

Rochester Hills Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) Entranceway and Beautification Grant Program

Introduction:

The Rochester Hills LDFA entranceway grant program aims to improve the physical aesthetic conditions and visibility of technology and business parks that lie within the designated LDFA district. The majority of Rochester Hills' major employers and growth sectors are located within the LDFA business parks and it is imperative that the marketability of those locations is improved to remain a premium choice location to do business. In 2009, the LDFA board decided to allocate a portion of the marketing and development budget to assist owners of the local business and technology parks with upgrading the signage at the entranceway of their respective properties. In turn, the board expects this program to have a positive effect on the image of the properties located within the LDFA, emphasizing Rochester Hills' attractiveness and business-friendly qualities.

Program Goals:

The purpose of this program is to encourage commercial building owners to invest in entranceway signage and landscaping upgrades by providing grants to cover a portion of renovation costs. The grants provide an incentive to complete upgrades that create a more interesting, appealing environment, attracting people and businesses to the area.

This initiative may contribute to additional aspects of revitalization such as:

- Promote the marketability of local properties and commercial businesses;
- Build civic pride among the business community in Rochester Hills;
- Help building owners to attract and retain tenants; and
- Make the LDFA a more inviting place to do business.

Budget and Timeline:

A budget of \$10,000 was approved by the LDFA. An annual program budget will be allocated based on fund availability and program needs at the discretion of the LDFA board.

Eligible Properties:

Business park developments located within the Local Development Finance Authority district in the City of Rochester Hills. Business parks, by definition, are considered to be office parks, technology parks and industrial parks only. Other properties may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Eligible Applicants:

Business park associations and owners, and building occupants are encouraged to work together in submitting applications. However, only representatives of the business park at-large within the LDFA district can officially apply.

Eligible Improvements:

Eligible signage and landscaping improvements are limited to entranceway signage and landscaping visible from the adjacent thoroughfare. Signage and landscaping cannot be

located within a City right-of-way or dedicated easement without obtaining a right-of-way permit.

Beautification projects will also be considered on a case-by-case basis. Projects must be developed in common areas and demonstrate improvement, functionality and attraction of the entire business park community. This does not include improvements to individual buildings within the parks.

Grant Approval and Allocation:

The applicant will be contacted in writing stating whether the application has been approved, refused or additional information is required within four weeks of submitting the application.

Funding will be allocated on a case-by-case basis subject to the approval of the LDFA until the budget has been spent or the program year has ended. Submitting an application does not guarantee a grant or a specific grant amount. All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review of the existing signage and landscaping, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of the Design Guidelines. If approved, the grant will provide 50% of the costs directly related to the permitted project, not to exceed \$19,000-dollar contribution by the LDFA for any individual project.

Indemnification Clause:

The applicant and their sub-contractors will be required to agree to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Rochester Hills and the LDFA against any and all liability, claims, suits, losses, costs and legal fees caused by, arising out of, or resulting from any improvements made as a participant in the Entranceway and Beautification grant program.

Design and Landscape Architectural Guidelines:

It is not the intent of the LDFA to mandate specific designs and landscaping, but only to ensure a standard of quality and encourage minimal consistency of improvement projects funded by this program.

- Any improvement funded by the Entranceway and Beautification Grant Program must bear the SmartZone logo, which will be provided by the grant administration staff.
- Provide signage and landscaping that is aesthetically attractive and complementary to the development's entranceway.
- Provide all appropriate annual maintenance to maintain an attractive display year round. Provide an Annual Maintenance Manual/Schedule specifying all necessary maintenance to maintain the proposed improvements in good condition year round.
- Every aspect of the entrance design (signage, landscaping, irrigation system, lighting, etc...) must meet all the requirements of the City of Rochester Hill's Codes and Ordinances.
- A cost estimate (both materials and installation costs) must be provided for the proposed improvements, with the signage upgrade/installation, landscaping (separating annuals), irrigation system, any lighting and signage calculated separately.

- Provide an automatic irrigation system to assure all plants receive sufficient water to promote healthy plant growth. All components of the irrigation system shall be designed to be out of sight, with the controller in a locked box.
- All proposed plans are subject to review and approval by the City's Planning and Economic Development Staff.

Grant Application Process:

Generally, the application process will be as follows:

1. Contact the Planning and Development Department to request an application package and program guide.
2. Submit a complete application.
3. LDFA Entranceway Grant sub-committee reviews the application. Additional information may be requested.
4. If the application is approved, an agreement is entered into between the applicant and the LDFA clearly stating project details, what costs will be reimbursed by the LDFA and any conditions.
5. Entranceway signage and landscaping project is initiated.
6. Applicant presents Planning and Development Department with a letter of completion of the improvement project and a package of relative receipts.
7. The economic development staff inspects the project, relative to the agreement.
8. If no terms within the agreement were violated, the LDFA writes a check consistent with the terms of the agreement.

Grant Reimbursement Process:

The applicant must provide the following for reimbursement from the LDFA:

- A certificate of completion signed by the applicant and the contractor or architect indicating that the work described within the agreement has been fully completed;
- Proof all contractors have been paid in full by the applicant for the portions or parts of the project for which the applicant is seeking reimbursement. This shall be a final invoice marked paid in full, a copy of the check made payable to the contractors; and
- Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection and meet all City of Rochester Hills codes and ordinances, and applicable state and federal laws.