



Staff Report

File #: 24-291

Version: 1

Date: 7/22/2024

Item #: 3.3a.

TO: Urban Renewal Agency Board
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, Executive Director
FROM: Kristin Retherford, Director, Community Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT:

Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Strategic Project Grant Exception - Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA)

Ward(s): Ward 1

Councilor(s): Stapleton

Neighborhood(s): CANDO

Result Area(s): Safe and Healthy Community; Welcoming and Livable Community.

SUMMARY:

Approving exceptions to the grant program restrictions on non-profit eligibility and maximum grant award to permit the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) to install a security fence and access gate around the perimeter of the ARCHES property.

ISSUE:

Shall the Urban Renewal Agency Board approve exceptions to the urban renewal grant restriction on grants to non-profits and the Strategic Project Grant maximum grant amount of \$30,000 to allow the Community Planning and Development Director to execute a grant for up to \$90,000 to MWVCAA to install a perimeter security fence and access gate for the ARCHES property?

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve exceptions to the urban renewal grant restriction on grants to non-profits and the Strategic Project Grant maximum grant amount of \$30,000 to allow the Community Planning and Development Director to execute a grant for up to \$90,000 to MWVCAA to install a perimeter security fence and access gate for the ARCHES property.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

On February 25, 2019, the Agency Board approved the Strategic Project Grant Program to support the goals of addressing homelessness within the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Area by providing grant funds for building and property improvements that help with crime prevention, security, and safety. The program was created to fund 100% of the improvement costs up to \$30,000 for properties within the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Area boundaries. The funding of this grant request does not negatively impact the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal FY 2025 grant budget of \$8 million.

Grant programs are identified as an eligible project in Sections 1105 and 1108 in the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The ARCHES building is located at 615 Commercial Street NE, directly north of the Marion Square Park on Union and Commercial, and just south of the Union Gospel of Salem facility and Bridgeway. The vehicle entrance to the site is off of Union Street and is shared with the adjacent property owner to the west, which is Coldwell Banker. The site is highly visible due to its location near Marion Square Park, Riverfront Park and the downtown core of Salem.

The ARCHES and Coldwell Banker properties have had a history of vandalism and crime due to the number of individuals congregating on the property, surrounding sidewalks, and Marion Square Park. On a regular basis, ARCHES experiences excessive trash, camping and illegal activity because the property is not secure and allows access 24/7. Over the years, ARCHES has hired security and taken other measures to reduce the crime and safety issues for their employees and clients who obtain meals and access services at this location.

ARCHES, in collaboration with Coldwell Banker, have both applied for Strategic Project Grant Funds to secure the access to both properties and share the cost of the entrance security gate. The project is unable to move forward unless both property owners install a security fence and gate, since both properties are accessed from the same location off Union Street. The fence material is a high-grade iron, which is more difficult to cut or damage. A separate request for an exception to the maximum grant amount to cover the costs of fencing for Coldwell Banker will also be presented for the Board's consideration.

Due to the large size of the ARCHES property, the cost for the security perimeter fence and shared gate is \$90,000, which exceeds the maximum grant amount for the grant program. ARCHES has previously been approved for two Strategic Project Grants totaling \$45,000 to purchase and install storage lockers for clients needing to secure personal belongings. Approval of these grant exceptions will be a significant improvement to security and reduction of crime for ARCHES and Coldwell Banker. It will also improve the overall aesthetics of the site, which is highly visible on Commercial Street and near the entrance to Salem's downtown core.

Sheri Wahrgren, Assistant Director
Urban Development Division
Community Planning and Development Department

Attachments:

1. Site Map ARCHES - Coldwell Banker