project Funding Criteria for up to $100,000 Grant Award

The project meets the minimum requirements for a $50,000 grant award, plus the following additional criteria:

• Capital investment (excluding land) by applicant must be at least $250,000.
• Creates at least ten jobs, or retains at least 10 jobs or facilitates the relocation of a company with 10 or more employees to the South St. Petersburg CRA. At least 50 percent of the job creation requirement must be met by residents of the CRA.

VIII Submission Requirements

Applications are to be submitted in an 8”x10” envelope or larger with the project’s name and location, the applicant’s name and address and the name of the TIF funding program for which the application is being made to the Economic and Workforce Development Department (or successor department) on the 9th Floor of the Municipal Service Building, which is located at 1 Fourth Street North, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33701. For more information, please contact

Anthony Chan
Economic Development Specialist
727-551-3279
tony.chan@stpete.org
Application packages must include documentation that illustrates the impact of the project and its cost. Failure to provide all required information will delay the review and approval process. Applications must include the following attachments:

- Complete application form
- Submit $35 check or money order for background check per officer/principal.
- Five-year business pro forma
- Documentation of property ownership or written consent from property owner giving permission to conduct identified improvements and evidence of a lease agreement. The property owner will be required to sign the Grant Agreement to assume responsibility for maintenance of improvements funded by the Grant
- Detailed cost estimates of work by input (labor, materials, etc.) and project component (signage, landscaping, painting, carpentry, etc.)
- Digital photographs of existing conditions of project, both interior and exterior
- Written description of project with drawings as appropriate
- Three signed bids from licensed contractors itemizing the estimated cost of improvements to be funded by the Commercial Revitalization Program and private capital
- Sketches or conceptual drawings of improvements that will be funded by the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Documentation of required private investment of a minimum of $100,000 or more, dependent on the amount of grant funding requested.
- Copy of current business license.
- Copy of current property insurance.
- Encumbrance and title reports demonstrating that owner has clear title and the status of any encumbrances on the property.
- Documentation of all other properties owned by applicant demonstrating that those properties are in good condition and in good standing with the city – no Code Enforcement liens or Special Assessments, etc.
- Legal description and survey of project site.
- Documentation that proposed use is consistent with the City’s Land Development Regulations.

**IX Disbursement of Funds and Compliance Requirements**

Upon approval of the project by the Mayor, and subject to City Council if applicable, the applicant will enter into a grant agreement with the city as evidence of the city’s commitment to the project. Construction may not commence on the project until after execution of the grant agreement. Funding will be disbursed by the city after project completion and receipt of Certificate of Occupancy. Projects must be completed within
18 months or the Grant Agreement will be terminated and earmarked funding will be released for another project.

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. 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 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.

To ensure that the job creation and retention measures of the Commercial Revitalization Program are met, the City will retain 25 percent of the award until six months after the completion of the project. The retainage will be released to the applicant upon submission of appropriate documentation.

After project completion, Economic Development staff will continue to provide guidance and mentorship. Assisted businesses will be visited at least semi-annually to continue to assist and ensure business success.
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Map 3.1
South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Area

Commercial Corridors

[Map Image]
Attachment 1

CRP Project Components that can be funded with Pinellas County TIF

- 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 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
- 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 the 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
- 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.