

MedQuarter Façade Improvement Program

Purpose

The MedQuarter Façade Improvement Program (the “Program”) is intended to encourage property and business owners within the MedQuarter to renovate their building fronts and other exteriors plainly visible to the public. By establishing a mechanism for the City of Cedar Rapids and the Cedar Rapids Medical Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (“SSMID”) Commission to share in the project cost, the Program promotes more renovations, as well as higher quality exterior improvements. An increase in the visible private investment complements all other economic initiatives within the area.

This Program may be used in conjunction with other City urban renewal activities and programs, as well as private redevelopment projects.

Qualified Area

The MedQuarter is defined by the boundaries of the Medical SSMID (*see Map of the MedQuarter - page 3*).

Eligible Structures & Applicants

Eligible structures may have various uses, such as medical, commercial, residential, arts and entertainment or mixed-use properties, but must be located within the designated Qualified Area identified above. Projects will be considered and evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis as applications are received. However, priority will be given for buildings determined by the City and Medical SSMID to have greatest need for renovation or the greatest strategic importance for implementation of the MedQuarter Master Development Plan (*see Resources – page 2*). Targeted properties must be in compliance with standards for routine maintenance and upkeep. The program is not intended to benefit property owners that have been negligent in standard maintenance of buildings and property.

Applicants can be property owners. Applicants can also be business owners or tenants within the building being renovated, but such applications must be accompanied by written consent from the property owner.

Eligible Improvements/Expenses

Program participation must be in compliance with design standards and guidelines outlined in the MedQuarter Overlay District Ordinance (*see Resources – page 2*). Projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Removal of existing façade materials in preparation for restoration of pre-existing building features.
- Renovation of building facades, including exterior design elements, that lead to visible aesthetic improvements (ie: a routine tuck-pointing job would not be covered, but painting or brickwork cleaning/restoration may be eligible).
- Restoration of historic painting or design on building exteriors.
- Installation of exterior lighting for the purpose of aesthetic enhancement that fits the character of the area.
- Renovation of current landscaping elements or installing new that leads to visible aesthetic improvements. Restoration of historic plantings for the purpose of aesthetic enhancement that fit the character of the area (i.e.: routine trimming and grooming would not be covered), or innovative applications such as vertical gardens. Landscape element improvements capped at 10% of total reward amount.
- Exterior improvements that support the Master Plan Update Appearance & Identity Initiatives through street level activation or greenspace expansion.

The Program is not intended to cover replacement of existing signage, nor any work related to structural or mechanical upgrades.

City and Medical SSMID Participation

The Program will cover up to 50 percent of eligible expenses on a project and award a maximum of \$10,000. The City of Cedar Rapids and Medical SSMID will each contribute up to 25 percent of the project cost in the form of a cash reimbursement to the property or business owner or tenant upon satisfactory completion of the project.

Committee Structure

The Medical SSMID Commission will appoint a three-member MedQuarter Façade Improvement Grant Committee (“Committee”) consisting of three members of the SSMID. The City of Cedar Rapids will assign a staff member to assist the Committee and the MedQuarter Executive Director. All projects are evaluated and awarded at the sole discretion of the Committee/Commission.

Participation Procedure

Success of the Program depends, in large part, upon the mutual cooperation and response on the part of the participant and City/Medical SSMID. The general procedure includes the following steps:

- Initial project consultation with the MedQuarter Executive Director to assess eligibility.
- Submit Façade Improvement Program funding request outlining the planned improvements and anticipated costs for reimbursement to MedQuarter Executive Director.
- Initial project consultation with the Committee to establish eligibility based on concept plans.
- Submit final plans and project bid to the Committee.
- Committee determines award to project and enters into an agreement with the applicant.
- Reimbursement to the applicant for eligible costs upon completion of improvements.

Resources

- MedQuarter Website: <http://www.themedq.com/>
- MedQuarter Master Development Plan: <http://www.themedq.com/Content/About-MedQ/Economic-Development/Master-Development-Plan.aspx>
- MedQuarter Overlay District Ordinance: <http://www.themedq.com/Content/About-MedQ/Economic-Development/Proposed-Overlay-District-Ordinance.aspx>

