



## Uptown Grand Rapids Outdoor Space Activation Program

### Awards and Funding

The Uptown Outdoor Space Activation Program will provide matching funds up to **\$10,000** for activation/beautification of outdoor spaces of commercial properties. Grants require a minimum 50% match from the applicant for all eligible expenses. Funding is provided on a competitive basis. This program is funded through the Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority with opportunities in the future for third party support.

### Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the program, the property must be located within Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority boundaries (see the attached map). The property must contain an active commercial business, be undergoing renovations for the opening of a business, or adjacent to an active business within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date of award approval. The outdoor space must be visible and accessible to the public from the right of way. Businesses leasing space can apply with written permission from the property owner. All applicants and properties must be in good standing with respect to all local, State and Federal taxes. Applicants in litigation with the City of Grand Rapids will not be considered.

Uptown will reimburse the applicant directly for no more than 50% of total project costs and no more than the amount stated in the original agreement. A single payment will be made upon completion of the project, subject to site review and the submission of proper receipts and copies of paid invoices.

### Program Guidelines

The Program is intended to enhance the pedestrian usage of the sidewalks, create a sense of neighborhood continuity by providing an interesting, lively and active presence at street level. An active presence means prioritizing interactive uses—community spaces, courtyards, entries, or seating—in the prime space where the building meets the street edge, between the building and street edge, or between buildings to ensure a lively interaction between the building and public realm. Outdoor activation encourages a more interesting, interactive, and safe streetscape.

A thriving commercial district is one that attracts people of all ages, races, identities, abilities, and backgrounds. These places thrive for a number of different reasons, but similarly, they all create a critical mass of activity that supports retail and restaurants, fosters healthy social settings, and provides a feeling of safety and security. **Public spaces are often the stage on which these dynamic results can be best realized** (and where urban district management organizations can play a significant role.) These places become authentic anchors, offering a unique sense of place and memorable experiences for visitors

A successful outdoor activation project enhances the permeable edge of the Uptown commercial corridor.

**Goals : [Create Lively Active Streets](#)**

1. Increase the amount of outdoor patio/seating in Uptown
2. Increase landscape features and hardscape designs
3. Activate alleyways and other “third places”
4. Create more outdoor spaces that meet [Universal design](#) standards and increase accessibility.

**Examples Projects**

1. Semi-permanent outdoor dining or vending
2. Parklet
3. Privately-held alley activation for public use
4. Urban Ecology

**Items Eligible for Reimbursement**

1. Design services (plans, layout, renderings, etc.)
2. Permit fees
3. Landscaping (planters, containers, plant material)
4. Lighting
5. Labor (installation)
6. Barricades, platforms, ramps
7. Permanent shade structures
8. Paint preparation related to implementation of the outdoor space activation
9. Signage specific to outdoor space activation
10. Other: The goals of this program are listed above. Implementation of the program is open to creativity and interpretation and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

**Items Eligible to count toward match**

1. All of the items listed above
2. Outdoor furniture
3. Temporary shade structures ie: umbrellas, tents, canopies

**Application & Review Process Formal Application**

To be considered for a grant, applicants must submit the following information to the Uptown Design Committee via email to: [imiller@uptowngr.com](mailto:imiller@uptowngr.com).

Applications will be reviewed monthly on a first come first served basis.

1. Application cover sheet (attached)
2. Detailed written description of the improvements, including materials, intended users, and programming.
3. Project site plan
4. Drawings, sketches, product spec sheets, or mood board to provide a visual

representation of the project. Professional drawings are not required. [Example here.](#)

#### 5. Third party estimates

### Preliminary Review

Applications will be evaluated on two criteria: (1) completeness and (2) adherence to design guidelines. Satisfactory applications will be considered for formal approval. Incomplete applications or projects not meeting the Design Guidelines will be rejected. Denied applicants will be provided with an explanation that details the reasons for denial. If a denied applicant remedies the concerns outlined, the application may be resubmitted.

### Formal Review

Applications passing the preliminary review phase will be awarded grants on a first come, first served basis. The amount of funding will depend upon the number of eligible applications, the quality of the project and the visual impact on the business district. Uptown reserves the right to approve and reject any and all requests. Partial or full funding may be awarded.

### Payments

Uptown will pay the applicant on a reimbursement basis upon submission of original contractor invoices after the work is completed. **Work completed prior to program application approval will not be reimbursed.** Reimbursement will be provided within 45-60 working days after submission of the receipts, Waiver of Lien, and verification of the completed work per site review by Uptown staff.

