



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Architectural Services for CorridorLive! Façade Restoration Program

Date Issued: Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Submission Deadline: Monday, October 19, 2026

Community Desk Chicago is actively seeking highly qualified architectural firms with historic preservation and façade restoration experience to serve as the architect of record or as a preservation consultant for properties along the 71st Street Corridor in the South Shore Community.

I. Introduction

Since 2023, [Community Desk Chicago](#) has been working with the [South Shore Community Development Corporation](#) (CDC) to pilot our [CorridorLive!](#) framework. CorridorLive! is a comprehensive strategy to revitalize neighborhood commercial corridors through community input, a development and activation strategy, coordinated capital, and a strong implementation team.

Since the launch and under the leadership of the CDC, the [71st Street Corridor Plan](#) was developed. The City of Chicago also awarded \$3M to the corridor as part of the [Commercial Corridor Storefront Activation Program](#). To date, there are 28 projects in various stages of development along the corridor, with more than \$18.5M in funding committed.

The 71st Street corridor between Stony Island and Yates contains several architecturally attractive buildings that contribute to the character of the South Shore community and preserve the traditional look and feel of Chicago's urban neighborhood business districts. The [CorridorLive! Façade Restoration Program](#) is designed to restore the historical character of the corridor and augment the existing work of the CDC and 5th Ward Alderman Yancy including reactivating vacant and blight buildings.

II. South Shore Community

Located along Chicago's lakefront, approximately 9 miles southeast of the downtown Loop, South Shore is home to an economically diverse population that includes many philanthropists, professionals and business owners. It is known for its culture and talent, with popular destinations including the [South Shore Cultural Center](#), [South Shore Opera Company](#), [Back Alley Jazz](#), [Muntu Dance Theater](#), and the [Jackson Park Golf Club](#).

In recent years, a combination of large-scale developments and smaller resident-led projects are bringing more than \$600 million in investment to the greater South Shore area. Here are some of the highlights:

- Along South Chicago Ave, [Regal Mile Studios](#) will be a 380,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art media campus. Derek Dudley, with ID8 Ventures and producer of Showtime's "[The Chi](#)," is a partner. Derek is also a product of South Shore.
- On 79th and Yates, the newly opened [Thrive Exchange](#) provides new housing, retail and health care to South Shore.
- Along the 71st Street Corridor: A host of resident-led and entrepreneur-led projects are also underway, demonstrating collective action by residents to revitalize their neighborhood. These include: [Bennett Place](#), [Studio Yogi](#), [Slab BBQ](#) expansion, [Nafsi](#), [Galley Culinary Studio](#) and [Inner City Entertainment](#). Additionally, under the leadership of the South Shore Chamber CDC, the South Shore community will be the first neighborhood in Chicago to launch a grassroots [Community Investment Vehicle](#).

Additionally, within a 10-minute drive, the [Obama Presidential Center](#) is a global attraction.

III. Project Overview

The CorridorLive! Façade Restoration Program will provide up to \$250,000 to qualified property owners along 71st Street to support revitalization efforts along the district. Properties considered for the program must be pre-1940's. Funding will be awarded in two rounds with potentially 2-3 projects per round. The first round will be awarded in October 2026. The second round will be awarded in Q2 2027.

Pre-qualified architects will work with the property owners in one of two capacities:

1. *Architect of record* – if the property owner does not have an architect of record for their proposed project, the architect will work with the property owner to develop a scope of work that achieves the objectives of the program which is full restoration of the façade. The scope of work will likely extend beyond the façade to ensure a comprehensive redevelopment project.
2. *Preservation consultant* – if the property owner has an existing architect of record, the architect will serve as a preservation consultant to ensure the design and specifications meet the objectives of the program.

IV. Scope of Services

The selected architectural firm will undertake a comprehensive range of responsibilities to ensure the successful execution of restoration projects. Responsibilities will vary based on the needs of the specific projects. These responsibilities include:

Scope 1: Architect of Record

1. **Preliminary Site Assessments and Feasibility Studies:** Conducting thorough evaluations of the proposed sites to confirm feasibility for restoration. This includes analyzing existing building materials, structural issues, deferred maintenance issues and other considerations to ensure project viability.
2. **Development of Conceptual and Schematic Designs:** Creating design concepts that align with the façade restoration goals and the long-term use.
3. **Preparation of Construction Documents and Specifications:** Producing detailed drawings and specifications necessary for construction, ensuring compliance with industry standards and regulatory requirements. This includes coordinating with engineers and other consultants to integrate all technical aspects.
4. **Cost Estimates and Budget Management Support:** Working with a cost estimator or general contractor, assist with developing accurate development cost projections and assisting in budget planning to ensure the project remains financially feasible. This includes ongoing cost management throughout the project lifecycle to address any financial challenges proactively.
5. **Permit Applications and Regulatory Compliance:** Assisting in navigating the permitting process, ensuring all necessary approvals are obtained from relevant authorities. This includes ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and codes.
6. **Coordination with Stakeholders, Contractors, and Municipal Agencies:** Facilitating effective communication and collaboration among all parties involved in the project. This includes organizing and leading meetings to align project objectives and resolve any issues that arise.
7. **Attending Project Meetings and Providing Progress Reports:** Actively participating in regular project meetings to provide updates on design progress, construction status, and any emerging challenges. This includes preparing and presenting detailed progress reports to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged.

