



CRA
Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date: March 15, 2023

Agenda Item No.

Agenda Title: CRA Draft Grant Applications to Assist Existing Businesses, Small-Scale Commercial/Industrial Property Improvements and Residential Properties.

<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Agenda	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Possible Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Approved by Executive Director: _____ **Date:** _____

Name/Title

Originating Department: CRA Executive Director/Grant Writer/Community Development	Costs: \$ N/A at this time. Funding Source: Acct. # [] Finance _____	Attachments: → CRA Draft Commercial/Industrial Grant Application → CRA Draft Residential Grant Application → Zoning Map (identifying the CRA boundary)
--	---	--

Summary Explanation/Background:

Over the past few years, the Town has experienced an extensive upswing in developers, investors, and a variety of stakeholders interested in investing in the Town. When fashioned correctly, economic development incentives are wonderful tools that help to create jobs, revitalize areas, promote investment in the community and strengthen local industries and services. In 2019, an incentives package was created by staff, and presented and deemed acceptable by the CRA Board. While the incentives package has been utilized since 2019 for several larger redevelopment projects and for new businesses seeking relocation or startup in the CRA, the incentives package was primarily geared towards these larger redevelopment projects and new businesses coming to the CRA. These incentives are still possible utilizing additional funds than those that are required for the programs presented below.

With the above being said, while the prior incentive agreements were structured to assist existing businesses as well, it has become increasingly evident that the COVID pandemic has presented several unintended long-term impacts to existing businesses and has prevented the ability for some property owners, whether commercial/industrial, or

residential, to perform façade or other types of smaller-scale property improvements. In addition, while the CRA has several mixed-use projects and industrial projects in the pipeline, some, particularly those proposing additional residential units in the CRA to attract people who will in turn support the existing businesses, will not come online for another few years. The existing businesses and properties have immediate needs. Consequently, the enclosed draft CRA Grant applications (geared specifically to existing Commercial/Industrial businesses and property owners, along with Residential properties in the CRA) are being presented in an effort to create dedicated programs for assistance as follows:

*The purpose of the **CRA Commercial and Industrial Improvement Grant Program**, which includes the **facility improvement grant** and the **operational sustainability grant**, is to assist commercial property and business owners in the CRA with maintaining their businesses and/or properties during times of financial distress and encouraging them to invest in their operations through interior or exterior improvements. The objective is to stimulate reinvestment in the CRA districts and to preserve or renew the traditional business areas and establish them as centers for community-oriented activities. The CRA is able to dedicate \$500K, on a first-come, first-serve basis, towards this grant program at **up to 50%** reimbursement of the total project cost, **up to a \$75,000 grant per applicant**.*

*The purpose of the **Residential CRA Grant Program** is to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of residential structures and properties by offering **limited** financial and technical assistance. The overall objective is to stimulate reinvestment in the CRA districts and to preserve or revitalize the homes that create the unique character of the community. The CRA is able to dedicate \$250K, on a first-come, first-serve basis, towards this grant program at full payment (for low-income homeowner-occupied properties) and 50% reimbursement (for residential rental properties occupied by low-income tenants) of the total project cost, to pay for the design and/or implementation of eligible improvements to existing residential structures within the CRA. A grant reward **cap of \$25,000** applies to all applications.*

The additional grant guidelines are enclosed in the draft applications. ***Note, these grant programs as structured are high-risk programs, especially for the funds allocated to existing businesses in distress since there is no mechanism to fully guarantee that even with assistance they will remain in business long-term (even if an approved grant agreement requires it).*** Legal review is still pending and may result in changes to the structure, criterion etc. The purpose of this agenda item is to initiate discussion with the CRA Board and community and receive input. The CRA's Public Information Officer utilized all active CRA email addresses currently available in Constant Contact to provide notification of this discussion at tonight's meeting.

*Reminder: **These proposed programs are separate from the larger property redevelopment grants and new business relocation and start-up grants that have been typical to the CRA until recently and subject to our previously developed incentives package that is economic development based.***

Recommended Motion: For Discussion and Direction.