

East Lansing Downtown Development Authority

Facade Improvement Program

Guidelines and Application



Program Guidelines

East Lansing Downtown Development Authority

Facade Improvement Program

Awards and Funding

The Facade Improvement Program may provide grant funds for improvements to the facades of commercial buildings. Grants require a cash match on behalf of the applicant for all eligible expenses. Please see the table below “Eligible Expenditures”. Funding is provided on a competitive basis. Total funds available for the project are \$15,000 and have been established through funds from the Downtown Development Authority. FINAL determination of eligibility/award will be made by the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority.

Program Objectives

To provide a tool to assist property owners and tenants in improving the appearance of buildings throughout the downtown.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the program, the property must be located within Downtown Development Authority boundaries (see the attached map). The property must contain an active commercial business, or be undergoing renovations for the opening of a business within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date of grant approval. Businesses leasing space can apply with written permission from the property owner. All applicants and properties must be in good standing with respect to all local, State, and Federal taxes. Building owner and tenant must be current on all City of East Lansing obligations.

Whenever possible, upgrades to the rear façade (facing the alley) and green building treatments are highly encouraged. Storefront improvements require compliance with barrier free design requirements. The DDA will give preference to projects that incorporate elements of the **Design Guidelines**.

If performed by a licensed contractor, material and labor costs can be considered eligible expenses. Property or business owners cannot charge labor for their own time, or their employees' time. However, "do-it-yourself" expenditures on materials are eligible.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Item	Detail	Match
Transformational Restoration Improvements	Substantial transformations including but not limited to removal of non-contributing false facades, restoration of doors, windows, building features, relocation and installation of new window and doors in new locations, installation of exterior lighting and landscaping if included under this category. In order to qualify as a Transformational Restoration Improvement, the building must undergo significant alterations/rehabilitation that substantially changes the façade of the building, as determined by the Downtown Development Authority. The Committee would consider phased, multi-year projects.	50% match up to \$10,000
Signs and Awnings	Repair and replacement of awnings and signs for existing businesses. <i>This does not cover new signs and awnings used for signs for new businesses.</i>	25% match up to \$1,000
Maintenance	Masonry repairs or cleaning, cornice repair, exterior painting and stucco, repair/replacement of gutters and down spouts, window and door repair or replacement, building exterior cleaning, and exterior painting, landscape	25% match up to \$2,500

Application & Review Process

Formal Application – To be considered for a grant, applicants must submit the following information to the Dept. of Planning, Building and Development office **no later than May 16, 2022**. **COMPLETED Applications will be reviewed monthly on a first come first served basis.**

1. Application cover sheet (attached).
2. DETAILED written description of the improvements, including materials to be used.
3. Contractor(s) estimates.
4. Graphic rendering of proposed changes.

Preliminary Review – A preliminary review of applications will take place. Applications will be evaluated on two criterias: (1) completeness and (2) adherence to design guidelines. Satisfactory applications will be considered for formal approval. Incomplete applications or projects not meeting the Design Guidelines will be rejected.

Denied applicants will be provided an explanation that details the reasons for denial. If a denied applicant remedies the concerns outlined, the application may be resubmitted, during the next period of grant applications being accepted.

Formal Review – Applications passing the preliminary review phase will be awarded grants on a first come first served basis. The amount of funding will depend upon the Eligible Expenditures Category the application was approved under, the number of eligible applications, the quality of the project, and the visual impact on the business district. The DDA reserves the right to approve and reject any and all requests. Partial or full funding may be awarded. Phased funding may be available based on available funds and priority to first-time applicants.

Design Assistance – Applicants may receive up to \$1,000 in grant funds for design assistance, under the Transformational Restoration Improvements category. Design funds can be used to hire an architect to provide design consultation. Design funds do not require a cash match. However, reimbursement is limited to 50%, or \$500, if the project is not completed. If you seek design assistance, contact Heather Pope at hpope@cityofeastlansing.com or (517) 319-6877 PRIOR to completing the application.

Permits & Approvals

Improvements are subject to standard City approvals. Depending on how extensive the work, permits may be required for electrical and structural repairs. Any new signs will require a sign permit. Any changes to properties located in the historic district (see the attached map) require review by the Historic District Commission. Questions regarding City permits can be directed to Planning, Building and Development at (517) 319-6871.

Timeline

Improvements to be made under this program must be initiated (secured all necessary permits) within 90 days of receiving approval from the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority, and completed within one year of the date of the application funding approval.

Payments

Awardees must submit original contractor invoices after all the work is completed. Documentation of all payments made directly to contractors/vendors, by Awardees, must be submitted. The DDA will pay the contractors and/or vendors directly. Work completed prior to approval will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement will be provided within 7-10 working days after submission of the receipts, Waiver of Lien, and verification of the completed work.

Application East Lansing DDA Facade Improvement Program

Instructions: Please print neatly or type. Only completed applications with required attachments will be accepted. Applications should be sent to the East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Rd., Room. 217, East Lansing, MI 48823. Any questions regarding the application or guidelines should be directed to Heather Pope at 517-319-6877 or hpope@cityofeastlansing.com.

