



Façade Improvement Grant Program

Guidelines & Application

Community & Economic Development Department
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A. Introduction

The City of Marshall has established the Façade Improvement Grant Program, which will provide technical and financial assistance to property owners seeking to renovate or restore their exterior signage, lighting or commercial building facades. This program is designed to impact properties in need of revitalization, resulting in the improved exterior, visibility and presentation of a business in our Central Business District. The program is not designed to subsidize corrections to building code violations that prolong the life of a commercial property.

The Façade Improvement Grant Program will provide a fifty percent (50%) matching grant not exceeding \$2,500.00 for the funding of well-designed improvements which will coordinate all the important features of the storefront into a more attractive image while creating, if necessary, an accessible entrance for the public. This may include the restoration of architectural details, better windows and doors, and well-proportioned signage and lighting. Applicants will be responsible for hiring licensed professionals to refine their conceptual design depending on the scope of work.

B. Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to the terms used in this Policy:

Applicant: The property owner signing the application for a Façade Improvement Grant.

Central Business District: Area located north of E. Travis Street, east of Grove Street, south of U.S Hwy 80 (East Grand Avenue) and west of S. Alamo Boulevard.

Construction Costs: The cost of construction materials and installation labor. All other associated costs are deemed excluded, including but not exclusively, the following costs: design, construction document preparation, bidding, sweat equity and construction financing.

Eligible Enhancements: The improvements identified as eligible in Section C herein.

Façade: The portion of the building parallel to the primary right-of-way as determined by the City.

MDDC: Marshall Downtown Development Corporation.

Notice to Proceed: A written notice from City staff authorizing the applicant to begin construction as approved by the City Commission.

Property: The physical lot and/or building to which improvements are being made.

C. Eligibility Criteria

The following criteria must be met for participation in the Façade Improvement Grant Program:

1. Applicants must be commercial property owners located within the Central Business District;
2. Applicants must be up to date on all municipal taxes prior to participation in the program;
3. Applicants must not have any City liens filed against any property owned by the Applicant; including but not limited to code enforcement liens or tax liens.
4. Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements;
5. Understanding that the overall objective of the program is the improve exterior, visibility and presentation of a property; the City has the discretion to decline an application while suggesting enhancements that would enable future acceptance.

D. Design Principles and Guidelines

Improvements to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as meeting City standards with regards to latest construction and design trends. Buildings with historical significant architectural qualities are strongly encouraged to restore and maintain these features. Improvements for buildings not having such architectural features should be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes. The U.S. Secretary of Interior Design Guidelines should be used as a guide when reviewing any work on a historically significant structure.

1. Eligible Façade Improvements:
 - a. Restoration of details in a historically contributing or significant buildings, and removal of elements which cover architectural details;
 - b. Window replacement and window framing visible from street which is appropriately scaled to the building;
 - c. New City-approved signage, including monument signage, wall and awning signage. All signage must comply with the City Sign ordinance;
 - d. Lighting which is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade;
 - e. Awnings or canopies which can be both functional and visually appealing;
 - f. Curbing, irrigation, approved landscaping or other landscaping features attached to the building where appropriate;
 - g. Cleaning, painting or residing of the building;
 - h. Resurfacing and/or restriping of parking lots visible from the street;
 - i. New storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building;
 - j. Other items which may not be listed above but would improve the front façade of the building.

2. Ineligible Improvements/Expenses:
 - a. Exterior improvements located on the sides or rear of the building not visible from a public right-of-way;
 - b. Interior improvements;
 - c. Playground or recreational equipment;
 - d. Structural changes;
 - e. Burglar bars;
 - f. Security Alarm System;
 - g. “Sweat Equity”;
 - h. New construction;
 - i. Furniture;
 - j. Architectural or other professional fees;
 - k. Asbestos testing, removal, abatement, or remediation; or
 - l. Improvements for which insurance funds are received.

3. Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements made prior to receiving a “Notice to Proceed” are not eligible for reimbursement.

E. Program Assistance

Financial Assistance

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the City reimburses the applicant fifty percent (50%) of the total construction costs, up to \$2,500.00 maximum match for façade improvements. Architectural design fees may not be included in the total cost of eligible improvements. In addition, the City agrees to waive building permits fees on an approved project under this program.

Applicant’s match may be in the form of other financial aid (grant or loan) received from other agencies and/or banks, but may not be “in-kind”. The City will only provide reimbursement after the Applicant supplies all documentation showing payment has been made for the work done.

F. Procedures

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below:

1. Applicant meets with the Director of Community & Economic Development for initial project discussion and submits application.
2. Applicant’s design team submits proposed drawings to City staff for review.
3. Proposed project is presented to the Marshall Downtown Development Corporation for review and recommendation is forwarded to the City Commission for final approval.
4. Staff sends applicant “Notice to Proceed” and fully executed Façade Improvement Grant Agreement. Any work completed prior to receiving the “Notice to Proceed” will not be reimbursed.

5. Applicant has 90 days from the date of the Notice to Proceed to being implementation of approved improvements. Applicant must provide City staff with copies of all building permits and certifications received from the improvement project.
6. Contractor constructs project improvements as specified in the final design. Any changes to the approved plan must be approved by City staff.
7. Applicant notifies City staff project is complete; City staff conducts necessary inspections to ensure improvements comply with final drawings and all necessary building and zoning codes.
8. Applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices to City staff, who then submits for reimbursement check.
9. In the event the Applicant is denied, the Applicant will not be allowed to reapply to the program for 90 days from the original application date.

G. Termination

The City has the right to terminate any agreement under the grant program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines in accordance with the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement.

