



Town of Hildebran: Facade Improvement Grant Program

SOURCE OF FUNDS

The program is initially funded through a Downtown Revitalization Grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce (the Rural Economic Development Division) and is appropriated by the Town of Hildebran Council in the Special Revenue Fund for the Town of Hildebran Façade Improvement Grant Program. Additional monies may be transferred to this program from other Town funds from time to time in the future.

OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

1. The objective of the program is to improve the appearance of properties in the Downtown District (as identified by the Town's Future Land Use Map) and promote economic development.
2. The purpose of the program is to provide an economic incentive (financial assistance) to:
 - a. Promote storefront rehabilitation in the downtown area;
 - b. Preserve the unique character of downtown's historic buildings;
 - c. Encourage aesthetic compatibility for improvements to facades of non-historic structures;
 - d. Encourage the use of quality materials, good design, and workmanship in the rehabilitation of downtown properties;
 - e. Make improvements that produce a highly visible contribution to downtown Hildebran.

ELIGIBILITY

1. A façade is defined as an individual storefront or commercial building side which faces a public right-of-way or is otherwise visible to the general public from the street. A façade is the face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space.
2. Commercial buildings must be located within the designated Project Area (see attached map).
3. Buildings that are solely used as a private dwelling are not eligible to receive a grant.
4. Owners or tenants are eligible to apply; however, the owner must sign the application.
5. An owner's town/county taxes cannot be delinquent.

FUNDING ELGIBILITY EXCLUSIONS

1. Single-family and two-family residential uses (Buildings with non-residential 1st floor and 2nd floor residential uses are eligible)
2. Religious organizations
3. Not for profit organizations and civic organizations (non-profits may lease building from for profit companies provided the building stays on the property tax scroll)
4. Schools
5. Political activities

6. Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, or religion
7. General storage or warehousing

GUIDELINES

1. All rehabilitations must:
 - a. Meet the North Carolina State Building Code and Zoning Ordinance requirements of the Town of Hildebran. All applicants must consult with both the Town's Zoning Administrator and Burke County Building Inspector prior to completing an application.
 - b. Applicants are encouraged to follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation if applicable (see attached).
2. Approved types of rehabilitations include:
 - a. Safe cleaning of brick/stone fronts or wall surfaces. This includes chemical stripping, water wash or scraping. No sand blasting is allowed. Chemical striping is not appropriate for historic properties (please see item seven U.S. Secretary of The Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation).
 - b. Masonry repair, mortar joint repair, re-pointing of brick.
 - c. Repainting and patching of façade walls.
 - d. Repair/replacement of windows and/or doors.
 - e. Removal of siding and exterior false facades and metal canopies.
 - f. Repair, reconstruction, and/or replacement of original architectural details.
 - g. Installations of canvas-type awnings.
 - h. Structural and cornice repair and/or replacement.
 - i. Railings, ironwork repair or addition.
 - j. Historic reconstructions, rehabilitation or compatible reconstruction of a store front.
 - k. Landscaping, including sidewalks, plantings and outdoor seating.
 - l. Installation/replacement/repair of exterior lighting.
 - m. Roof repairs
 - n. HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems
3. Ineligible projects include:
 - a. Improvements made prior to grant approval.
 - b. Interior rehabilitation/improvements (excluding HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems)
 - c. Construction of false fronts.
 - d. Blocking up of windows or installing storm/vinyl windows and doors.
 - e. Signs
 - f. Demolition of historic features.
 - g. Materials inappropriate to the original structure or nearby structures as determined by the Town Manager or his/her designee.

INTENT AND GUIDANCE

1. Rehabilitation of structures in the downtown district should respect and reflect the architectural integrity of the entire building and retain those elements that enhance the building.
2. Priority is given to rehabilitation projects that notably and visibly improve downtown facades.
3. This program is to aid substantial investments to improve the aesthetic qualities of a building as well as protect it for the future.
4. Façades should be in harmony with the character of the Downtown and in coordination with the shape, color and design of adjacent facades.
5. Use colors that are compatible with other buildings and that are true to the style and age of the structure.
6. The Town reserves the right to withhold the approval of a grant application if the color, design, sign design or other façade component is not deemed appropriate to the historic integrity of the structure and/or the Downtown as a whole.

GRANT AWARD

1. Grant award amounts are at the discretion of the Town Council.
2. Decisions may be based upon, but not limited to, size, project cost and amount of available funds.
3. Based on availability of funds, program recipients will receive a maximum of \$1.00 in matching grant funds for each \$2.00 expended by the owner on an approved façade improvement consistent with the goals of this program. Depending on the availability of funds, the maximum grant that may be awarded per façade is \$5,000.00, based on a minimum investment of \$10,000.00 by the owner. For approved façade improvements, larger grants may be considered by the Town Council on a case-by-case basis.
4. At least two (2) project cost estimates must be submitted with the application. If both estimates are deemed equal (in regards to quality of materials used, etc.) only fifty percent (50%) of the lowest estimate will be granted, regardless of which bid is accepted by the building owner.
5. The grant amount shall be determined at time of application approval and paid when the project is completed as proposed in the work program and is deemed compliant with all regulatory codes.
6. The work must be completed within six (6) months of application approval; however, the owner may request one extension for one (1) month based upon compelling valid reasons for the delay. Extensions are discouraged.
7. The façade improvement must stay in place for three (3) full years from the date of completion. If not, the grant amount for that project must be repaid in full. Additional grants for the same façade shall only be considered after the three (3) year period has been completed.

DECISION PROCESS

1. Applications will be reviewed by the Town Manager or the Town Manager's designee for completeness and compliance with the criteria above. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. After the review of a complete application, the Design Review Board will make a recommendation to the Town Council for its final approval or denial. The Planning Board will serve as the Design Review Board. All decisions of the Town Council are final.
2. If the application is not recommended by the Design Review Board, it shall not be voted on by Council. A meeting can be scheduled with the applicant and Town staff to refine the proposal to enable it to qualify if possible. If other more appropriate applications are pending, they will take precedence; however, efforts will be made to help applicants succeed.
3. A notification letter or email will be sent to applicants explaining approval or denial.
4. If awarded, the applicant/owner must execute the contract/grant agreement **before** work begins.
5. Applicant must obtain necessary zoning and building permits if applicable.
6. Applicant may then begin work.
7. Upon completion of work, applicant must submit any documents evidencing payment required by the Town including, but not limited to, receipts of payment, canceled checks, contractors' payment receipts and lien waivers, to the Town of Hildebran.
8. The Town Manager, or his/her designee, will inspect work for conformance with the approved application.
9. If the work is accomplished in accordance with the agreement and grant requirements, then the Town shall reimburse the applicant as stipulated hereinabove under "Grant Award."

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.