

City of Newberry's Downtown Façade Improvement Plan 2017

Intro: People and businesses bring life to any location, but downtown areas in particular are defined and shaped by the quality and vibrancy of buildings. The City of Newberry's Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program enlivens the built environment in the downtown core by significantly improving the appearance of buildings, adding value for downtown property owners and visitors.

Purpose: Recognizing the fact that the appearance of a downtown is largely determined by the condition of its buildings, which also forms the basis of the public's overall impression of downtown, the City of Newberry has developed the Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program. The objective of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to dramatically improve the facades of downtown buildings so that after completion of work, citizens will notice a marked improvement in the appearance of the buildings and the physical environment of downtown. The purpose of the program is to provide an economic incentive to:

- 1) promote storefront rehabilitation in Newberry's Historic Downtown area;
- 2) preserve the unique character of downtown's historic buildings;
- 3) encourage aesthetic compatibility for improvements to facades of non-historic structures;
- 4) encourage the use of quality materials in the rehabilitation of downtown properties;

Façade improvements should be those that are permanent and part of the building.

Funds will be made available periodically on a first-come-first-serve basis

- Eligibility:
- 1) Owner or tenant of a business/commercial building located within one of the two Downtown historic district boundaries. (Main Street or Newberry Historic District)
 - 2) Owners or tenants may request the incentive grant; however, any tenant must have the owner's written permission attached to the application.
 - 3) If a property owner owns more than one building or facade in downtown, he or she will be eligible for only one grant per year as funds are limited.
 - 4) No more than one grant per location per year will be available. (*see "Additional or Future Grants"*)
 - 5) The property shall be classified as business/commercial.
 - 6) There must be no delinquent bills, business license, charges or taxes due to the City

Grant Guidelines:

- 1) Must meet all City of Newberry Architectural Review Board's guidelines and requirements.
- 2) Rehabilitation work must conform to the City of Newberry's Building Codes.
- 3) Rehabilitation of structures in the downtown district should respect the architectural integrity of the entire building and retain those elements that enhance the building.
- 4) Façade grant applications may be made for structures within the defined boundaries, with priority given to renovation projects that visibly improve downtown facades, including buildings with inappropriately applied facades that cover windows, or that are unsightly, out-of-scale, or in need of general repair work.
- 5) All properties classified as business/commercial within one of the two Downtown historic district boundaries. (Main Street or Newberry Historic District) may apply for grant funds.
- 6) Improvements may include, but are not limited to:
 - Façade improvements
 - Brick or wall surface cleaning
 - Patching and painting of facade walls
 - *Signage or exterior lighting replacement/repair
 - Structure or frame that contains or holds a sign
 - Canopy, porch, awning installation/repair
 - Window and/or door replacement/repair
 - Mortar joint repair
 - Railings, ironwork repair or addition
 - Cornice repair and/or replacement

*Only established businesses (3+ years) are eligible for sign replacement

Removal of inappropriate additions to buildings and non-compliant signs may qualify based on the effect the removal will have on the appearance of downtown.

Ineligible improvements include but are not limited to: building maintenance including paint to match existing conditions and deferred general repairs; parking lot improvements; interior or roof improvements; removal of architecturally significant building features; purchase property, inventory or operating capital; any activity completed prior to receiving grant funds.

7) Any improvements that have been made through the façade improvement grant program and which become a part of the property may not be removed from the property unless they can be used (without significant alterations) on another property within downtown (e.g., awnings).

- Design Guidelines:
- 1) Improvements should contribute to the pedestrian environment by enhancing the aesthetic impact of the faced by adding visual interest to the streetscape.
 - 2) Improvements should provide a year round impact
 - 3) Improvements should be completed in ways that are compatible with the original design of the structure.
 - 4) Improvements should not shield from public view nor cause the removal of architecturally significant features
 - 5) Improvements should contribute to the building's character
 - 6) Improvements should encourage other restoration or redevelopment within the downtown area.

Additional or Future Grants (Previous grant holders only)

- 1) A property may be eligible for an additional grant if:
 - a) At least three (3) years have elapsed since the last grant was awarded and the property is in need of further improvement (e.g., repaint, new awning); under extenuating circumstances an additional grant may be awarded prior to three years from the last grant, if deemed necessary by the City of Newberry's Architectural Review Board.
 - b) The existing business/property undergoes significant expansion which requires improvement to the property.

- Criteria:
- 1) For the purposes of the façade improvement grant program, a façade is defined as an individual storefront, rear, or side of a building that faces a public street or alleyway or which is otherwise visible to the general public.
 - 2) Qualifying projects are eligible for a grant match of 90% on projects up to \$10,000 per façade (or \$9,000 on a \$10,000 project): 90% (City of Newberry) / 10% (Applicant) matching basis as funds are available.
 - 3) Projects proposals are not capped at \$10,000. Applicants are encouraged to strongly leverage their grant funds to get the most from their investment.

4) **Any** work done before a grant application is approved is **not** eligible.

5) Work on the project must be completed within six (6) months after the date that the grant is awarded. The grant match will be reimbursed to the grant recipient after the work is completed and all bills relating to said work are paid in full.

6) The property owner must agree to maintain the facade improvement as set forth in the application for a period of three (3) years or until the property is sold. *(Example: if an awning is installed as part of a project and then rips within a three-year period, it must be repaired or replaced by the owner.)*

Application Process: 1) Applicant will complete application and return to the City of Newberry's Administrative services office along with proposed improvement plan. **APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 31st, 2017**

2) Two qualified and professional estimates of cost are to be included with the application.

3) Applications will be reviewed and signed by the City's Building Official for building code compliance.

4) Applications will be presented and reviewed by the City's Architectural Review Board (ARB). Applicant must be present at review.

5) An agreement must be signed **BEFORE** any work begins. Parties to the agreement will be the applicant(s), building owner(s), ARB and the City of Newberry.

6) A copy of the fully executed and approved application will be made available to the grant recipient upon request.

7) Upon project completion, copies of fully paid statements must be submitted to the City of Newberry's Planning and Development offices to claim grant reimbursement.

8) The City's Building Official will then inspect work completed and request checks be issued for the amount approved in grant application. Provided all work is accomplished in accordance with the agreement.

2017 Grant Timeline: Applications Accepted Starting: July 3rd, 2017

Application Deadline: October 31st, 2017

ARB Application Approval by: November 16th, 2017

Project Completion On or Before: May 31st, 2017