



Main Street Redevelopment District Commercial Rehabilitation Grant Program

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Description of Grant Program

The City of Bexley makes funds available on a first-come, first-served basis as incentive (matching) grants for commercial property owners and businesses in the Main Street Redevelopment District to carryout exterior building and property improvements consistent with the Main Street Design Guidelines. The incentive grants, in the form of reimbursement payments, will amount to Thirty Five Percent (35%) of approved project costs up to a maximum of \$10,000 per business application or \$10,000 for each business located in a building if the property owner is the applicant, depending on funds available.

Recognizing that commercial property owners and businesses can be challenged by funding costs directly related to the “planning” of their enhancement project, consulting professional design services will also be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$1,500 on a “per project” basis. An example of the matching grant is the following \$30,000 improvement to an existing structure:

City Grant	\$10,000
Private Match	<u>\$20,000</u>
Total Project	\$30,000

The program is not mandatory, all participation is voluntary. The grant money will be spent to revitalize the area. What improvements will be made will be decided by the commercial property owners and businesses, the public and city government.

The four goals of this “pilot” program are to stimulate private investment along Main Street, generate additional revitalization by focusing investment on visible improvements, beautify the business district so that it reflects positively on adjacent residential areas, and increase business by making the area more attractive.

Eligible Applicants

That within the Main Street Redevelopment District all commercial property including existing residential structures converted to commercial office or retail uses will be eligible for Main Street Redevelopment District Commercial Rehabilitation Grant Program funds, and residential or industrial property are not eligible under this Program.

To be eligible for incentive grants, the applicant must:

- A. Demonstrate ownership of the commercial property in need of improvements or be a business tenant and have written approval to implement the improvements from the property owner.
- B. The applicant's property must be located within the established boundaries of the Main Street Redevelopment District.
- C. For every dollar requested, the applicant must provide the required minimum two-to-one (65%) match, preferably in cash. In-kind donations (i.e., work and materials) may be used as part of the required 65% match. If in-kind is part of the match and a grant is awarded, all in-kind donations must be documented by the provider. Documentation must be submitted with all requests for reimbursement when project activity is completed.
- D. Maintain a membership in the Bexley Area Chamber of Commerce.

Eligible Grant Projects

The incentive grants may only be used for the following work or costs:

- A. Consulting professional design services for exterior design assistance, conceptual plans and preliminary cost estimates necessary for development review and approval.
- B. Exterior work and changes to exterior materials, including building and property improvements consistent with established design guidelines. Building facade improvements shall include the entire facade, and not just a portion.
- C. Sidewalks not in the designated public right-of-way.
- D. Off-street parking lot repairs, replacement and upgrades.
- E. On-site lighting.
- F. Screening and buffering elements (i.e., mechanical units, loading areas, fencing, storage of garbage).
- G. Landscaping not in the designated public right-of-way.
- H. Signage work.
- I. Reimbursement for sidewalk, parking lot, lighting, screening and buffering, landscaping and signage work will be made only after all exterior work is completed on the principal building or structures.

Ineligible Projects

Ineligible project activity, improvements or costs include the following:

- A. Interior and/or residential work.
- B. Sandblasting of any building and chemical cleaning processes.
- C. New construction (i.e., addition to building) and/or demolition of existing structures.
- D. Any work done prior to approval of the "Rehabilitation Grant Application" and signing of "Acceptance of Reimbursement Agreement."
- E. Installation of a new parking lot where one does not exist.
- F. Security systems and phone lines.
- G. Permits, inspection fees, engineering, or architectural costs required for construction.
- H. Sales tax.

Grant Policies

The grant amount an applicant can receive is Thirty Five Percent (35%) of approved project costs up to a maximum of \$10,000 per business application or \$10,000 for each business located in a building if the property owner is the applicant. In addition, consulting professional design services will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$1,500 on a "per project" basis.

If a property owner applicant is requesting rehabilitation grant funds for a vacant building, the building must be pre-leased and they must submit copies of their pre-leases.

Once an applicant receives the maximum grant amount, they are no longer eligible for the Program. If an applicant does not request/receive the maximum amount, they may submit a written request to amend their grant award upward to the maximum amount. Award of additional funds is contingent on availability of program funds.

Under no circumstance will a project be funded if there is any displacement of a business or business tenant or if there is any need to temporarily or permanently relocate any person(s).

