



## **Winters Community Redevelopment Agency Downtown Façade Improvement Program GUIDELINES**

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The Downtown Façade Improvement Program is intended to stimulate building improvements and enhance the physical appearance and economic vitality of historic downtown Winters. The program is designed to promote joint public/private investment to complement ongoing revitalization efforts.

### **Program Goals**

- To make positive, high-impact visual improvements to commercial building facades, providing an overall enhanced image for downtown Winters, thereby attracting local residents and visitors to shop, dine and do business in Downtown.
- To encourage historic building façade restoration.
- To provide an incentive for owners of properties with multiple storefronts to undertake a high-quality project incorporating all storefronts.

### **Eligible Properties**

Buildings within the Façade Improvement Area (map attached), which are used for commercial, retail, office, and/or mixed-use purposes, are eligible to participate in the program.

### **Eligible Participants**

Any property owner or tenant in good standing with the written approval of the property owner may apply. Existing businesses must have a current City of Winters Business License. Applications for participation in the Downtown Façade Improvement Program must be approved by the Agency prior to the commencement of improvements.

### **Minimum Guidelines**

- To be accepted into the Downtown Façade Improvement Program, projects must make a substantial visible improvement to the appearance of the storefront, at the discretion of Agency staff.
- Retroactive applications will not be accepted. Applicants must consult with Agency staff before work begins to define a project scope and select colors, materials, etc.
- For historically significant properties, program funds shall be made available only to projects that enhance and are sensitive to the historic nature of the façade.
- For properties with multiple storefronts, it is recommended that the façade treatment provide a cohesive theme while also allowing for some distinctive design elements to the various businesses, such as signage, exposing transom windows, lighting, flower boxes, murals, etc., to provide better street visibility and promote economic development downtown.

### **Application Prioritization**

Funding is limited, and project applications will be prioritized on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Rebate Amounts**

The Downtown Façade Improvement Program provides reimbursement for exterior improvements in the form of a rebate. Rebate amounts vary, as illustrated on the chart below.

<b>Storefront Type</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>% Reimbursement</b>	<b>Max. Reimbursement</b>
Non-historic	Paint only	25%	\$1,500 per storefront
Historic or non-historic	Performs only one improvement such as: lighting and awnings	25%	\$1,500 per storefront
Non-historic	Paint plus other exterior improvements	50%	\$2,500 per storefront
Historic	Paint only	50%	\$3,500 per storefront
Historic	Paint plus other exterior improvements	50%	\$5,000 per storefront

*Historic is defined as those properties identified in the City's historic inventory list.*

### **Properties with Multiple Storefronts or Facades**

In addition to the categories above, staff has the ability to negotiate higher rebate amounts for properties with multiple storefronts, provided the project meets quality standards and improves all the storefronts simultaneously. These projects will be evaluated and negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The maximum allowable rebate is \$20,000.

For corner buildings fronting more than one street, improvements must be made to each frontage if determined necessary by staff. Corner buildings generally have two facades and therefore are eligible for higher rebates.

### **Eligible Improvements**

Eligible improvements must be permanent in nature as determined exclusively by the Redevelopment Agency. All improvements must be consistent with the City of Winters General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Building Regulations, and other applicable laws. Eligible improvements include:

- Removal of old signs, awnings and other exterior clutter
- Exterior cleaning and/or painting
- Façade restoration
- Exterior lighting
- New window treatments, signage and awnings
- Planters
- Other exterior storefront improvements

### **Façade Maintenance Easement**

Once the work is completed, the Agency will record a five-year façade maintenance easement on the property. If the applicant does not maintain the improvements that were funded through the program, the Agency has the authority to record a lien on the property to recover the Agency's cost. A sample of the easement is attached to these guidelines.

### **Application Process**

Program Application and Agreement forms are available from the Winters Community Redevelopment Agency, 318 First Street, telephone (530) 795-4910 x118. The application process is as follows:

1. After reviewing the Program Guidelines, the applicant will meet with Agency staff to discuss desired work to be undertaken. If proposed work is within Program Guidelines as determined exclusively by Agency staff, a completed Application is submitted to the Agency. Written bids, sketches, color samples and material samples should be included.
2. The applicant is responsible for submitting plans and specifications to the City of Winters and obtaining all required planning and building permits, and any other applicable approvals, with the assistance of Agency staff.
3. Upon approval, the Agency will send a "Notice to Proceed" to the applicant. The applicant may proceed with the façade improvements pursuant to the approved design and issued permits. All payments for the work should be made by the applicant supported by clearly defined invoices outlining eligible work. Work shall commence within 90 days of the approval date of the building permit. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of Agency staff.
4. Agency staff will monitor the ongoing progress during construction to ensure that the work is performed according to the approved application and plans. No changes to work shall be made without the written consent of both the applicant and the Agency.
5. Once the work is completed, the Agency will record a facade maintenance easement, good for five years, on the subject property.
6. Reimbursement claims for all eligible expenses must be submitted with the following supporting documents:
  - A completed Rebate Claim form, supplied by the Agency
  - Any applicable planning and building permits
  - Canceled checks and paid invoices/receipts for eligible work

After final approval of the improvements, the rebate reimbursement will be processed. Allow 30 days for receipt of the rebate check.

7. After the work is completed, applicant shall display a sign (provided by the Agency) indicating participation in the Downtown Façade Improvement Program. The sign shall be displayed either on the exterior or in the front window of the building for a period of 30 days.

*Attachments: Map of Façade Improvement Area; Agreement; Application; Rebate Claim Form; and Sample Façade Maintenance Easement*