



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-1196A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Three applications for funding under the Penny for Pinellas Employment Sites Program.

Recommended Action:

Conditional approval and funding of the three projects presented here following the successful completion of due diligence to comply with program guidelines as determined by the County Administrator.

It is further recommended that the Board delegate authority to the County Administrator to negotiate and execute all agreements and documentation associated with the Employment Sites Program project funding.

A total of four applications were received and evaluated. Based on scoring evaluations and the determination of these projects' readiness to proceed, these three applications are recommended for conditional funding at this time.

- Brooker Creek V, LLC in the amount of \$908,500.00 to assist with construction of a new 130,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Oldsmar.
- CMNY Transitions, LLC in the amount of \$1,723,000.00 to assist with construction of a new 86,350-square-foot manufacturing facility in Pinellas Park.
- Multi-Use SCIF in the amount of \$183,655.00 to fund the acquisition of a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility in unincorporated mid-County.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.1 Proactively attract and retain businesses with targeted jobs to the county and the region

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

The first application cycle for the Employment Sites Program opened on January 11, 2021 and closed on March 11, 2021. Four applications were submitted requesting project funding assistance in a total amount of \$11,555,155.00. Pinellas County Economic Development staff scored each application based on objective evaluation criteria based on the public policy goals. Then County staff from multiple departments reviewed and provided input on all proposed projects. Three projects are recommended for funding. Staff is continuing due diligence on the fourth project. The three recommended projects meet the eligibility criteria and comply with the public policy goals as set forth in the program guidelines.

Background Information:

Penny IV Funds are provided through an extension of the Infrastructure Sales Surtax, a voter-approved 1.0% sales tax that is dedicated to infrastructure improvement projects in Pinellas County. Penny IV was approved by 83% of Pinellas County voters on November 7, 2017. The approved ballot language included “capital projects to support economic development” as permissible uses of funds. On August 1, 2017, prior to the vote on the Penny IV ballot initiative, an Interlocal Agreement between Pinellas County and the 24 municipalities was approved to allocate the proceeds from the 2020-2029 infrastructure surtax. Under the Interlocal Agreement, 8.3% of the net proceeds of the surtax is dedicated to countywide investments in the areas of Economic Development Capital Projects, as authorized in Section 212.055(2)(d)3, Florida Statutes, and “Housing” land acquisition in support of residential housing, as authorized in Section 212.055(2)(d)(1)(e), Florida Statutes.

The Board established a Joint Review Committee (JRC) to develop guidelines for the use of Penny IV Funds for affordable housing and economic development capital projects. The JRC was comprised of City and County representatives and met monthly between March and October of 2019. The County engaged a consultant to assist the JRC by conducting market research to inform policy regarding the deployment of Penny IV Funds. This research indicated that there is strong demand for the development of industrial and office properties within Pinellas County. However, while there is a potential market for future development, attraction and retention of targeted industry employers will likely be limited by various factors including:

- 1) Competition for target industry employers from other markets
- 2) Presence of obsolete buildings that do not meet modern target industry employers’ needs
- 3) Unavailability of sites
- 4) Inadequate infrastructure
- 5) Financial feasibility of new office and industrial development
- 6) Lack of workforce housing

Program guidelines prescribe that the Penny IV funds be used for strategic investment in economic development capital projects to address these identified challenges which prevent or limit desired economic development. These guidelines were approved by the Board on December 10, 2019 and establish minimum criteria and project eligibility requirements. Based on the guidelines, staff developed an application along with evaluation criteria that align with the public policy goals. The guidelines identified three primary categories for funding:

- 1) New construction, expansion, and/or rehabilitation of office and industrial buildings
- 2) Site-readiness
- 3) Public infrastructure

The initial application cycle for the first category of funding focused on the private sector’s ability to complete new and/or substantially improved office and/or industrial spaces to accommodate target industry jobs. All proposals were required to submit an online application that included a financial plan to demonstrate and document a financial gap. Following conditional Board approval, due diligence will be completed to ensure compliance with program guidelines. A summary sheet for each project application is included as an attachment.

Staff recommends the Board approve the following not-to-exceed funding amounts for three project applications and authorize the County Administrator to negotiate and approve the terms and final funding:

\$ 908,500.00 - Brooker Creek V, LLC

\$ 1,723,000.00 - CMNY Transitions, LLC

\$ 183,655.00 - Multi-use Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF)

\$ 2,815,155.00 Total not-to-exceed funding

Fiscal Impact:

Total Not-to-Exceed Expenditure - \$2,815,155.00

Funding to support the recommended applications is budgeted in the County's Capital Improvement Program, funded by the Local Infrastructure Sales Surtax (Penny for Pinellas) in project 004149A Penny IV Economic Development Capital Projects. This funding is from the Penny for Pinellas countywide investment for Economic Development Capital Projects and Housing.

Staff Member Responsible:

Kevin Knutson, Interim Director, Economic Development

Teresa Brydon, Business Development Manager, Economic Development

Partners:

City of Oldsmar

City of Pinellas Park

Attachments:

Project Summary Sheets

Penny IV Affordable Housing and Economic Development Program Guidelines