Pre-Application Procedures

The Bexley Development Office (BDO) is available to assist potential applicants in the preparation of applications and in packaging the project. All potential applicants will first consult with the BDO and appropriate city staff to discuss the purpose of the Program and procedures for incentive grant processing. If it is determined that the proposed project and applicant are eligible for incentive grant funds, a formal application will be furnished to the applicant.

Application Procedures

Upon completion of the formal application and all required documents, the applicant will submit these materials to the Bexley Building Department at least 21 days before a scheduled meeting of the Main Street Redevelopment Commission.

The appropriate city staff will be responsible for reviewing the application for completeness, will provide project recommendations to the Main Street Redevelopment Commission, and will transmit all materials to the Commission for consideration.

Approval Procedures

The appropriate city staff will review applications to insure that they are complete, and will submit applicant materials and staff recommendations to the Main Street Redevelopment Commission.

The Main Street Redevelopment Commission will review, approve, approve with modification or disapprove applications. The Commission evaluates the design and planning for each new, altered or expanded structure, and the overall project proposal for any property in the Main Street Redevelopment District.

The Main Street Redevelopment Commission meets on the first Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 P.M., unless otherwise stated, in City Council Chambers at the Bexley Municipal Building, 2242 East Main Street. It is mandatory for the applicant or an authorized representative to attend the meeting if their application is to be heard.

Grant Award & Acceptance

After the application/project has been approved by the Main Street Redevelopment Commission, BDO staff will forward a grant award notice to the successful applicant ("Grantee") and all financing participants.

Following this, Grantees have 60 days from the date of application approval and grant award notice to select a contractor(s) or funding will be canceled, unless an extension is requested and approved. To get the best price for the best work, applicants are encouraged (but not required) to get three estimates or "bids". Grantee submits a copy of the accepted bid(s) to the BDO staff for final processing. In turn, the BDO staff will forward to the Grantee a reimbursement agreement for signing. Rehabilitation construction work cannot begin until the Grantee receives a signed agreement back from the City. Any work done prior to signing of the reimbursement agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

If some of the work changes on any exterior building and property improvement project and is different from the original approved rehabilitation grant application, the following procedures apply:

- A. If new work is proposed and the cost exceeds the original grant award amount, a written request to amend the grant award must be submitted to the BDO. If funds are available and the Grantee has not exceeded the maximum grant amount, the additional funds may be awarded. If the additional funds are awarded, contractor selection must occur and bid(s) must be obtained for the new work and/or materials.

- B. If new work is proposed and does not increase the original grant award amount, contractor selection must occur and bid(s) must be obtained for the new work and/or materials.
- C. In both cases, once the new work is approved by the BDO or the Main Street Redevelopment Commission (whenever applicable), an amended reimbursement agreement will be forwarded to the Grantee for signing. If the new work involves extensive changes, a sketch plan may be required for review/approval by the Main Street Redevelopment Commission.

Implementation

Implementation includes applying for necessary permits, monitoring rehabilitation construction progress and obtaining the appropriate inspections for construction.

Construction work on any enhancement project cannot begin until the Grantee signs a reimbursement agreement with the City. A reimbursement agreement with the City will be signed only after the rehabilitation grant application has been approved by the Main Street Redevelopment Commission and all contractor selections have been completed.

Following this, approved projects shall be constructed in full compliance with the Building Code and the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bexley, and shall follow standard City building permit, plan review and inspection procedures required for construction.

It is the Grantee's responsibility to coordinate the completion of the project or hire a contractor(s) to complete the project for them. Information requirements and fees associated for each required permit may be obtained from the Bexley Building Department. Grantee's should verify with the Building Department that their contractors are licensed and bonded with the City to do the proposed work.

All work must be completed and all requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the BDO within 12 months from the date a rehabilitation grant award is made or funding will be canceled, unless an extension is requested and approved.

Grantees will submit statements or billings of evidence of payment for eligible improvements or costs, including all in-kind donations documented by the provider, when the project activity is completed to the BDO for final processing.

The City will verify (inspect) the work was built according to Codes. Upon approval, a certificate of occupancy is issued, which implies that the project (improvements) has met code in all respects. Within 30 days of approval, the City will pay to the Grantee the reimbursement as set forth above.

The City reserves the right to limit the amount of grant dollars per applicant and to reject any applications which do not meet all of the guidelines listed above.

For Further Information

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