



District del Sol Business Improvement Fund

Grants for Façades, Signage, Permanent Art and Interior Improvements

Total amount available: \$62,000

Administered by West Side Community Organization (WSCO)

Funded by The City of Saint Paul's Commercial Vitality Zone Program

I. Background

The Commercial Vitality Zone (CVZ) program of the City of Saint Paul invests in neighborhood commercial districts to promote city-wide vitality, growth, and equity. It is funded by Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) revenue. STAR comes from a ½-cent local sales tax to further residential, cultural, commercial, and economic development. Projects funded by CVZ must be capital (bricks and mortar) improvements to buildings, public realm, open spaces and other potential improvements.

- The District del Sol area of the West Side neighborhood has been identified as a commercial zone since the mid-1990s.
- In 2013, the City Council adopted The District del Sol Plan which outlines plans and recommendations to revitalize the area. This plan provided an initial list of potential projects already identified as needs to improve the area.
- In 2017, District del Sol was selected for Commercial Vitality Zone funding of \$312,500 (RES 17-149).

After additional community engagement over 1.5 years, the West Side community identified this façade, signage and interior improvement program as a top priority for the area.

II. Goals

The goal of the *District del Sol Business Improvement Fund* is to provide businesses in the West Side's District del Sol area with funds for permanent building or site projects that improve customer experience, that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the district, and that strengthen the businesses now serving the community. Projects should, where possible, include elements that also build community, honor history and celebrate cultural assets.

III. Eligibility

- Property owners and business tenants on or near Cesar Chavez between Wabasha and Ada, and Robert St. from Wood to the viaduct. See map below for boundaries.
- Property is identified as commercial, industrial, office or mixed-use.

IV. Program Overview

Allowable Improvements

- External and interior building improvements that enhance the appearance and/or experience of the building and/or business. The improvements must be maintained for seven (7) years from the date that the City has issued its final disbursement for the project.
- Allowable exterior improvements include (more than one of these improvements may be included in the proposed project):
 - Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage, to include free-standing signs on the property, window signs, awnings, signs affixed to the building (signs must comply zoning code)
 - Exterior lighting
 - Exterior painting
 - Repair and /or replacement of windows and exterior doors
 - Masonry repairs and tuck pointing
 - Art installations
 - Wall murals
 - Canopy and/or awning installation or repair
 - Removal of barriers to access the building from outside for people with disabilities
 - Permanent site improvements (walks, patios, courts)
 - Trash and mechanical enclosures
 - Parking area (including bicycles)
 - Fences
 - Trees
- Allowable interior improvements include:
 - Interior painting
 - Designed or artistic wall treatments
 - Lighting upgrades
 - Carpeting/tile/flooring
 - Interior window displays
 - Ceilings / ceiling panels / ceiling treatments
 - Bathroom upgrades
 - Kitchen upgrades of permanently affixed equipment
 - Mechanical and HVAC systems

Not allowable

- The following are not eligible:
 - Improvement to residential-only (non-commercial) buildings or sites
 - New additions (new square footage) or new buildings
 - Temporary signage

- Security system (including metal roll-down gates and window bars)
- Billboards
- Roofing
- Kitchen or store equipment that is not affixed to building, such as free-standing refrigerators
- Pylon, temporary, or roof signs
- Plantings (w/exception of trees)

Program Details

- A maximum of \$10,000 will be granted for each project, exemption of projects above \$10,000 will only be allowed per approval of review committee.
- These are disbursement style grants (moneys are not available to be given up-front), invoices and documentation will be required for grant disbursements. Disbursements may be distributed incrementally throughout the project. Work must be complete before receiving the final disbursement.
- Projects requesting more that \$10,000 may be eligible to receive a low interest loan of up to \$3,000. Further information regarding the loan will be discussed when applicable.
- Compliance requirements may apply to your project and can be reviewed on the City of Saint Paul’s Contract Compliance webpage (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/contract-compliance-business-development>). The following compliance programs are examples of compliance programs that may apply:
 - Vendor Outreach Program: **total** project budget of more than \$50,000
 - Affirmative Action: Entities receiving \$50,000 or more of city funds within a 12-month period
 - Labor Standards – Federal Davis Bacon (Projects funded with \$2,000 or more of federal dollars) and City (Little) Davis Bacon (**total** project costs of \$25,000 or more)
 - Two Bid Policy: Projects receiving \$20,000 or more of city funds
 - **All projects will be required to submit a vendor identification sheet for before work begins** (example attached). Please keep track your vendor bidding process, including names of businesses. You may refer to the City's CERT list to find vendors. Got to <https://cert.smwbe.com/> and select “Central CERT Directory” under the “Vendor Certification” section. WSCO does not endorse or specifically recommend any business on (or off) this list. If your business is a minority-owned, women-owned, or small business it may be eligible to be on the CERT list. You can find information on how to apply here: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/contract-compliance-business-development/central>
 - More information and assistance regarding compliance will be given to all successful applications.

IV. Application Process

In order for the applicant to be considered for the District del Sol business Improvement Fund grant, applicant must submit an application with the following information:

1. **Letter of Interest** - Please send a brief Letter of Interest to Leah Shepard at leahs@wSCO.org or 209 Page St W St. Paul, MN 55107. This should state information regarding your business, proposed project, timeline, and estimated total project cost (including this grant and any other additional funds) as well as any questions you may have. Please reference "District del Sol business Improvement Fund - Letter of Interest" in your subject, email, or letter.
2. **Meeting with WSCO Staff and/or Workshop with Review Committee**
After receiving your Letter of Interest we will contact you to discuss your project further and invite you to an informational workshop or meeting.
3. **Submittal of Grant Application** with attached documents:
 - Picture(s) of exterior or interior area that needs to be improved
 - Descriptions, drawings, renderings and/or pictures of improvements to be made
 - Contractor estimates
 - Timeline for project
 - For tenants: Letter of consent for improvements from building owner

Applications that are judged complete by noon on **March 29th** will be reviewed by Review Committee in a first round of consideration for funding. After that date, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funding has been depleted.

