

FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM?

The facade improvement program has been established by the Comstock Park Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to encourage the preservation, restoration and /or renovation of significant building exteriors for properties located within the downtown district (a copy of the district boundary map is attached). The program is administered by the DDA, which has determined, consistent with the DDA's adopted development and tax increment financing plan, that the preservation and enhancement of building facades in the district will facilitate and encourage the goals of the DDA as more fully stated below. Monies available for the program come exclusively from those funds controlled by the DDA Board and may be only used in a manner consistent with the DDA Board's approved policies and plans.

Grants of monies, up to 20% of project costs, maximum \$5,000.00, are available to eligible property owners.

WHY WAS THE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED?

The DDA Board believes that the appearance of buildings in the downtown district is critical to maintaining the viability of the Comstock Park downtown district. Comstock Park is not an incorporated village but rather a section of Plainfield Charter Township. We need to maintain our exteriors to remain a viable business community. It is the Board's belief that an attractively preserved downtown district will encourage pedestrian and vehicular traffic, thus improving economic conditions in the district.

WHAT IS ELIGIBLE?

Restoration or renovation of building facades, for which the DDA has a facade easement or license, is eligible for the grant program. Exterior work can include the costs of design, construction, removal and replacement of exterior elements. Improvements which would help a business comply with the American Disabilities Act are also eligible.

Examples of exterior improvements, where a facade easement or license exists, would include but are not limited to the following:

- Awnings
- Front Entrances
- Side Entrances
- Rear Entrances
- Painting
- Exterior Restoration
- Removal of Existing Façade
- Signs (attached to buildings)

Program funds may not be utilized for any of the following uses:

- Refinancing Existing Debt
- Complete Building Demolition
- Property Acquisition
- Site Plan, Building or Sign Plan Fees
- Property Appraisal Costs, Legal Fees or Loan Origination Fees
- Labor Cost Paid to the Owner/Applicant or Relatives
- New Building Construction

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The following criteria will also apply:

1. Only buildings for which the DDA has a facade easement or license and which contain retail, commercial or professional use consistent with desired land use are eligible.
2. Properties must be structurally sound, roof intact and meet basic public safety codes. Proposed facade improvements must also comply with all applicable building and zoning codes.
3. Building owners are eligible.
4. Applicants will be required to complete an application form provided by the Comstock Park Downtown Development Authority.
5. All required governmental permits must be obtained prior to the start of construction.
6. In the case of facade improvements, the owner must dedicate a facade easement to the DDA for a period of at least two years. The facade easement will limit changes to the facade during the period covered by the easement.
7. A licensed builder must be employed to do any structural changes.

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM GUIDELINES?

Applicants who wish to apply for the grant will complete an application, which in turn will be processed by the DDA Project Review Committee. Application must be received, reviewed and approved before work can commence. Upon approval, construction must commence within 60 days of approval and must be completed within 120 days after construction start date.

All payments will be made upon determination of completion by the Review Committee with payment to be made directly to the contractor and property owner. Signed and notarized lien waivers will be needed at time of payment.

Project Review and Selection Process – Project Review Committee members will work closely with property owners to determine initial eligibility under program guidelines. Once the initial scope of work has been determined, the applicant will present the project to the Project Review Committee. The Committee will meet as needed to provide input, make suggestions to the scope of work and approve or deny individual projects.

Right Rescinded – The DDA reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The specific program guidelines detailed herein are subject to revision or amendment by the DDA Board in its sole discretion at any time. The DDA may discontinue the program at any time, subject to the availability of program funding.

Once a grant is approved, applicant can not apply for more grant money, on the same property, for a period of five years.

Upon completion of renovations, the building must be occupied before payment will be made.

WHEN DOES THE PROGRAM BEGIN?

The program will begin April 20, 2005 and expire December 31, 2021.