



CITY OF HASTINGS
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The City of Hastings Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has determined that a portion of the revenues collected by the DDA should be used to enhance the building facades found in downtown Hastings. The DDA Downtown Development and Financing Plan, adopted in 1986 and last revised in 2001, includes "façade improvements in cooperation with private property owners" among the improvements to be carried out under the plan.

The appearance of individual buildings, storefronts, signs, alleys, window displays, parking lots, and sidewalks establishes the visual character of the downtown and plays a major role in the marketing success of the business district.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the facade improvement grant is to encourage improvements to commercial facades visible from the public right-of-way. The grant money is intended to provide financial incentives for quality facade development.

It is also the intent of the program to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Hastings by improving the exterior physical appearance of buildings. The public perception of the downtown retail district has a great deal of influence on its economic success. By improving its physical appearance, the downtown will have a much greater potential for attracting and retaining business, as well as creating an image of strong economic health and vitality.

ELIGIBILITY

- Owners of real property within the Hastings DDA district.
- Owners of business establishments within the DDA district. Tenants need written approval from the property owner.

CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

- Property taxes and other city accounts must be current.
- Project components must have a useful life of at least 10 years.
- Projects will be funded to the extent that budgeted DDA façade improvement program funds are available.

ELIGIBLE COSTS (Exterior Improvements Only)

- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, walls, or other appropriate architectural elements.
- Exterior painting
- Awnings
- Exterior Lighting
- Masonry repair or cleaning
- Conversion to retail or entertainment storefront
- Restoration of vintage elements
 - ✓ Removal of historically unsuitable “modern” facade treatments
 - ✓ Removal/replacement of historically unsuitable signs and/or lighting (new signs/lights must be compatible with existing architecture)
 - ✓ Repair or restoration of original brick and woodwork
- Architectural fees (up to \$500)
- Materials and labor for work performed in association with above-mentioned improvements.

Note: All work performed in association with a facade improvement grant application shall be performed by licensed contractors. Any work that requires the use of scaffolding, lifts or other construction equipment in a public area must be effectively barricaded to protect the public from danger.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Expenses incurred prior to approval of site plan by the DDA
- Property Acquisition

- Mortgage or land contract financing
- Loan fees
- Site plan, building permit fees
- New construction
- Appraiser, attorney, interior decorator fees
- Wages paid to applicant, relatives, or friends for work associated with the facade improvement (e.g. payments under the table).
- Furnishings, trade fixtures, display cases, counters, or other items taxed as personal property
- Reusable or removal items
- Any portion of expenses for which applicant pays contractor in merchandise or in-kind services.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

Applications containing the following characteristics will have priority in the appropriation of project funds:

- New Projects
- Projects identified on corner lots
- Projects in which the building is owner-occupied
- Projects containing a high ratio of private to public dollars
- Projects preserving community institutions (banks, theaters, etc.)
- Projects designed to remove/replace boarded windows
- Projects designed to resolve deteriorated/inappropriate/ unsightly conditions that have existed for many years (boarded windows, deteriorated electrical fixtures, etc.).
- Projects that enhance pedestrian movement from the rear to the front of buildings.
- Projects designed to restore the historic condition of the building facade or posterior (see eligible costs: Item No. 7)
- Projects that will complete the improvement of a block or portion of a block (ex. replacement of an inappropriate facade that exists on a block containing many appropriate, well-preserved, or improved facades).

GRANT AMOUNTS

Maximum Grant Amount: \$2,500 per project
 Minimum Grant Amount: \$500

Maximum amount available for architectural design in addition to grant: \$500

Facade Improvement Grants will be made on a 50%-50% ratio. The applicant must

invest at least 50% of the total project cost to receive the remaining 50% grant from the DDA. The 50% granted by the DDA is not to exceed \$2,500. (For example, a project totaling \$4,000 may receive \$2,000 from the DDA. A project totaling \$12,000 may receive the maximum of \$2,500 even though it does not equate to 50% of the total project cost.)

PROCESSING OF GRANT REQUESTS

- A facade improvement application can be obtained from the City of Hastings, Community Development Department, 201 East State Street, Hastings, MI 49058 (269) 945-2468.
- The application is completed by the property owners or tenant of the building with owner's written consent and returned to the City of Hastings where it will be reviewed for accuracy and issues of compliance and logged into the records of the DDA.
- There is a **\$100 application fee**, due when the application is submitted. This fee will be refunded if a project is not approved, or if the project is approved and completed. Applicants who receive a grant award and do not complete the project will forfeit this application fee.
- The application is reviewed by City staff to verify that it is located in the DDA district. Staff will provide a preliminary review outlining how well the project meets the program objectives.
- If the application meets program objectives the applicant will be notified that his/her project has been accepted for consideration.
- The applicant must submit a detailed plan illustrating proposed improvements (architectural fees of up to \$500 are covered separately from grant and are reimbursable).
- In addition to the plan, a detailed break out of all costs, including a signed estimate from a qualified contractor, will be submitted by the applicant (including a project budget illustrating both private and public expenditures).
- Once a plan is submitted it will be taken before the Downtown Development Authority for review.
- If approved then project construction may commence. If plan is inconsistent

with program goals it will be returned with request for modifications.

- Façade improvement projects exceeding the 50%-50% capped grant limit of \$5,000 (\$2,500 DDA - \$2,500 private investment) may be constructed in phases during different calendar years. Each phase will then be considered by the DDA as a separate 'project' for the purposes of this grant program, with each 'project' eligible for up to \$2,500 in DDA funds.
- Grant funds for Façade Improvement Projects will be awarded to the extent that funds for such projects are available in the City Council approved DDA budget.

Note: The DDA reserves the right to recommend grant awards it deems to be in the best interest of the City of Hastings, the DDA, and the facade improvement program. The DDA reserves the right to nullify grant awards that are found to be non-compliant with the conditions of this program. Non-compliant's may not re-apply for a period of one (1) year following the DDA's decision.

POST-APPROVAL PROCEDURES

- Any changes in the scope of work must be approved by the DDA prior to construction/installation.
- All approved changes in work verification shall be attached to the original site plan in the form of an addendum and dated.
- City staff may conduct periodic inspections to ensure compliance with the site plan and adopted eligible activities.
- Projects must be completed within one (1) year of notification of project approval by the DDA. Only under extenuating circumstances, a single extension of time to complete the project can be requested in writing and may be awarded by the DDA.
- Upon completion of the project improvement City staff will photograph the new facade and submit it to the DDA to ensure that all components of the site plan are met.
- After final project inspection, the Downtown Development Authority will review and approve the project, and the applicant be reimbursed for the

approved grant amount.

Questions and comments regarding the Facade Improvement Program and these guidelines should be directed to City of Hastings Community Development Department at (269) 945-2468.