

## **City of West Fargo**

### **Façade Improvement Program**

#### **Program Purpose and Benefits**

The City of West Fargo (city) façade improvement program provides the use of public funds to leverage private investment for exterior façade improvements to properties located within the city's Sheyenne St./Main Ave overall corridor. The program applies to all commercial property within the designated area whose property is along Sheyenne St. or Main Ave. The program is intended to encourage owners and business tenants of existing properties to restore or renovate their buildings, so as to improve the area's physical characteristics and enhance the aesthetics of the commercial environment.

#### **Program Goals**

- Beautify the area by improving exterior building facades
- Enhance commercial growth
- Encourage redevelopment and reinvestment
- Increase community pride in the adjacent neighborhoods
- Add significant physical improvements to the aesthetics of the property
- Create a unique and distinct place
- Coordinate implementation efforts

#### **Project Eligibility**

The program is offered through and administered by the City of West Fargo Economic Development office. Interested parties may apply for a zero percent (0%) loan/grant, not to exceed \$20,000 for up to 50% of their investment. Additional Renaissance Zone incentives maybe applicable if other capital/structural improvements are made to the property. Eligibility requirements include:

- Property may not have any outstanding code violations
- Payment of all taxes and/or assessments must be current
- Property must be zoned commercial and operate as such
- Applicant must make a financial commitment to the project
- Projects must focus on the exterior façade of the building and be a visual improvement
- Improvements must comply with all City zoning and building code requirements and Sheyenne St./Main Ave recommendations.

This incentive maybe used in conjunction with a Renaissance Zone incentive.

#### **Eligible Improvements**

The following list contains eligible improvements which may be included under this program for grant assistance:

- **Doors:** installation, repair and/or replacement of exit doors and hardware to provide public access or where current doors don't meet building or fire codes or it will improve the appearance of the building.
- **Painting:** Painting of the exterior of the building
- **Fencing:** Decorative fencing for pedestrian plazas or courtyards
- **Fascia/Gutters/Downspouts:** Replacement or repair of these items
- **Shutters/Awnings/Canopies:** Repair or replacement of these items
- **Signs:** New, repair, replace or removal of exterior signs
- **Stairs, porches, railings:** Repairs or replacement of these items
- **Walls:** Repair or rebuilding of exterior walls including sealing, cleaning, painting
- **Windows:** Repair of frames, sills, replacement of glass and installation of new windows
- **Roofs:** Repair and/or re-roofing where the effects of the repair will be visible from a public street
- **Walkways:** Restoration or replacement of deteriorated or hazardous sidewalks, pavers, plazas or other permanent improvements designed for pedestrian use
- **Lighting:** Repair, replacement or installation of exterior building and sign lighting
- **Landscaping:** Limited to perennial plantings such as trees and shrubs; construction of planters or window boxes permanently affixed to the building is included
- **Removal of materials:** Removal of any inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes and materials
- **Aluminum or vinyl siding:** repair or replacement of these items

All improvements must be permanently affixed to the building. Architectural costs incurred in the projects design are eligible for assistance not to exceed \$1,000.

**The following lists contains costs NOT eligible for assistance**

- Building permits and fees
- Title reports and fees
- Extermination of insects, rodents or other pests
- Private sidewalk replacement or repair
- Acquisition of land or buildings
- Refinancing of existing debt
- Air conditioning or heating facilities
- Plumbing
- Sprinkler systems-indoor or outdoor
- Building security systems
- Interior floor, wall or ceiling repair
- Working capital
- General repair/maintenance work not contributing to the overall exterior impact of the building

Improvements not listed as eligible or ineligible are subject to review by the city, EDAC and city commission.

## **Funding**

A project will be funded by a 50/50 split between the applicant and City for the total project costs. The city's share assistance may not exceed 50% of the total project costs up to a maximum of \$20,000 for each qualifying project, whichever is less. The interest rate will be 0% and amortized over ten years. If a recipient makes payments consistently and stays in business for a minimum of five years, the remaining loan balance will be written off up to a maximum of \$10,000. Projects with a total cost of less than \$2,000 will not be considered.

## **Process**

Interested applicants should submit an application to the economic development office. City staff will review the project to ensure program compliance. If the project complies, it will be sent to the EDAC for review and recommendation. The applicant is encouraged to attend the EDAC meeting where the project will be reviewed and considered by the committee. City staff will notify applicant as to the progress, time and date of the EDAC meeting. If the project is approved by the EDAC it will be sent to the city commission for review and recommendation. If denied at any level, city staff will notify the applicant as to the reasoning and give the applicant the opportunity to amend their application for reconsideration and further review.