Scope 2: Preservation Consultant

1. **Site Assessment:** Conduct a site visit of the proposed project to confirm the existing conditions and feasibility for a façade restoration.
2. **Plan Review:** Review the proposed façade scope of work to verify that scope will meet the goals of the façade program.
3. **Provide Design and Specification Recommendations:** As necessary, provide design and specification recommendations based on the proposed scope of work to ensure the façade program objectives are met.
4. **Advisory Services:** During design and construction, serve as a consultant to ensure that design and specifications are implemented according to the approved plans.

V. Submission Requirements

Interested firms must provide the following:

1. **Cover Letter:** Provide a concise introduction of your firm, expressing your interest in the project and highlighting key reasons why your firm is best suited for this opportunity.
2. **Company Profile:** Offer a detailed overview of your firm, including its history, size, areas of expertise, and any notable achievements that demonstrate your capabilities.
3. **Relevant Experience:** Present a portfolio of 3-5 projects that reflect restoration of historic buildings including traditional urban one-story commercial properties and existing mixed-use properties. For each project, include:
 - a. Completion Date
 - b. Project Name and Location
 - c. Total Budget
 - d. Graphic Description (illustrations or diagrams)
 - e. Photographs showcasing key aspects
 - f. Total Square Footage, including:
 - i. Additions
 - ii. Renovations
 - g. Construction Cost per Square Foot
4. **Team Qualifications:** Detail the qualifications of the potential team assigned to this project, including resumes of key personnel and their respective roles, skills, and experiences relevant to this scope of work.
5. **Approach and Methodology:** Outline your proposed approach to executing the scope of services, detailing each phase of the project lifecycle and your strategies for effective implementation.
6. **Fee Structure:** Provide a transparent overview of your pricing strategy and fee schedule for both potential scopes of work, including any variable factors that could influence costs based on the following project types and total construction costs:
 - Projects less than \$500K
 - Projects between \$500K - \$2M
 - Projects between \$2M-\$5M
7. **Certifications and Licenses:** Include proof of all necessary professional certifications and licenses required to undertake this project.
8. **Legal Proceedings:** Disclose any ongoing or pending legal proceedings (e.g., arbitration, complaint, or court action) filed by an owner or contractor against your firm within the past five years.

9. Project Approach:

- a. Describe your firm's management approach for projects of this nature, emphasizing the benefits each step provides to the owner.
- b. Highlight any unique techniques or innovations your firm employs in project design that differentiate you from competitors.

10. References: Provide contact information for at least three (3) references who can attest to your firm's performance on similar projects.

11. Unique Qualifications: Articulate the distinctive attributes and strengths of your firm, explaining why you should be selected for this project over other candidates

VI. Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be rigorously evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Proven Experience and Track Record:** The firm's history and success in managing and delivering projects of similar size, scope, and complexity. Emphasis will be placed on projects that underscore the firm's ability to handle restoration and historic preservation projects effectively.
- **Qualifications and Expertise of the Project Team:** The credentials, expertise, and experience of the personnel assigned to the project. Particular attention will be given to the team's ability to collaborate effectively, solve complex problems, and innovate.
- **Understanding of Project Scope and Objectives:** The firm's comprehension of the project's goals, challenges, and opportunities. This includes the ability to articulate a clear vision for successful project completion and to align strategies with client objectives.
- **Quality and Creativity in Previous Work:** The originality, innovation, and excellence demonstrated in past projects. The evaluation will focus on the firm's ability to deliver not only functional but also aesthetically compelling solutions.
- **Fee Structure and Cost-Effectiveness:** The transparency and competitiveness of the proposed pricing model. Consideration will be given to how well the fee structure supports value for money and aligns with budgetary constraints.
- **Client References and Feedback:** Insights and testimonials from previous clients regarding the firm's performance, reliability, and ability to meet or exceed expectations.
- **Commitment to Sustainability and Innovation:** The firm's dedication to sustainable practices and its ability to incorporate cutting-edge technologies and methodologies that benefit the environment and enhance project outcomes.

VII. Selection and Awards

Qualifications Due	October 19, 2026, 5pm CT
Architect Notification of Pre-Qualifications	October 23, 2026
Architect Paired with Projects	No later than October 30, 2026
Preliminary Façade Rendering Due	No later than November 13, 2026

VIII. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically to Ja’Net Defell, Community Desk Chicago by email at jdefell@communitydeskchicago.org. Submissions should be clearly labeled “RFQ Architectural Services – CorridorLive! Façade Restoration Program in the email subject line.

IX. Contact Information

For questions or further information please contact Ja’Net Defell, Community Desk Chicago at jdefell@communitydeskchicago.org.