



## **ABOUT THE DDA**

Voters established the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in November 2006 to provide programs and financial incentives to encourage Downtown development. DDA is governed by a board of 11 people appointed by Colorado Springs City Council. Downtown Partnership executes the work of the DDA as a contracted affiliate. In 2016, City Council adopted the Experience Downtown Plan as the updated plan of development for DDA. The DDA is funded in two ways: first, by a 5-mill tax levy within the district to support its operations, and second, through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The latter tax is the capture of increased property tax revenues following a baseline assessment. TIF revenues go into a special fund and as it grows, the funds can be leveraged for support of Downtown projects. The DDA's TIF will expire in 2037. The DDA board meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month.

## **MISION OF THE DDA**

To build public and private investment partnerships that promote the physical and economic growth of Downtown Colorado Springs.

## **PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT**

The Experience Downtown Plan Volume 1 serves as the plan of development for DDA. The plan was created in 2016 as an update to the original Imagine Downtown Plan, which governed the DDA from 2007 through the newest plan's adoption in 2016. The Experience Downtown Plan consists of eight primary goals and 36 aligning action steps. The plan can be found at: [downtowncs.com/dda/](http://downtowncs.com/dda/).

## **DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

The DDA encompasses roughly two square miles of downtown. For a map, click [here](#).

## **ABOUT TREE CANOPY GRANTS**

Trees are an important element of streetscape design that bring a vitality, vibrancy, and sense of well-being to the urban environment. They create a pedestrian friendly experience that:

- Removes pollutants from the air, soil, and water
- Reduces the urban heat island effect
- Provides shade reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy savings, and cooling sidewalks
- Natural filtration and capturing of rainwater supplementing stormwater practices and infrastructure
- Carbon sequestration and improved public and mental health
- Increased property value

The Tree Canopy Grants are designed to supplement or match funds for properties within the DDA that contribute to creating a robust urban tree canopy for all these benefits and more. Current streetscape enhancements throughout Downtown are inconsistent and sparse. The majority of trees downtown are planted in constrictive areas that do not allow the trees to become well-established. The grant enables applicants to either enhance existing or create new planting areas that will support a flourishing tree canopy. These enhancements stimulate economic vitality within the DDA and help to achieve its goals as

identified in the Plan of Development. Grants are provided on a reimbursement basis after project completion.

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- The project work must be completed within the public right-of-way. Information on selecting a tree and the planting permit can be found [here](#).
- The project must enhance or install at least one planting area.
- Planting areas must be at least 5' by 15' with no more than 40% of the surface area covered in pervious bricks following the Amenity Zone Paver Design in the Form Based Code. Rocks are not to be used for surface coverage or infill. Infill should be natural, organic material. To maximize survival rates, proposed tree types and planting methods should be consistent with the City's Approved Street Tree List.
- Applicants must be owners or tenants doing business within the boundary of the DDA.
- Tenants must apply jointly with property owners.
- Properties must demonstrate as current on all city, county and state property and income taxes.
- Work must be launched within six months of the date the grant is awarded and completed within one year.
- Projects with a higher ratio of owner or tenant direct investment will be given greater consideration.
- Grants will not be awarded for work completed prior to the grant application date.
- All work must comply with applicable laws, ordinances, building codes and zoning ordinances.
- Applicants must have a track record of successful operations within the DDA district, or, for new businesses, an articulated business plan.
- Grantees must agree to provide a final report and receipts upon project completion.
- Special consideration will be given to the following:
  - Projects that complete an entire block, are near to other installation projects, or partner with neighboring properties to create a greater impact.
  - Projects that demonstrated eco-friendly practices in the execution of the project such as water conservation through automatic drip irrigation installation.
  - Inclusion of the installation of climate appropriate perennials and shrubs or chipped organic wood base in addition to trees as opposed to hardscape materials.
  - Designs that limit the depth of the surrounding concrete to no more than 12 inches.
  - Designs that incorporate a raised curb to prevent harmful elements accumulating in the planting beds.

### **ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS**

- DDA Tax Increment Finance recipients are not eligible for tree canopy grants. Recipients of the DDA's Building Enhancements grants are eligible.
- Eligible costs could include:
  - Project feasibility costs
  - Design services
  - Construction and material costs (e.g., demolition, concrete, soil, pavement, tree grates, irrigation, plant material, installation)
- Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:
  - Street furniture
  - Appraiser or attorney fees
  - Expenses incurred prior to application date
  - Property acquisition costs or loan fees
  - Building permit fees

**GRANT STRUCTURE**

- Microgrants of up to \$2,000 may be awarded for design services to explore the project and site feasibility.
- Grantees may receive up to \$12,000 per tree bed (for both enhancements and new).

**GRANT PAYMENTS**

- Grantees must sign a Grant Agreement within 30 days of receipt.
- Payments are awarded to recipients as reimbursements to completed and inspected work.
- All work must be in compliance with the aforementioned requirements and original receipts for work performed must be provided in order to receive reimbursement.
- Grant awards are competitive and based on market demand and conditions; grants are capped at amounts based upon number of tree beds created or enhanced.

**TO APPLY**

- Interested applicants are highly encouraged to first call the Downtown Partnership staff to discuss the project, its eligibility and its competitiveness.
- Applications must be received and confirmed by Downtown Partnership staff prior to the start of any work reflected in the grant request in order to receive reimbursement.
- Applications must be received by the third Tuesday of the month. Every attempt will be made to schedule board review of grant requests within eight weeks of submittal.
- Submit one complete copy of the application plus attachments to the Downtown Partnership. Notification on your grant status will be provided within 90 days.

**Downtown Development Authority of Colorado Springs  
Tree Canopy Grant Application**

**Summary sheet**

- Application date
- Business name
- Property address
- Business owner
- Business owner address
- Business owner phone
- Business owner email
- Property owner
- Property owner address
- Property owner phone
- Property owner email
- Is this an existing or new business?
- Is this an expansion/upgrade to existing landscaping or new?
- Is this within the BID's maintenance plan? If not, who will be responsible for the watering and maintenance?
- Project timeline to include start and end dates
- Total project budget
- Amount requested
- Amount requested reflected as a percentage of total costs

**Supplemental application information**

- A narrative of no more than two pages (description of tree bed type, size, and planting as well as watering and maintenance responsibilities).
- Architectural plans, renderings, or illustrations depicting the work to be performed.
- Photos of the existing property.
- A thorough project budget.
- If the applicant is a new business owner, please include a copy of your company's business plan.

**All decisions concerning aspects of the grant application process, including eligibility, are within the sole discretion of the Downtown Development Authority board.**

**Submit grant application and supporting documents electronically to:**

Austin Wilson-Bradley, [Austin@DowntownCS.com](mailto:Austin@DowntownCS.com)

Address questions to Downtown Partnership at 719-886-0088.