



N O R F O L K

Commercial Façade and Aesthetic Improvement Grant Program Project Eligibility and Application Process

1. Program Objective: To encourage the improvement of the aesthetic quality of commercial properties located in designated commercial corridors through a public/private partnership program between the City of Norfolk and local businesses.

2. Grant Eligibility and Requirements

- a. To qualify for the grant program, properties must be located in the following commercial corridor areas (see accompanying maps):
 - **E. Little Creek Road** (generally, along East Little Creek Road from Chesapeake Blvd. to Shore Drive);
 - **Fairmount Park** (generally, along Tidewater Drive and Lafayette Blvd. and encompassing areas on Cromwell Road, Ballentine and Chesapeake Boulevards);
 - **Five Points** (generally, the areas at the intersection of Norview Avenue, Sewells Point Road and Chesapeake Blvd.);
 - **Riverview** (generally, along Granby Street between 38th Street and Beach Avenue);
 - **Titustown** area (generally, along West Little Creek Road from Nesbitt to Endfield Avenues); and,
 - **W. 35th Street** (generally, from Granby Street west to Colley Avenue);
- b. Only commercially developed properties are eligible for the program. Legal non-conforming land uses, sites and structures are eligible for grant funds if the non-conformities are brought into further compliance with the zoning ordinance through the grant award. A determination of legal non-conformity by staff is required.
- c. Eligible improvements for grant funding may include the following:
 - building façade improvements;
 - enhanced entrances or storefronts;
 - exterior lighting;
 - replacement of signage;
 - fencing;
 - landscaping;
 - upgraded parking surface areas (paving) with associated landscape improvements;
 - architectural or engineering fees associated with exterior work;
 - site and building demolitions related to upgrading real estate in the targeted area.
- d. Façade and aesthetic improvements to the commercial property must be feasible, must result in significant aesthetic or visual improvements as seen from the street, and costs must be reasonable.
- e. Work begun or completed prior to application submittal is not eligible for grant funding. After-the-fact applications for grant funding will not be reviewed. Routine building or site maintenance projects are not eligible projects.

- f. All sources of financing for facade and aesthetic improvement must be committed with proof of commitment provided at time of application.
- g. Specific improvement costs are itemized in a Grant Agreement with the City of Norfolk.

3. Grant Program Incentives and Reimbursement

- a. Grant funds reimbursement is available for up to 50% of eligible improvements costs as itemized in the executed Grant Agreement and cannot exceed \$25,000.
- b. For eligible properties, funding is available on a first come, first served basis. The source of funds is the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- c. The approved grant reimbursement is paid after applicant completes the improvements, as set forth in the City Grant Agreement, and work is reviewed and approved by the City of Norfolk for consistency with Agreement.
- d. Improvements shall be completed within six (6) months from the Grant Agreement's date.
- e. One (1) extension of time may be requested and approved administratively. Subsequent extensions may be requested but must be reviewed and approved by the respective Grant Review Committee. If an extension is not granted and work has not started within six (6) months from the contract date, the Grant Agreement becomes null and void.

4. Grant Application Review and Approval Process

- a. A completed application must be submitted to the Department of Planning and Community Development, Bureau of Long Range Planning, with appropriate supporting documentation and/or materials as listed on the application form.
- b. Written approval from the property owner, if the applicant is not the property owner, is required for all applications.
- c. Each activity proposed for grant reimbursement is required to have cost estimates listed in the application. An application will not be considered if costs estimates are not included.
- d. Listed below are examples of eligible improvements and the type of support documentation required for the application request:
 - 1) Exterior building improvements – may include facade improvements, such as new windows, doors, awnings, building materials. Such improvements require registered architectural or engineer plans that illustrate work areas, proposed changes, materials and colors; and an elevation drawing illustrating proposed improvements. All proposals involving structural changes must include a stamped architectural drawing/pre-approved plan by the Building Official.
 - 2) Enhanced building entrances or storefronts – may include awnings, canopies, etc.; documentation must include scaled drawing, picture, brochure or color.

