

**Façade Pre-Proposal Meeting
Questions and Answers
November 7, 2008**

Are non-priority areas eligible for funding?

Yes, commercial nodes that are designated as non-priority areas are eligible for the façade improvement grant program. These areas are often well-suited for façade grants, as property owners and businesses might be in a better position to invest in the exterior of their building.

Are mixed-use buildings eligible?

Yes, the commercial part of the building qualifies.

What if a property is zoned as residential, but has a commercial use?

Eligibility decisions are based on the property use, rather than property zoning.

How does organizational capacity impact whether or not a contract is granted or how much is awarded?

If there is a question related to the organization's capacity to administer the program, the City may give less than the full number of points, as listed on page seven of the RFP; however, we want areas to be served and organizations to succeed. Therefore, organizational capacity is not the only criteria upon which the City rates applications. If organization capacity is a concern for your group, it is recommended that you partner with an organization with more experience. To discuss how partnerships have worked in the past, call Rebecca Parrell at 612-673-5018.

What are the exact geographical boundaries for the eligible areas?

LRT station areas: ½-mile radius around station

Commercial Corridors: one block off corridor in either direction

Nodes: the commercial properties clustered around the intersection, each node will look different

Question five in the RFP asks how the program will be marketed to provide equal access to eligible properties AND asks if the program will be targeted to areas with greater need. These seem contradictory. How can we have a targeted strategy while also preserving open and equal access?

The City wants to provide organizations with the flexibility to target a particular block, area, or intersection, yet at the same time does not want an organization turn any eligible businesses away if funds are available. Also, targeting is not a requirement. This question allows respondents to describe any targeting they plan to do and the overall marketing strategy they will employ that will get the message out more broadly and not turn eligible applicants away.

Question seven asks if the program will be on a first-come first-served basis or within a set timeframe for applying. Does the City want to see one way or the other or is it neutral on which way an organization chooses to administer the program?

The City is neutral on this point. Whether or not an organization chooses first-come first-served or a timeframe for submitting applications will not determine the quality of the answer. What will determine the quality of the answer is how well the organization explains why the method chosen will likely work better in their area.

What is the total pool of money to be awarded?

The City has \$650,000 to split between the façade program and the business district support grants (RFP to be issued in February 2009). We have not determined the amount that will be allocated to each program yet.

What are eligible sources for the required match?

The match can come from any non-Great Streets source. Examples include private equity, NRP funds, a 2% loan, private bank loan, et cetera.

Are two bids always required?

If the total project cost is less than \$5,000, or if the project is a mural, only one bid is required.

What if you are doing interior work as well?

The project is still eligible, but you must break out the façade (exterior) improvements, and only match that façade improvement amounts. This is also an opportunity for leveraging resources- for example you can use a City 2% loan for the interior renovations.

Can an organization apply to cover one node?

Yes, but it is unlikely you will receive the maximum \$50,000 for just one node.

Are businesses outside of a designated node, corridor, or LRT station area eligible?

No. Adopted City Policy directs these resources to these areas as defined in the *Minneapolis Plan*. For additional information on geographic eligibility see:

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/GS_Geographic_Eligibility.asp.