

Old Hilliard Façade Improvement Program Guidelines

OVERVIEW

The Old Hilliard Façade Improvement Program is designed to stimulate private investment in high-quality building improvements that creates and enhances community image and character in Old Hilliard. The program will share the costs of improving commercial building exteriors and publicly used amenities, thereby promoting joint public/private action and investment, which will complement and enhance Old Hilliard. The Hilliard Development Corporation (HDC) will provide matching grants to property owners or tenants of commercial buildings.

ELIGIBILITY

Commercial and mixed-use structures within the boundaries of Old Hilliard (see *Old Hilliard Location Map*) are eligible for funding. Buildings used solely for residential purposes and government properties are not eligible for funding from this program.

GRANT AMOUNT

Grants are available to cover up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, not to exceed **\$50,000**. Grantees will be reimbursed at the conclusion of the project, after certification of project costs and verification of compliance with applicable city regulations.

WHO MAY APPLY

Applicants can be property owners or businesses. Businesses must have written approval from property owners to participate in the program. Property owners/businesses must be up to date on all municipal taxes and be in compliance with Hilliard City Code prior to participation in the program. Additionally, the property owner must agree not to change or alter the improved façade for five years from the date of the reimbursement unless prior written approval from HDC is granted.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The intent of the program is to help fund **significant** improvements to eligible buildings and sites. Routine repairs or maintenance are not eligible unless the repairs represent major improvements that could contribute to the structural longevity of the building. Projects must comply with Section 1115 of the City of Hilliard Planning and Zoning Code. Priority will be given to projects that would result in comprehensive restoration or substantial improvement to the entire building or façade.

Projects which solely consist of routine maintenance (e.g. repainting, replacing awning fabric, new sign panels, etc.) are not eligible for grant assistance, particularly if the current property owner allowed the building to fall into disrepair

Below is a general list of the eligible improvements*:

- Uncovering and restoration of historical façades
- Replacement/repair of cornice, parapets, shutters and other architectural features
- Removal of inappropriate façade materials
- Addition of appropriate detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance
- Site and landscape improvements in areas that are open and accessible to the public
- Improvements to the backs or sides of properties
- Restoration of original doors or windows
- Window repair or replacement – if being taken back to original historical character
- Door repair or replacement – if being taken back to original historical character
- Installation and improvement of signage
- Storefront restoration or renovation
- Parking improvements (striping, paving, signage, etc.), new parking additions and shared parking arrangements

*HDC may consider additional improvements not listed as “eligible improvements” on a case-by- case basis.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The costs of new construction or work that only involves routine maintenance are not eligible under the program. An exception may be made in the case of repairs if they will support the health, safety, and preservation of the structure. Projects which commence prior to HDC and Planning and Zoning Commission (if applicable) approval are not eligible.

DECISION CRITERIA

If the total requested amount exceeds the available funds, then HDC will rank the applications based on the criteria. HDC’s final decision is not appealable by applicants. HDC reserves the right to reduce grant awards if project activities are ineligible or the amount of grant requests exceed available funding. Priority will be given to projects that result in comprehensive restoration, high visibility and impact on public streets and for projects. The criteria listed below (in no particular order) will be considered:

- Instances where an immediate renovation would stop serious deterioration of the building’s façade and where historic or architecturally significant features contributing to the building’s character are in danger of being lost
- Projects that would restore the historic features of a building
- Projects that would improve the architectural integrity of a building
- Projects that support new or existing businesses
- Projects that would result in significant new investment and the creation of jobs in Old Hilliard
- Projects involving buildings with vacant or underutilized spaces where the overall marketability of the building would be improved
- Applicant’s ability to complete the project in six months or less

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

The owner/business shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Hilliard Codified Ordinances and Ohio Building Code. Code violations discovered after project acceptance will not result in disqualification from the program, but corrections of such violations shall be incorporated into the project. HDC retains the right to withhold reimbursements from the applicant until such violations are corrected to the satisfaction of City Staff.

All necessary board approvals must occur before a project begins. No funds will be awarded if the project begins before the application is reviewed and approved by the HDC Board. Applicants have 180 days from the earlier of the HDC award notification letter or receipt of a grant agreement to complete the project. Applicants shall obtain necessary building permits. The applicant must request an extension in writing. HDC will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.

Applications and grant agreements are not transferable without written consent from HDC.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Step 1 – Façade Improvement Application Submittal

The applicant shall submit the following to HDC:

- Completed HDC Façade Improvement Program Application
- Estimated budget with detailed line items
- Pictures, site plans, architectural renderings and/or other visual representations of the proposed improvements.

The Secretary will review the information and make preliminary determinations as to whether the proposed project meets program requirements. If the Secretary determines the initial information provided meets program criteria, the project will be allowed to continue to HDC Board for approval.

Step 2 – Project Approval Process (HDC & City Approvals)

The HDC Board will vote on the grant request after the Secretary determines project eligibility. If the project is approved by the HDC, the applicant will receive a grant agreement. HDC may require projects to be completed in phases or accomplish certain construction benchmarks before receiving payment. If the project is denied, the applicant will receive an e-mail notification of the HDC's decision. Applicants must receive approval from Hilliard Planning and Zoning Commission or the Hilliard City Planner and submit and receive any necessary building permits before commencing work.

Projects are expected to be completed within 180 days of executing the HDC Grant Agreement as stipulated under Grant Requirements.

Step 3 – Project Completion & Grant Reimbursement

HDC will review projects for compliance within 30 days of notification of project completion by the applicant.

For a project to be considered complete and eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must:

- Obtain all applicable building permits and pass all building inspections relating to the Project
- Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy;
- Resolve any city code violations;
- Obtain written approval from the City Planner confirming that the project was completed in compliance with Zoning Code Section 1115;
- Submit a completed W-9;
- Submit third-party receipts or invoices to HDC that match the project description and final budget. If other building improvements were made in conjunction with the façade improvements, separate cost summaries related to the façade improvements must be provided. In-kind contributions are not eligible unless prior written approval was issued by HDC.
- Schedule an onsite visit with the Secretary to verify the work was completed in accordance with the Applications scope of work