Contact Information

Property Address: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Applicant Address: _____

Applicant Phone #: _____ Applicant Email : _____

If applicant is a lessee and not the property owner, please fill out the following information:

Property Owner's Name: _____

Property Owner's Address: _____

Property Owner's Phone #: _____ Property Owner's Fax #: _____

Category

- Maintenance
- Signs and Awnings
- Transformational Restoration Improvements

Project Summary

Applicant Contribution	\$
Grant Request	\$
Total Project Cost	\$

Contractor Name _____

- Check box if you requested design assistance funds.

Design assistance contractor _____

Required Attachments

- Detailed description of project and materials
- Contractor bids/cost estimates
- Graphic rendering of proposed improvements
- Letter of approval from property owner (Lessee Applicants Only)

Signature of Applicant

Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Application Received: _____

Approved Date: _____

Denied Date: _____

Design Guidelines

East Lansing Downtown Facade Improvement Program

Below is a listing of key design principles for successful façade improvement projects. In making grant determinations, the Downtown Development Authority will give preference to projects that incorporate these elements into building improvements.

Key Design Principles:

1. All improvements must be compatible with applicable zoning codes, satisfy permit requirements, and conform to any other regulatory restrictions.
2. Individual storefronts should be clearly defined by architectural elements, such as pillars, piers, or separations of glass. These elements, if not already clearly defined on the building, should be incorporated into Transformational Restoration Improvement projects.
3. Emphasize the character of the building with a unified treatment of the storefront (and upper floors, as appropriate) and the upper façade.
4. Alterations over time that have acquired significance, e.g., art deco facades, should be preserved.
5. If a building has historic or aesthetic merit, improvements should be designed to reveal the building's original style, form, and materials, whenever possible.
6. Entrance character should be enhanced to become a strong element of the front and rear facades.
7. Recessed entryways and/or alcoves shall be maintained for existing street level storefronts.
8. The use of high quality, traditional materials such as brick, wood, concrete and tile is encouraged.
9. Colors of all exterior materials should be coordinated.
10. Painting of brick is only allowed if the brick was previously painted. This excludes cement block.
11. All glass and window areas shall be clear, not tinted or otherwise visually obstructed, e.g. film coating.
12. Building lighting should be provided with directional and recessed lighting.
13. Storefront improvements will require compliance with barrier free design requirements.

SIGNAGE – EXISTING BUSINESSES ONLY

1. Every sign should be of high quality and be consistent with the architecture of the building.
2. Signs should be in proportion to the size of the storefront and building as a whole.
3. The design and placement of signage should be improved to reduce the visual blight, clutter and excessive advertising.
4. Flat wall signs installed above storefronts should form a clearly articulated sign band and be integrated into the overall facade design.
5. If other block style signs are present on adjoining buildings, placement of the sign should attempt to be at a similar height to create continuity and cohesion.
6. Window signage should not cover more than 40% of the total window area.
7. Typefaces should remain simple and legible.
8. Lighting, if required, should be provided by directional or recessed lighting.
9. In general, the number of signs per storefront should be kept to a minimum. Limit signage to the number necessary to effectively communicate the business message.
10. Neon is acceptable if done in an appropriate scale.

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

1. Awnings should respect the overall facade organization of a building. Awnings should be located within the building elements which frame storefronts.
2. The scale of the awning, i.e., height, length, depth and overall bulk shall be compatible with the building storefront.

3. The color of awnings should be compatible with the building facade.
4. Awnings shall be of a solid through color, i.e., the underside of the awning is the same color as the exposed face.
5. Important architectural details should not be concealed by awnings, canopies or marquees.
6. Awnings should only be lighted with directional or recessed lighting.
7. Signage and graphics applied to awnings shall be of an appropriate color, scale, and overall design compatibility.
8. Awnings shall overhang the sidewalk at a distance consistent to awnings of adjacent properties.

GREEN IMPROVEMENTS

1. LED lights should be used at doorways, whenever possible.
2. Energy Star-qualified windows and doors are recommended.
3. Whenever possible, low-VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) products such as adhesives, paints, woods (LEED certified) should be used in façade renovation.

PROHIBITED IMPROVEMENTS OR ELEMENTS

1. Repair or application of aluminum or similar slipcovers that cover the original facade.
2. Removal of original, decorative elements such as cornice ornamentation.
3. Concealing and/or covering of original windows and bays. Exceptions for side, rear doors and windows will be considered.
4. Mirrored glass.
5. Permanent window and door security bars, including sliding gates or roll-down panel systems.
6. Awnings shall not be made of shiny, high-gloss, and translucent materials such as vinyl or plastic.
7. Awnings shall not cover distinctive architectural features of the building, nor shall installation of the awning damage the structure.
8. No backlit awnings or signs.
9. No flashing and moving signs.
10. No temporary signs, including banners.

Approved: March 22, 2018

Revised: July 22, 2021