Façade Improvement Grant Program

Program Description:

Proposed projects within the CRA area are eligible to receive a one-to-one dollar match for structural improvements made to the exterior façade of the building. The CRA Board annually will allocate a portion of the Tax Increment Financing fund for the program not to exceed $100,000 by the year 2024, with annual appropriations made during the budget process. The CRA Board allocated $20,000 for Fiscal Year 20/21. The maximum eligible amount for each project is fifty percent of the total eligible costs, not to exceed $5,000.

Program Intent:

The intent of the program is to further the 2014 CRA Plan and to achieve the following objectives:

- Eliminate blight by assisting property and business owners in the redevelopment of existing buildings within the CRA area
- Improve property values by creating an aesthetically attractive downtown area that is a pleasant experience for shoppers, merchants and visitors
- Stimulate private investment

Project Eligibility:

- Private property owners or tenants (if the property owner is not the applicant) of commercial buildings that are open to the public located within the CRA, including national corporations and tax-exempt buildings. Residential dwellings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are also eligible.
- Exterior renovations including but not limited to,
stucco, architectural details, replacing windows, door trims, porches, storefronts, façade renovations, painting associated with renovations, awnings. May also include expansion of existing buildings and energy exterior retrofitting (solar panels, siding, roofing).

- The following improvements are eligible only if they are part of a qualified building improvement and limited to 25% of the total improvement costs:
  - Decorative external light fixtures attached to the building or freestanding
  - Upgraded site signage when nonconforming signage is removed
  - Landscaping and irrigation when considered integral to the façade treatment of the building
  - Screening including the screening of trash receptacles, air conditioning, utility equipment or other objects with landscaping or fencing materials that compliment the building
  - Permanent site furnishings that provide a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, such as benches, trash cans, bike racks, etc.
  - Site improvements that improve the pedestrian and transportation functionality of the property
  - Site improvements necessary for fire safety and/or ADA accessibility compliance
  - Sewer line installation and connection to available City utility service when an existing drain field is abandoned

The following improvements are not eligible:

- Improvements made prior to grant approval
- Site improvements with no building improvements
- Any improvements on vacant land
- Work performed that is not consistent with the approval of the CRA Board
- Interior renovations
• Improvements that are maintenance oriented, which should be done for the upkeep of the building such as painting and reroofing with the same material
• Payments for the applicant’s own labor or other in-kind costs
• Permit and recording fees
• Design assistance costs- the cost for preparing site plan or building permit drawings for the necessary approvals of the project

**Review Criteria:**

Grant funding may be awarded based upon factors including:

1. Location within high traffic, high visibility area and/or improves view shed from a thoroughfare
2. Improvement to the overall appearance of the site
3. Quality of design
4. Contribution to historic renovation or restoration
5. Will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment
6. Incorporation of sustainable materials and/or methods
7. Business/property owner tenure in the City
8. Degree to which the project upgrades or eliminates substandard structures
9. High funding ratio of total renovation costs and leveraging other assets
10. Other as determined by the CRA Board

**Process and Procedure:**

Property owners may submit a grant application to the Development Services Department (DSD) at any time during the year. The DSD will review all applications, request additional information if necessary, and draft a report for CRA Board ranking. The CRA Board meets quarterly and will consider any complete application made within 14 days of the meeting date.

The CRA Board may approve the grant application as submitted,
approve the grant with conditions, approve a portion of the grant request, or deny funding based on the eligibility criteria noted herein. Upon approval, a grant agreement between the City and the applicant will be executed. The agreement will contain a budget of the improvements to be performed and authorizes the owner to apply for building permits and/or site plan approval.

The applicant has 180 days to complete the project, unless a longer time is negotiated in the grant agreement. Applicants shall incur all project costs and may receive reimbursement only after all improvements have been completed in accordance with the program. The City will issue a Certificate of Completion or a Certificate of Occupancy upon receipt of evidence that the work has been completed in a lien-free manner.

Requests for reimbursement of project costs shall be reviewed as a single, complete package. The package shall include a notarized contractor statement depicting actual cost of project, proof of payment and final lien waivers from contractors and subcontractors. If all work is determined to be complete and in conformity with the grant agreement, Land Development Code, and Florida Building Code, the applicant will receive a check within 30 days of receipt of documents.

Application Submittal Requirements:

- Proof of ownership or a notarized authorization of ownership
- A written summary of the scope of work to be performed. This summary should include all proposed work, regardless of eligible items
- Two bids for the work
- Color photo documentation of existing conditions in digital format
- Architectural rendering or sketch detailing the scope of work
- Color and material samples to be used
- Detailed worksheet itemizing the project costs of the total renovation, regardless of eligible items
- Site plan and survey

DOWNLOAD PROGRAM SUMMARY and CRA BOUNDARY MAP

DOWNLOAD APPLICATION