Application items to be included are as follows:

- Completed application form
- Property address and/or complete legal description
- Proof of ownership
- Site plan with elevations
- Photos, drawings, site plans
- Bids and cost estimates
- Landscaping plan, signage plan

## **Project Award**

Following the review and approval by the city commission, the applicant will receive a letter of commitment from the city stating the reimbursement grant amount, terms of the improvements, conditions for construction and any other provisions related to the project. This letter must be signed and executed by the applicant within 15 days of notification. The applicant then can obtain the necessary building permits and must do so within 30 days. Applicant should NOT start improvements prior to receiving notification of approval. Any work performed or materials purchased prior to final approval by the city commission will NOT be eligible for grant assistance.

Construction must be completed within 180 days or as otherwise approved by the city commission. Modifications to the approved final plans which produce visible differences in the approved application and design will require review and approval of city staff. Failure to do so will invalidate the project and result in the project being terminated and NOT eligible for grant assistance.

Once construction is complete, the applicant will notify city staff and schedule a final walk-through. Discrepancies between the approved plan and actual construction will be noted in writing and a time frame for correction will be determined.

Façade grant assistance is limited to one project per fiscal year for each property. Applications cannot be submitted for properties which received façade assistance within the prior two years. Grants are limited to Façade Improvement Program funding allocations by the city for any given fiscal year and will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. The city, in its sole and exclusive discretion, reserves the right to cancel the program at any time, prior to grant approval, without notice, if sufficient funds for the program are not unavailable.

### **Payment**

Payments are due the first of each month. If a payment is more than 30 days late applicant will be charged 5% of the amount of payment or \$500 whichever is less. Applicant will pay the late charge promptly, but only once for each late payment. Applicant may prepay this note in full without any prepayment penalties.

Applicant will be in default if any of the following events occur:

- **Payments:** Applicant fails to make a payment in full when due.
- **Insolvency or bankruptcy:** The death, dissolution or insolvency of appointment of a receiver by or on behalf of the business or applicant; application of any debtor relief law, the assignment of the benefit of creditors by or on behalf of; the voluntary or involuntary termination of existence by; or the commencement of any proceeding under any present or future federal or state insolvency, bankruptcy, reorganization compensation or debtor relief law by or against applicant or any co-signer, endorser, surety or guarantor of this note or any other obligations applicant may have.
- **Business Termination:** Applicant merges, dissolves, reorganizes, terminates business existence or a partner or majority owner dies or is declared legally incompetent.
- **New Organization:** Without city's written consent, applicant reorganizes, merges into or consolidates with an entity; acquires all or substantially all of the assets of another business; materially changes the legal structure, management, ownership, or financial condition; or affects or enters into a domestication, conversion or interest exchange.
- **Failure to Perform:** Applicant fails to perform any condition or to keep any promise or covenant of this note.
- **Other Agreements:** -Applicant is in default on any other debt or agreement with city.
- **Misrepresentation:** Applicant makes any verbal or written statement(s) or provides any financial information that is untrue or inaccurate, or conceals a material fact at the time it is made or provided.
- **Judgment:** Applicant fails to satisfy or appeal any judgment against city.
- **Forfeiture:** The property is used in a manner or for purpose that threatens confiscation by a legal authority.

- **Name Change:** Applicant changes name or assumes an additional name without notifying city before making such a change.
- **Property Value:** City determines in good faith that the value of applicant's property has declined, is impaired, or in a gross state of disrepair.
- **Material Change:** Without first notifying city, there is a material change in applicant's business, including ownership, management and financial conditions.
- **Due on Sale or Encumbrance:** City may, at its option, declare the entire balance of this note to be immediately due and payable upon the creation of or contract for the creation of, any lien, encumbrance, or transfer of sale of, all or any part of the property. If applicant is in default under this agreement, applicant may not sell the inventory portion of the property even in the ordinary course of business.

Should the business be sold, the incentive may be assumed by the buyer, provided they meet all of the requirements and agree to terms of the Note.

**Waivers and Consent:** To the extent not prohibited by law, applicant waives protest, presentment for payment, demand, notice of acceleration, notice of intent to accelerate and notice of dishonor.

**Release of funds**

Grant funding will be awarded upon a **post completion** basis only. Applicants must provide verification of all project costs including copies of all paid invoices before funds can be disbursed.