

## **Community Redevelopment Agency: Façade Improvement Grant Program**

The Lake Alfred Community Redevelopment Agency's Façade Improvement Grant Program seeks to partner with the business community to promote investment in the downtown area. The program incentivizes commercial building owners and tenants to renovate and update the exteriors of commercial properties located within the CRA, specifically in the downtown area, by providing financial assistance. The program is designed to provide a matching reimbursement grant to make these exterior and façade improvements. By offsetting the cost of these projects the CRA hopes to incentivize visible improvements that will improve building and site aesthetics thereby improving the marketability and value of existing businesses while also attracting new businesses, residents, and visitors to the area.

The program is designed to work in conjunction with the City's Downtown Overlay District in the ULDC that has specific site and design standards that are required based upon the level of renovation taking place on a downtown business. To accomplish the goals of the program, the CRA will provide grant funding based upon the following guidelines and requirements:

### **General Guidelines:**

- Funds shall be allocated based upon the application submittal and review period as approved by the Board and subject to the limits of the program and the annual budget allocation.
- The program is a grant award on a reimbursement basis. Grant funds can reimburse for up to 50% of eligible project costs, with the grant award not to exceed \$50,000 (i.e. on a \$100k of eligible expenses). The reimbursement will be limited to 50% of the actual eligible and verified costs that were incurred up to and not to exceed the grant amount awarded.
- Each grant will be limited to one property (even if multiple buildings and/or businesses are present) and each property is eligible to receive funding through this program once every five years.
- All grant applications must receive approval by the CRA Board before any construction can commence. No grants will be awarded on an application if work has been started or completed.
- Proposed improvements that require permits must be issued prior to the grant being awarded. This application may be submitted and reviewed concurrently with the permitting process and the grant application may be considered as long as the proposed work is eligible to be permitted.
- The Applicant shall incur all eligible costs and may receive reimbursement only after all eligible improvements have been completed; subject to verification by staff and/or final inspection if the work is tied to a building permit.
- All projects are to be completed and final reimbursement request submitted with all required documentation no more than two years from the date of the approval of the grant.
- All applicants that are awarded a grant acknowledge that "cash receipts" will not be accepted due to auditing standards. Eligible reimbursements must have been paid for by check, money order, or credit card. Verification of payment must be submitted with the reimbursement request.
- All work must be engineered and receive permitting as required by the existing regulations on the type of work being performed.

## **Eligibility Requirements:**

- Applicant must be the owner of the building or a tenant must have written and notarized consent by the owner.
- Businesses must have a valid Lake Alfred tax receipt.
- Business must be a conforming use within a commercially zoned parcel in the Downtown Overlay District AND within the CRA area; consistent with the Future Land Use and Zoning classifications.
  - Nonconforming elements may be present but the renovation/redevelopment should reduce or eliminate nonconforming elements but under no circumstance create or expand nonconformities.
- Property taxes to both the City and County must be current.
- Property must not have active or pending building code or code enforcement violations.
- Property must not have outstanding utility balances or outstanding code enforcement liens.
- Property may not receive more than the maximum grant award in any aggregated five (5) year period.
- Grants are intended for rehabilitation and restoration only. New construction is ineligible; see below for eligible (and ineligible) improvements.

## **Eligible Improvements:**

- Architectural Treatments & Façade Articulations on exterior walls. Code reference: 2.04.03.01.05(C)(2) & (3).
  - Application of primary or secondary materials such as stucco or split face block
  - Horizontal banding or kickplates
  - Architectural moulding, decorative framing, cornices, etc.
  - Increased transparency (additional or faux windows)
- Signs, Lighting (and associated electrical), and Landscaping
  - Removal of old sign and the design, production, and installation of new signs
- Screening enhancements such as dumpster or utility enclosures, walls, or buffers. Code reference: Code reference: 2.04.03.01.05(C)(6).
- Low Impact Design strategies such as pervious pavement or green roofs. Code reference: 2.04.03.01.05(C)(8)
- Pedestrian walkway enhancements such as awnings, canopies, or cantilevered roofs. Code reference: 2.04.03.01.05(C)(9).
- Porches, Stairs, Railings, Windows. Replacement is eligible but should have an upgraded aesthetic beyond simple replacement.
- Minor exterior repair such as Painting/Pressure Washing is eligible but is limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant amount.
- Associated demolition for eligible improvements.

## **Ineligible Improvements:**

- New construction (or additions).
- Impervious parking lot paving.
- Interior work (even if visible through windows).
- Roof repair or replacement.
- Permit fees and engineering fees.
- Improvements made prior to grant approval.
- In-Kind or Sweat Equity payments (i.e. reimbursement for applicant's own labor).
- Improvements that are required as a result of a violation or citation.

## **Application:**

- Complete Grant Application Form and include/attach the following:
- Copy of Deed/Proof of Ownership; and Notarized tenant authorization (if tenant is implementing the project).
- Complete, written description of all rehabilitation work.
- Project Schedule with anticipated timeframe for improvements and associated budget.
- Photographs of the existing building and proposed project area.
- Should include schematic drawings illustrating proposed work or pictures with project description outlined and detail of materials, colors, and other specifics.
- A quote for the work to be performed by a licensed contractor (Owner performed work (a.k.a. "Sweat Equity" costs) will not be credited).
- Evidence of available private funds to pay for the rehabilitation (i.e. letter from bank)
- Proof of insurance coverage
- Anticipated Timeframe for improvements

## **Application Process:**

- Completed application packets are to be submitted to the City's Community Development Department:  
Community Development - City Hall  
120 East Pomelo Street  
Lake Alfred, FL 33850
- City staff will review the application for completeness. Additional information or clarification may be necessary.
- If complete, the application will be sent to the Review Committee for evaluation and feedback. Additional information or clarification may be necessary to determine if an application is sufficient to be transmitted to the Board.
- The application process will formally open on October 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year and will close on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any application received during this time period will be reviewed and presented concurrently to the Board in the following quarter (January, February, or March)
- Approval of the application and funding amount awarded is determined by the City of Lake Alfred's Community Redevelopment Agency Board.

**Reimbursement Process:**

- Upon full completion of the improvements, the property owner shall submit an itemized reimbursement request with all necessary supporting documentation and copies of receipts for eligible improvements identified in the grant award.
- Itemized receipts must clearly demonstrate that the contractors and/or suppliers have been paid in full by the applicant and that the costs incurred are tied to the project (i.e. address, job number, project name, etc.).
- Copy of the release of contractor lien on property.
- Final inspections must be completed on building permits associated with the improvements on the property.
- Only one reimbursement check will be processed for any one applicant. There will be no partial reimbursements.
- Final (and only) reimbursement request with all necessary supporting documentation shall be submitted no later than two years from the date of the grant being awarded.