



## Façade Improvement Grant Program

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

There is no denying that first impressions really do count. Call it superficial but when it comes to doing business, *beauty* and profit start outside your front door. What your customers and potential customers see when they look at your business can make or break those potential sales. Growing and maintaining any type of business can be challenging and that is the purpose of this program- to help you put your best *front* forward.

The program is intended to:

- Promote the marketability of our business area
- Help building owners attract and retain tenants
- Make our streets more inviting and interesting to walk and shop
- Build civic pride among the community
- Contribute to the quality of life of our residents, workers and visitors

Grants are available for exterior improvements only and may be used to improve the building provided the façade faces a public access area. The amount of the grant, if any, will be recommended by the Community Advisory Team (CAT) for approval by the Strasburg Town Council based on the funds available and the number of requests under consideration. The money is a grant not a loan; therefore, you do not have to pay it back.

### PROGRAM BUDGET

The program is funded through the Town of Strasburg. Monies are subject to annual appropriations. If approved, new funding begins July 1 each year and applications are accepted on September 15th and February 1st.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

These reimbursable grants are available for any building façade rehabilitation project that qualifies with up to a 50% match and a maximum amount awarded up to \$10,000.00 per grant per fiscal year. The Community Advisory Team and the Strasburg Town Council reserves the right to modify/increase this amount on a case-by-case basis. Reimbursable grants may also be awarded for the cost of professional design services; such grants will not exceed 50% of the cost with a maximum amount awarded of \$1,000.00. ***You are strongly encouraged to submit construction plans, which may be phased, in your application.*** Should an application be denied, reapplication is permissible in the same fiscal year if aspects are changed to meet the program requirements or if an entirely separate project is proposed.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by the Community Advisory Team. The decision made by CAT will be based on an application review and scoring by a rating system and presented to the Strasburg Town Council for final approval. Based on the recommendation by CAT, the Town Council has the sole discretion to deny or approve any application. CAT will make every attempt to provide appropriate alternative recommendations to the applicant should the application be denied. All applications should adhere to the Architectural Review Board guidelines and may be subject to an additional review process.

Town staff intend to notify applicants of a decision via email and/or letter within 45 business days of the application submittal date. The communication will identify the specific elements of the project that have been approved for funding. If additional time is needed for approval, clear communication will be a priority.

Upon completion and review of the work, the recipient must submit proof of payment (e.g., copies of paid invoices) and photos showing the completed work, in order to receive reimbursement from the Town of Strasburg. Reimbursement checks will be made within thirty days of receiving the proof of payment.

## QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Any **commercial** property owner or **business tenant** within the Strasburg Community Commercial zones may apply. Improvements to mixed use properties (e.g., first floor business with second floor apartments) are permitted. Residential property improvements do not qualify.

### Requirements:

- **All applications must be submitted prior to beginning the improvement.** Any changes made to the project after the grant is approved require an addendum to the original application and may result in a change in grant funding.
- Tenant applicants must have the building owner's written approval in a separate document signed and attached to the application. This document must also state the party who is financially responsible for the improvements.
- Projects must comply with all town codes, ordinances, and policies. Tenants and building owners must be in good standing with the Town and County and have no outstanding fees or taxes or a significant history of delinquencies.
- Work must adhere to the plans and renderings recommended by the Community Advisory Team and approved by the Strasburg Town Council. Should an application be denied, the applicant may reapply in the same fiscal year if aspects are changed to meet the program requirements or if a completely separate project is planned. Minor modifications to approved design may be administratively approved by Town staff provided the façade improvement will remain substantially similar to the approved design and there is no increase in the requested grant funds from the applicant.
- Work must be completed within nine (9) months of approval of funding or the applicant must reapply for funding, if available.
- Applicant and owner must agree to maintain the façade for a three-year period. If the property is sold, the building owner must convey this information to new owners.
- Applicants must submit a copy of the current business license of the contractor(s)/company(ies) involved with the improvement(s).

## QUALIFIED IMPROVEMENTS

Qualified improvements must be visible from public right of way, and the improvements include but are not limited to the following:

- Painting that provides a new color scheme including public facing access walls and porches.
- Roof repainting
- Removal of elements covering any architectural details (ex: vinyl or aluminum siding)
- Restoration of architectural details in historic buildings (ex: cornices or other unique features)
  - Changes must be in accordance with the Architectural Review Board (ARB)
- Installation of new or improved doorways, awnings, shutters or canopies.
- Installation of appropriate lighting for the purpose of illuminating the exterior and/or signage of a building
- Enhancing windows, doors and/or framing visible from the street/public area
- Brick cleaning, repointing, and painting and repair/replacement of stucco, tile, stone elements
- Professional design services/plans (\$1000 max façade contribution)
- Landscaping (that may include hardscaping) that is creative and visually pleasing. Perennials, shrubs and trees accepted. Annuals and small planters will not be accepted.
- Signage and backlit awnings
- ADA improvements

## UNQUALIFIED IMPROVEMENTS

Unqualified improvements include areas not prominently visible from public right of way, and the improvements include but are not limited to the following:

- Roof replacement
- Parking lots
- New construction
- Interior improvements
- Equipment or inventory
- Inappropriate cleaning methods, repairs, replacements or alterations
- Installation of vinyl or aluminum siding
- Sidewalks and paving

## APPROVAL CRITERIA

Committee members will use a rating system for all applications with qualifying improvements which will ultimately produce scores based on how well each project adheres to the following criteria.

- The aesthetic quality and appropriateness of the design proposal (use of appropriate colors, materials, landscaping/hardscaping, etc).
- The project's potential to retain and attract businesses to strengthen the business community
- The potential visual impact of the rehabilitation project taking into consideration the building, block, streetscape, etc.
- The comprehensive approach of the design.
- Long-term durability and sustainability of the improvements.
- The historical or architectural impact of the project.

## CRITERIA RATING SYSTEM

Each qualified application will be evaluated based on the criteria above using a rating scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Each CAT member will judge every criterion and totals will be calculated and an average cumulative score computed.

The cumulative average score will aid and not guarantee in determining the amount of funding given based on the following:

<u>Cumulative Average Score</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
2.00 and below	No Funding
2.01 to 3.50	Potential Partial Funding (50% of qualified improvements amount)
3.51 to 5.00	Potential Full Funding (based on qualified improvements amount)

### Example:

CRITERIA	COMMITTEE MEMBERS							
Use 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) scale to score	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1 - Potential to Retain/Attract Businesses	3	4	2	5	4	3	5	5
2 - Aesthetic Quality	3	3	2	4	5	3	4	4
3 - Visual Impact	1	2	1	4	5	2	4	3
4 - Comprehensive Approach	5	4	1	5	3	4	2	1
5 - Historical/Architectural Significance	4	4	2	3	4	4	1	2
6 - Durability/Sustainability of Improvements	5	5	4	3	3	4	5	3
TOTAL	21	22	12	24	24	20	21	18
AVERAGE	3.5	3.66667	2	4	4	3.33333	3.5	3
CUMULATIVE AVERAGE								3.375

### More Information

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**LAST REVISION DATE:**

**11/2022**



## EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS FACADE IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH STRASBURG'S DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT

177 East King Street, Strasburg VA 22657

BEFORE



AFTER



133 East King Street, Strasburg VA 22657

BEFORE



AFTER



137 East King, Strasburg VA 22657

BEFORE



AFTER



222 West King Street, Strasburg VA 22657

BEFORE



AFTER



214 West King Street, Strasburg VA 22657

BEFORE



AFTER