Please submit applications to:

leahs@wSCO.org OR mail to WSCO 209 Page St W St. Paul, MN 55107

4. **Letter of Grant Award-** Applicants will be notified of funding decision within 4 weeks following application deadline. Successful applicants will be guided on next steps, including signing a grant agreement with WSCO. Partial awards may be offered. Applications may be denied. With notification and permission of applicant, decisions may also be held for future consideration.

V. Review Process

Review Committee

Application will be reviewed by a committee of WSCO staff, staff from City of Saint Paul, and/or community members using the scoring criteria below. A combination of funding amount requested and score will be considered in the selection of the projects to be awarded grant funds.

Only projects with a score of 25 or more can be approved.

Scoring Criteria

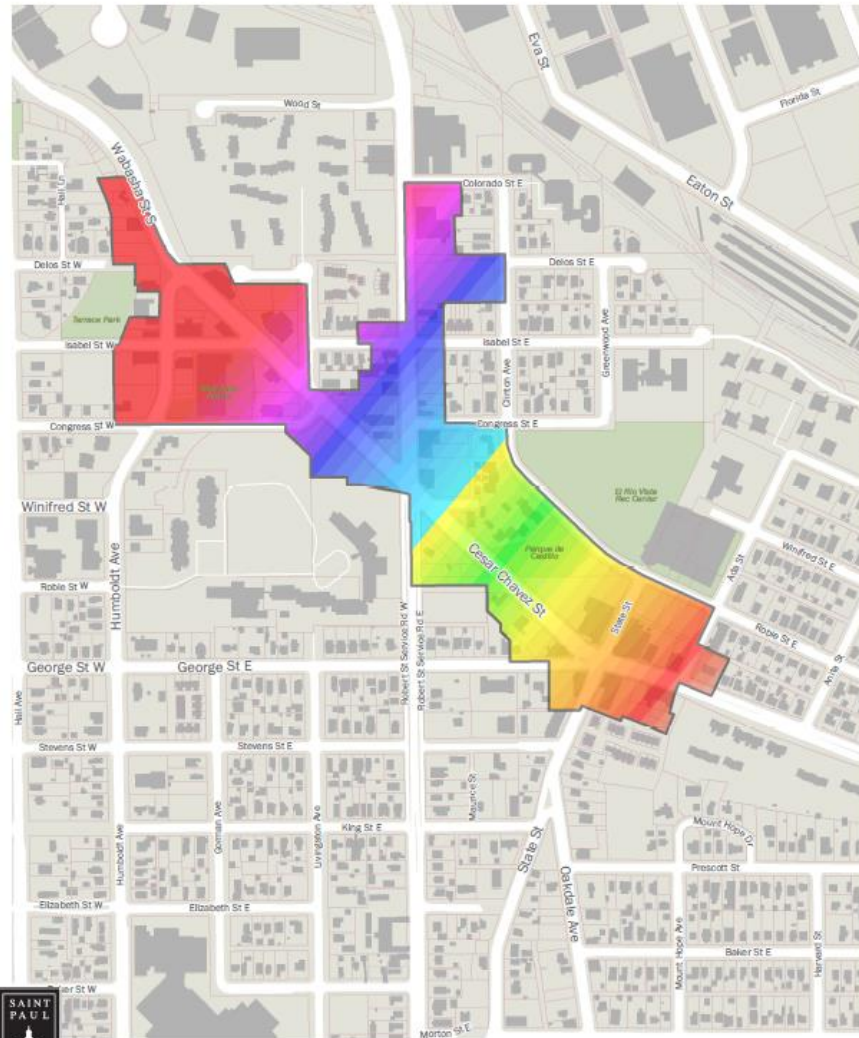
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE
Private investment: the higher the amount of private funding being added (i.e. match funds) to the project will	10 (0 points for applications with no	

receive more points. 1:1 match will be considered 10 points. .5:1 match will be considered 5 points. Minimum of .1:1 match to get 1 point. No match will be 0 points.	match)	
Aesthetic improvement/ "curb appeal": improvements that have a greater positive change to the appearance of the building will receive more points	5	
Neighborhood impact/public benefit: improvements that have greater positive impact to the neighborhood will receive more points, such as improving safety, increasing ADA accessibility, improving public space (such as bicycle parking, places to sit), build community, honor history, celebrate cultural assets, and jobs created.	15	
Feasibility: Projects completed more quickly but in a reasonable timeframe, with a budget that matches the scope (i.e. contractor bids are included), with a detailed scope of work that is achievable with funding and within timeline provided) will receive more points	10	
Collaboration: Projects that integrate the District del Sol theme created by community as part of the 2018 Our Streets, Our Stories initiative and/ or work with other businesses collaboratively to increase the impact of the project(s).	10	
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE	50	

Program Contact Person:

Leah Shepard
 West Side Community Organization Administrator
LeahS@WSCO.org
 651-293-1708 ex 303

Program Boundaries:



District del Sol Commercial Vitality Zone (CVZ)
November 2018



District del Sol CVZ



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