

Storefront Improvement Program

Introduction

Visual presentation is an important aspect of marketing and gaining customer loyalty. The exterior appearance of a building is the initial point of interaction between the business operating within and a potential customer. The economic vitality as well as the aesthetic quality of each business enterprise is important, and both are linked in part to the success of surrounding commercial establishments. The physical character of Grafton contributes greatly to the overall image of the community for its residents, customers, and visitors.

The intent of Grafton's Business Enhancement Program is to:

- enhance, protect, and promote Grafton's historic character and unique identity.
- renovate the exterior facades of deteriorating commercial buildings,
- improve the appearance of individual building storefronts including attached signs and awnings or canopies as well as the overall look of the area,
- promote energy efficiency, and
- leverage private improvements while making revitalization affordable, creative and community based.

Program Summary

Interested property owners may apply for a grant of up to 50% of their investment in rehabilitating a building façade not to exceed \$10,000. The minimum investment must be \$10,000. Any building owner or store proprietor/tenant with lease authority or authorization from the owner may apply for funding. Tenants must have a minimum of two years remaining on their lease. Either building owner or tenant may apply for the program. A property improved under this program may apply for the maximum allowance no more than once every 10 years. Residential properties and home-based businesses are not eligible. Businesses must be located within City limits.

Application and Approval Process

1. Submit completed applications to the Community Development Director for preliminary review to assure that all necessary information is provided.
2. Applications will be reviewed by the Grafton City Building Official to ensure proposed improvements meet applicable building requirements.
3. Consideration of all applications will be by the Grafton Economic Development Committee. Applicants will be notified of the meeting and asked to attend to present their

project proposal. The Grafton Economic Development Committee will review projects and award matching funds.

Qualifying improvements must be to areas visible from the public right of way and include:

- Awnings and canopies
- Lighting
- Paint
- Removal/replacement of inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes or materials
- Reconfiguring entrances
- Door/window replacement or repair
- Public-facing signs detached and attached to the building (new, repairs, replacements, removal)
- Sides of buildings if exposed to a street or alleyway.

4. Work started prior to approval will not be considered for cost share. Before and after pictures required.

5. Reimbursement will be based on actual invoices and proof of payment for completed work. Quotes/bids must be provided if services and/or materials can be sourced locally.

6. Building permit is Required.