

Richmond Downtown and Village District Façade Grant Program – 2020 -2021

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

Program Intent

The Richmond Downtown and Village District Façade Matching Grant Program is intended to promote direct improvements to the appearance of downtown and village district buildings. The Town will offer up to a 50 percent matching grant for façade improvements to downtown and village district properties. This program is funded with revenues generated from the Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and the Pipeline/Compressor Station Municipal Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District; part of an overall downtown and village revitalization initiative funded by various federal, state and local sources.

The program is intended to:

- Promote improvements to structures in the Downtown and Village Districts and eliminate and prevent conditions that cause blight;
- Preserve the unique character of downtown and village district historic buildings by providing greater leverage to private investment and state & federal funding; and
- Encourage façade improvements that meet Zoning Ordinance Village District standards.

General Eligibility Requirements

- A Façade Grant may be made to a commercial, mixed-use or multi-family housing property located within the Downtown and Village District project area (*See attached map*). *Note: Blighted single-family housing buildings are now eligible.*
- The applicant may be the property owner or the lessee and either may provide the required matching funds. A lessee will be required to have the building owner co-sign the formal application.

Eligible Activities

Grant funds will be used only for eligible improvements to the exterior of buildings/structures. Eligible uses may include, but are not limited to:

- Signage;
- Awnings;
- Storefront improvements;
- Restoration of original/historic windows, doors, and trim where possible;
- Removal of non-historic features and/or inappropriate non-historic alterations and additions;
- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and trim;
- Roofing visible from street level;
- Cleaning and/or painting of wood surfaces;
- Cleaning and/or repainting of surface brick or stone;

- Replacement, repair or addition of architectural details (e.g. cornices, bulkheads, transoms, etc.);
- Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding;
- Removal or repair of fire escapes;
- Exterior code violations;
- Exterior lighting;
- Landscaping;
- Entranceway modifications, including provisions to improve accessibility in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Ineligible Activities

- Interior repairs of any kind;
- Any improvements not seen from the public right-of-way or publicly owned space;
- Minor maintenance and repairs;
- Purchase of commercial property/equipment;
- Business operations-related costs including business inventory, debt reduction, etc.;
- New construction;
- Parking lot surfaces;
- Property acquisition;
- Non-visible roofing;
- Expansion of building area.

If your project is not listed here, please do not assume that it is not eligible. Before proceeding with the application, please contact the Town Office contact listed below.

Program Guidelines and Eligibility

1. A Façade Improvement Grant may only be made to a commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family property located in the areas identified in the attached map. *Blighted single-family residential properties are now eligible.*
2. Grant funds will be awarded on a competitive basis; Small and large projects are eligible for funding.
3. Grants are available for **up to 50% of the total cost** of the improvement project and therefore must be matched at a ratio of 1:1 (cash) at minimum. Maximum matching grant award: \$30,000.
4. Each applicant may only be awarded one grant per grant period.
5. Business owners leasing or renting space should work with their building owner to develop an application. The property owner must sign the application.
6. Applicant must obtain all necessary approvals and/or permits from the Town of Richmond.
7. The project applicant must owe no outstanding property taxes, fees, judgments, or liens to the Town of Richmond and have no outstanding code violations.
8. Building projects must be designed by a qualified design professional and signs must be produced by a professional sign maker.
9. The applicant will be reimbursed for the amount of the grant award only upon completion of the project.

10. It is not our intent to compete with local financial institutions and we encourage you to find alternative funding sources for your projects. However, we do have a revolving loan fund available and we encourage applicants to consider it.

Application Review and Grant Payment Procedures

1. Richmond's Office of Community, Business & Economic Development will review Downtown and Village District Façade Grant Applications.
2. Preference will be given to proposals that:
 - Make significant visual improvements to the storefronts/building facades.
 - Plan to match more than 50 percent of the grant amount.
 - Plan work on Main Street on their "street-facing" façade.
 - Take advantage of the Town's Revolving Loan Fund.
 - Perform work in accordance with Village District Performance Standards outlined in the Land Use Ordinance, Article 4, G (pp. 11-15).
3. Those Downtown and Village District proposals that warrant funding will be forwarded to the Town Code Enforcement Office and any applicable agencies for review and permitting. Please see the Richmond Zoning Ordinance, Article 4, Section G (Village District) and Article 4, Section I (Main Street Commercial-Industrial Sub-District).
4. Process for Payment:
 - a. Upon determination by the Community & Business Development Office that an application should be funded, recommendations will be sent to the Town Manager for final approval.
 - b. Upon completion of each Downtown and Village District Façade Grant project, each business/property owners shall submit paid bills/invoices for the work to the Town's Community & Business Development Director (*see contact information, below*). Grant monies will not be paid out until the owner has demonstrated that their 50 percent contribution to the project has been paid.
 - c. An inspection will be performed to ensure work billed is actually performed. The amount of grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50 percent of the actual total unless the actual total is greater than the estimated total in which case the grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50 percent of the estimated total. The Town will only pay its portion of the project costs once the building owner has paid its portion of the project costs.
 - d. The Director will submit the grant fund reimbursement determination and supporting paid bills/invoices to the Finance Department for payment, which will then go through the Town Warrant system.

Please Do Not Contract for Work to Be Done Until Application Has Been Accepted.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact Darryl Sterling, Director of Development: 207-737-4305 ext 331 or email director@richmondmaine.com.