### Permits & Approvals

Improvements are subject to standard City approvals. Depending on how extensive the work, permits may be required for electrical and structural repairs. Any new signs will require a sign permit. Any changes to properties located in the historic district require review by the Historic District Commission. Any project proposed in the Right-of-Way (sidewalk or street) will require an encroachment permit.



## Uptown Outdoor Space Activation Program Application Form

In order to review a request for assistance under the Uptown Outdoor Space Activation Program, the Design Committee needs information about your project. This information will confirm that your project qualifies for assistance under the program. Please read all instructions carefully and complete all sections of the application. If you need additional room to answer any question, attach additional pages of exhibits.

### Part A: Property Information

#### A1. Property Location & Description

Property Address:

Parcel Number:

#### A2. Outdoor Space Information

Type of Business:

Current use of property:

Proposed use of the property:

Total square footage of activated space:

Is the adjacent business currently occupied?

#### A3. Project Information & Description

Describe in detail what is intended to be done to activate the outdoor space? Please include the intended use/programming as well as user. Attach additional pages as needed.

#### A4. Project Cost

Total estimated project cost: \$

Amount of requested assistance: \$ (Maximum \$10,000)

A5. Required Attachments:

The following items must be attached in order to process this application:

- Existing Condition Photo
- Project site plan
- Drawings, sketches, product spec sheets, or mood board
- Project Budget
- Certificate of Appropriateness (if the building is located in a historic preservation

district).

**Part B: Threshold Criteria**

*If a "No" response is given to any of these questions, it does not qualify for assistance under the Uptown Facade Improvement Program.*

B1. Is this project located within the boundaries of the Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority?  
(See attached map.)

B2. Will the proposed funds be used exclusively for the activation of outdoor space?

B3. Will all applicable City permits be obtained?

**Part C: Point Evaluation System**

C1. What percent of the total project cost does the request represent?

- 15 points 6% - 20%
- 10 points 21% - 40%
- 5 points More than 40%

C3. When completed, how many square feet of outdoor space will be activated?

- 25 points 2,500 SF
- 15 points 1,000 SF
- 10 points 500 SF
- 5 points 100 SF
- 0 points Less than 25 SF

C4. When completed, does the project utilize principles of Universal Design criteria?

- 15 points Yes
- 0 points No

C5. When completed, is the project environmentally responsible?

- 15 points Yes
- 0 points No

C6. Does the project promote and utilize local art/artists?

- 15 points Yes
- 0 points No

C7. Does the project involve the activation of a currently vacant space?

- 10 points Yes
- 0 points No

#### **Part D. Applicant Information**

##### D1. Applicant Information

Identify the person or organization requesting assistance. If an organization is requesting assistance, please indicate the name of the organization exactly as it is registered and indicate the name of the person that should be contacted. If an individual is requesting assistance; please indicate the full name of all persons having an interest in the property.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

City:

Applicant's Telephone:

Daytime:

Evening:

Email:

Organization: If the applicant is not an individual, indicate type of organization:

- Partnership
- Corporation
- Limited Liability Corporation
- Other
- EIN#:

##### D2. Applicant Interest

Identify the applicant's legal interest in the subject property:

- Property owner having title
- Land contract vendee
- Purchaser by option or purchase agreement
- Lessee
- Other:

D3. Request

Applicants must read the following statement and sign the application below.

The undersigned hereby request that the Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority provide assistance to the project described in this application for the express purpose described above. The applicant affirms and acknowledges the following:

That the applicant has legal interest in the property as described in Section D2 of the application.

That the offer of assistance will only be effective only upon execution of the agreement between the applicant and the Uptown CIA.

That the answers and statements contained in this application and in the attachments are in all respects true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Print or Type Applicant Name Date

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Signature

D4. Owner's Signature

If the applicant is not the owner or the property, the property owner must read the following and sign below.

The undersigned hereby affirms and acknowledges that he, she or they are the owner(s) of the property described in the application, are aware of the contents of this application, and hereby authorize the applicant to submit this application and represent the undersigned in the matter being reviewed by the Design Committee and Uptown CID.

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Print or Type Name of Owner Date

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Signature

Owners Address:

Phone Number:

Return completed application with attachments to:

Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority  
PO Box 6632  
Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6632

Phone: 616-920-0383  
Email: imiller@uptowngr.com

### Uptown Corridor Improvement District Boundary Map