- 3) Lighting – may include exterior or security; must submit type, location, detailed description or specifications; and labor costs (for installation, etc.).
 - 4) Fencing – type of materials, such as wood, metal, etc., with picture or scaled drawing; height, length, location, color (a site survey that is required by the City for a permit).
 - 5) Replacement of commercial signage – a scaled drawing of proposed sign (including information and specifications for zoning review); measurements; and location.
 - 6) Landscaping – detailed plan by licensed landscape professional that shows location of each plant and a written proposal to include prices, size, type and quantity of plants.
 - 7) Parking surface areas upgrade – such that an unimproved parking area (e.g. gravel lot) is improved with a paved or other approved surfacing material. Documentation by registered professional must include drawing of area or a survey, description of work, and proposed surfacing materials, including parking lot perimeter or interior landscaping as required by the Zoning Ordinance.
- e. Initial consultation and review of application, proposed property improvements and costs are undertaken between city staff and applicant.
- f. Grant Review Committee: All applications for a Commercial Façade and Aesthetic Improvement grant will be reviewed and acted upon by the Grant Review Committee from the designated commercial corridor. These committees have sole discretion to review and approve grants. Each committee is comprised of three (3) members selected by the business association of the respective commercial area and one (1) member each from the staffs of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (as appropriate) and the City of Norfolk Department of Planning. The Grant Review Committee:
- reviews the grant application for compliance with program guidelines and objectives;
 - either approves or denies applications for grant funding; and,
 - may modify the grant application in a mutually agreed-upon manner.
- g. Following approval of the application by the Grant Review Committee, a Grant Agreement will be entered into between the City of Norfolk and the applicant, setting forth:
- specific improvements to be made as determined by the Improvements Committee;
 - estimated total costs of improvements;
 - financing source commitments;
 - anticipated project start and end dates;
 - approved grant reimbursement amount; and,
 - any conditions of approval requested by the Grant Review Committee.

A standard condition of approval that will apply to all projects is that all necessary building and/or zoning permits shall be obtained from the Building and/or Zoning Official, prior to commencement of the project.

- h. All Grant Agreements will contain a release authorizing the City of Norfolk to place a sign on the property during work, noting participation in the grant program.

- i. No approved project may commence construction or rehab work can start until the Grant Agreement is executed if it is to remain eligible for reimbursement funding from the City.
- j. If, during project construction, the applicant determines that deviation from the approved plans or conditions is necessary, a request for review of changes must be made to the Planning Department. Minor changes may be administratively approved at the Planning Director's discretion. All others must be reviewed and approved by the Grant Review Committee.
- k. Payment will be made by the City of Norfolk after completion and final inspection by program staff of approved work improvements to ensure consistency with the Grant Agreement. Requests for payment must be accompanied by "PAID IN FULL" receipts. Payments may be lump sum unless specifically arranged otherwise prior to approval.



N O R F O L K

For Office
Use Only:
Date
Received

**Commercial Façade and Aesthetic Improvement Grant Program
Application Form**

NOTE: It is a requisite of the grant program, that **no application will be considered if work has already begun. No work can start until the application is approved and an agreement is executed.**

A. Applicant information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone/fax numbers: _____

Email: _____

Property address: _____

Business name: _____

Property owner if different than applicant (name, address, phone):

B. Commercial corridor: _____

(select one: E. Little Creek Road, Fairmount Park, Five Points, Riverview, Titustown, W. 35th Street)

C. Requested grant funding: \$ _____

D. Project description narrative. Describe and detail the proposed improvements and note how project will result in significant aesthetic or visual improvements as seen from the street.

E. Project's itemized improvement costs:

Listed improvements	Cost estimate
Total Estimate:	

F. Zoning district of property: _____

G. The following support documentation must be provided at time of application submittal:

- ___ Property survey
- ___ Site plan, showing building footprint, with proposed modifications
- ___ Architectural plans and building elevation details
- ___ Landscape plan by a certified landscape architect or certified nurseryman
- ___ Photographs of property in its present condition and with proposed improvements
- ___ Color samples and specifications of all construction materials to be used
- ___ Copies of executed contracts for professional or construction services, including architectural, engineering, landscaping and contracting services
- ___ Proof of financial capacity to complete project (e.g. loan commitment, personal financial statement, etc.)

Applicant's signature

Date

Property owner's signature

Date